REPORT

AEC ANNUAL MEETING

FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COORDINATORS 2026

Common Ground – Diverse Pathways

AEC IRC 2026

CONSERVATORIO DI MUSICA F.A. BONPORTI
Trento | Riva del Garda - Italia

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Theme and Teaser

The AEC Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators 2026 in Trento invited participants to reflect on these shared foundations while exploring the many different pathways currently shaping international cooperation in higher music education.

Under the theme **"Common Ground – Diverse Pathways"**, the meeting brought together discussions on **Erasmus digitisation** – with the usual **EASY-dedicated workshop**, this year celebrating the **10th anniversary of the project** – the relations between education and profession, the role of AI in our institutions and the role of our institutions in our societies. Across the programme, the focus remained on how institutions can learn from one another while responding to different local, cultural, and institutional contexts.

A central element of this year's meeting was the continuing professional development of International Relations Coordinators themselves. **Dedicated workshops on project writing** — designed both for beginners and advanced practitioners — supported participants in strengthening competencies related to **Erasmus+, KA171, BIPs, KA220 and Horizon applications**; sessions on intercultural training offered practical approaches to working across cultures and supporting increasingly diverse student and staff communities; session on the efficient and **ethical use of AI** and automation related to process at the heart of international offices.

The programme combined strategic reflection with practical exchange. Participants engaged also with topics such as new education formats developed by **IN.TUNE**, **seamless and sustainable mobility processes**, **cross-continental partnerships** and **"going global"**, support for institutions and students in enlargement countries with a special focus on Ukraine and Balkan countries, and new opportunities for collaboration through European and international projects. Alongside plenary sessions and workshops, the meeting placed strong emphasis on peer learning and community-building through speed dating sessions, matchmaking activities, student-led discussions, informal exchanges, and networking opportunities throughout Trento and Lake Garda.

Bringing together experienced professionals and newcomers alike, the meeting aimed to strengthen the common ground of the AEC community while encouraging diverse perspectives, new partnerships, and fresh approaches to international cooperation in higher music education. Consult the Useful Documents section of the IRC Meeting 2026 webpage.



IRCs Meeting and the IRCs Working Group

The AEC Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators is meant for administrative or teaching staff members in Conservatoires who deal with international relations and European programmes (such as ERASMUS), as well as for institutions not familiar with these programmes, but with an interest in getting involved. The meeting is important for networking, exchanging useful information and for developing partnerships.

With this annual meeting, the AEC is bringing together a growing community of International Relations Coordinators. The programme of the meeting, as well as other important documents and policies on the field of international relations of conservatoires, are the result of the collaboration between the AEC office and the IRCs Working Group.

TThe International Relations Coordinators (IRC) Working Group 2026:

- Dimitrios Marinos – Chair, Athens Conservatoire
- Sara Primiterra – Coordinator, AEC Office
- Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson – Student representative, Lund University Malmö
- Riccardo Mascia – Conservatorio Arrigo Boito Parma
- Anika Stiawa – Kunstuniversität Graz
- Veronika Kuželová – HAMU Prague
- Linn Eriksen – UiA – Universitetet i Agder
- Sarah Low – Royal Academy of Music London
- Ivana Mijanović – Faculty of Music, University of Belgrade
- Junta Arakawa – College of Music, Mahidol University, Thailand - external member
- Massimiliano Mainolfi – Hosting Institution 2026 – Conservatorio “F.A. Bonporti” di Trento e Riva del Garda

The AEC Working Group members work on the preparation of AEC events on a voluntary basis. The AEC Preparatory Working Groups are all formed by co-opting active individuals in the relevant field of specialization within AEC member institutions. Proactivity, as well as geographical and gender balances, are the applied criteria to guarantee the diverse and dynamic character of the groups, which should ideally recreate the diversity of AEC members' institutions.



2 September

EASY Workshop

The IRC Meeting 2026 opened with a workshop dedicated to the AEC EASY Mobility Online system and the digitisation of Erasmus+ procedures. The opening plenary set the scene with an overview of the latest developments of ESCI+, the European Student Card Initiative, followed by a presentation of the improvements and updates introduced in EASY MO. The session also introduced the new EASY MO Code of Conduct.

Participants then moved from theory to practice in hands-on simulations held in two parts. In parallel workshops, one group worked through the EASY MO application process, while the other focused on Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) and the Digital Learning Agreement.

The afternoon closed with three parallel groups: an open discussion on general questions about EASY MO, a practical workshop on merge fields and letter templates, and a focus group working towards a standard process for staff mobility.







View plenary presentation on ESCI

View plenary presentation on EASY MO Principles and Code of Conduct

View Mentimeter Quiz results

View presentation on EASY MO Application Process Logic

Watch the plenary session and the explanation of the process logic

Watch the workshop on merge fields and letter templates

Let’s celebrate: 10 years of EASY

To close the first day, participants came together to celebrate ten years of EASY. With a toast and a piece of cake, the IRC community marked a decade of shared work on digital mobility within the AEC network.







3 September

Pre-conference Workshop 1

AI in International Relations Offices:
Practical Applications, Automation and Responsible Use

Artificial Intelligence can offer new opportunities for IRCs of Higher Music Education Institutions to simplify complex workflows, reduce repetitive administrative tasks, improve communication with students and staff, and support data-driven decision making. At the same time, institutions are facing important questions regarding responsible use, reliability, ethical considerations, and the development of institutional guidelines.

This interactive workshop provided a practical and accessible overview of how AI tools can be integrated into the daily activities of International Relations Offices. Rather than focusing on theoretical discussions alone, the session emphasised concrete use cases, demonstrations, and real operational challenges identified by participants via the IRC Survey 2026, sent by the AEC to its members during the spring.

The workshop explored how AI can support common administrative and communication tasks by creating effective setups tailored to the specific needs of international offices, in order to obtain reliable, structured, and high-quality outputs from AI systems. In addition to operational applications, it addressed the growing need for institutional AI policies and ethical frameworks.

Designed as a collaborative and discussion-oriented session, the workshop encouraged participants to share their own experiences, challenges, and expectations regarding AI applied to their daily work.
By combining demonstrations, practical examples, policy reflections, and peer exchange, it aimed to provide realistic, actionable ideas that can be adapted to different institutional contexts.

Ultimately, the workshop sought to empower international education professionals to approach AI not as a replacement for human expertise, but as a practical support tool capable of improving efficiency, communication, and innovation within International Relations Offices.



Olivier Dubois,
founder of The AI App Factory

Moderated by **Dimitrios Marinos,** IRC Working Group Chair

Resources

1. The presentation

Here you can find the workshop deck, in four parts:

Part 1:
https://gamma.app/docs/AI-in-International-Relations-Offices-Workshop-3h-Part-1-xdwj0frgyx0ck6v

Part 2:
https://gamma.app/docs/AI-in-International-Relations-Offices-Workshop-3h-Part-2-c1wnuvyrvast2qg

Part 3:
https://gamma.app/docs/AI-in-International-Relations-Offices-Workshop-3h-Part-3-trx4rj3vaunf0j3

2. Provider conditions and useful AI tools

The Keiko for Business Hub marketplace lists the AI tools Olivier has tested. It also has provider-by-provider fact sheets: personal vs. commercial account, data retention, whether your data is used for training, and whether a data processing agreement exists.

https://hub.keikoforbusiness.com/ai-marketplace

3. NotebookLM for recurring student questions

If you want a chatbot that answers only from your own documents, a good free tool is: https://notebooklm.google.com.

The three steps from the last slidedeck linked in this mail (gather your content, build the project, publish the notebook) are enough to get a first version running in an afternoon

5. Other content discussed during the workshop

During the workshop, we went through various concepts and features live which were not part of the decks. I have therefore created this new deck which summarizes these concepts:
https://gamma.app/docs/The-foundational-building-blocks-for-mastering-generic-AI-tools-rnx5jm7sn7nysl4

Olivier Dubois is a Luxembourg-based entrepreneur and AI innovation consultant, best known as the founder of The AI App Factory. He focuses on helping entrepreneurs and businesses turn ideas into practical AI-powered applications by combining human expertise with modern AI tools. Through initiatives like Keiko for Business and projects such as Lactose.help, Dubois promotes accessible, pragmatic AI solutions for startups, SMEs, and innovators. You can contact him at olivier@theaiappfactory.com

Pre-conference Workshop 2A

Project Writing for Beginners: dealing with KA171 and BIPs project applications

Three experienced IRCs of the AEC IRC community shared with their colleagues their experiences of writing BIP and KA171 projects, which are considered the first step towards writing more complex applications.

This practical workshop was meant for IRCs planning to apply for BIPs and KA171 for the first time and looking for information, tips and tricks from fellow colleagues.



- **Sigita Razminovica,** Riga
- **Karolina Jarosz**, Krakow
- **Riccardo Mascia,** Parma

View the KA171 presentation

View the BIPs presentation

Pre-conference Workshop 2B

Project Writing Advanced Level: Erasmus+ KA220-HED and Horizon Europe (Cluster 2)

This advanced workshop was designed for participants with prior experience in international project development who wished to strengthen their capacity to design competitive proposals under Erasmus+ KA220-HED and Horizon Europe Cluster 2.

In an increasingly competitive funding landscape, the session focused on practical strategies for developing strong, coherent, and impactful project proposals aligned with European priorities.

The workshop covered key stages of project development, including concept design, consortium building, alignment with call priorities, and structuring proposals. Drawing on recent hands-on experience in both Erasmus+ cooperation partnerships and Horizon Europe projects, participants gained concrete guidance on translating institutional strategies into fundable project ideas.

A central focus of the session was on award criteria, offering insights into how proposals are assessed, how to interpret requirements effectively, and how to strengthen key sections such as impact, dissemination, and sustainability. Common challenges and frequent pitfalls in proposal writing were also addressed.

The session was structured in three parts:

- Erasmus+ KA220-HED: technical aspects, call requirements, and practical examples
- Erasmus+ KA220-HED: award criteria and practical guidance
- Horizon Europe Cluster 2: project design, coordination, and consortium management

Through a combination of practical input and discussion, the workshop aimed to equip participants with tools to improve the quality, competitiveness, and strategic relevance of their project applications.

- **Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson,** PhD Researcher in European Studies and Assistant Professor in Socially Engaged Music, Malmö Academy of Music, Lund University
- **Lucia Di Cecca,** Conservatorio "Santa Cecilia" di Roma

View the presentation on KA220 and Horizon – Iveri

View the presentation on KA220 Evaluation – Lucia



Pre-conference Workshop 3

Lost in Translation? Turning Intercultural Moments into Action

This three-hour workshop invited International Relations Coordinators at Higher Music Education Institutions to move beyond good intentions and develop intercultural competence as a practised skill.

Beginning with a simulation that put participants in the shoes of the cultural outsider, the workshop built a shared analytical lens (cultural, institutional, and practical) and applied it to real scenarios through a World Café dialogue format.
Rather than offering step-by-step solutions, the session prioritised reflection, peer dialogue, and honest engagement with the assumptions that shape everyday IRC practice.

The workshop aimed to leave participants with a co-built toolkit of individual and institutional actions, and a concrete personal commitment to carry forward.



- **Monica Vejgaard and Alessandra Callegari,** AEC DEI Panel of Experts
- **Steven Faber,** AEC DEI Allies

View the presentation



Introductory Session for Newcomers and Buddy System

In this introductory session, Sarah Low, Ivana Mijanovic and Linn Eriksen from the IRC Working Group gave a short overview of the AEC and IRC activities. The buddy system was launched by pairing newcomers with old timers, and Sabine Roth presented how she can support the work of IRCs in AEC member institutions in the coming year.



- **Sarah Low,** IRC Working Group
- **Ivana Mijanovic,** IRC Working Group
- **Linn Eriksen,** IRC Working Group
- **Sabine Roth,** mdw Vienna

View the presentation

Watch the session

Opening Session





Welcome words by:

- **Francesca Gerosa**, Assessore all'istruzione, cultura, per i giovani e per le pari opportunità, Provincia di Trento
- **Klaus Broz**, Vice-President of Conservatorio di Trento e Riva del Garda
- **Calogero Di Liberto**, Director of Conservatorio di Trento e Riva del Garda
- **Dimitrios Marinos**, IRC Working Group Chair
- **Finn Schumacker**, AEC Executive Director



Watch the session

AEC Talk 1

Building Cross-Continental Collaborations

The first AEC Talk focused on international collaborations at global level among AEC members. Veronika Kuzelova of the IRC Working Group presented the results of the IRC Survey 2026 on this topic, followed by a case study presented by Consuelo Giglio, IRC at Conservatorio Scarlatti di Palermo.

Case Study: Piano World. Soul Roots Benefits

'Piano World. Soul Roots Benefits' is an international Erasmus+ KA171 International Credit Mobility project combining advanced piano performance, therapeutic music practice and AI. Its broad partnership network extends to Asia and America the strong cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa established during the previous project, 'MMM Mediterranean Sub-Saharan Music Movement'. In particular, the impact of an outstanding European piano performance during an outgoing mobility at the University of Lagos generated the idea of exploring the spirit of the Piano City international project in a broader and more inclusive way, making music a powerful tool for communication and integration through a keyboard instrument that has traditionally been the most exclusive.

'Piano World' therefore aims to explore the capacity to create emotion and communication, in order to provide tools to counter the mainstream approach. Mobility and activities also promote traditional music and the related written repertoire, always with the aim of creating benefits, while the new relationship between 'human' and 'artificial' is explored, both to identify ways of countering the 'mechanical' and to draw useful elements of communication and expressiveness from computer science.

Despite the constraints of the new Regions budget, the project has incorporated Asia/India (partially reduced), North America/USA (travel grants halved) and Latin America/Argentina (initially pending, ultimately not funded) in order to achieve its goals. The activities are organically distributed, with the historic Conservatory of Palermo as a hub for four continents, at the heart of the Mediterranean.

Starting with the specialisation in both piano and music therapy of the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Lagos, the partnership network has expanded to include the Music Therapy Faculty of the Boyer College of Music and Arts (Temple University, Philadelphia) and the Faculty of Technology at RK University (Rajkot), thanks to contacts already established through the Conservatory's Master in Music Therapy and its digital-focused KA220 and PNRR projects. The external partner Piano City was set to host the pianists from Lagos in highly evocative locations during its Palermo edition at the end of September.

The presentations were followed by a Q&A moderated by Veronika Kuzelova.

- **Veronika Kuzelova,** IRC Working Group
- **Consuelo Giglio,** IRC, Conservatorio Scarlatti di Palermo, Italy

Watch the session

View the presentation by Veronika



1. Flexible learning pathways: IN.TUNE's approach to joint educational offers

The session was delivered in two consecutive parts.

Making Joint Educational Offers: First Steps & Benefits

This session presented the 16 joint educational formats developed within the IN.TUNE Alliance, exploring why internationalisation in this framework is valuable, how it is implemented, and how it benefits participating institutions, teachers and students. It highlighted the role of International Relations Coordinators as drivers of institutional change, showing how these formats expand institutional offers and provide students with international opportunities beyond traditional full-semester mobility. Teachers who are developing the formats took part in person, giving participants the opportunity to ask questions and learn first-hand from those who have done them.

Going Forward: Navigating Joint Educational Offers: Methodology, Implementation and Lessons Learned

Tailored for institutions offering or developing joint educational offers, the second part focused on the methodology behind the 16 formats, with particular attention to joint online courses and joint modules. It examined the implementation process, addressing administrative, logistical, and organisational aspects. With insights from teachers representing different disciplines, participants exchanged best practices, discussed lessons learned, and explored strategies to refine and scale similar initiatives.

- **Sara Belfiore,** IN.TUNE University Alliance

Moderated by **Ivana Mijanovic**

View the presentation



2. AI in HMEIs International Offices

Artificial Intelligence offers new opportunities for International Relations Offices in Higher Music Education Institutions to streamline workflows, reduce repetitive tasks, enhance communication, and support more efficient decision-making. At the same time, its use raises important questions regarding reliability, ethics, data protection, and the need for institutional guidelines.
Introduced by a presentation of the IRC Survey 2026 results on AI, the session provided a practical introduction to how AI tools can support the daily work of IRCs, focusing on concrete examples, demonstrations, and challenges identified through the survey. Participants explored how AI can assist with common administrative and communication tasks, and how effective approaches and workflows can be developed to obtain reliable and useful results.
The session also briefly addressed the importance of responsible AI use and institutional frameworks, while encouraging participants to exchange experiences, questions, and good practices. By combining practical examples with peer discussion, it aimed to equip international education professionals with realistic ideas for integrating AI as a support tool that enhances efficiency, creativity, and innovation in their everyday work.



- **Olivier Dubois,** AI expert, The AI App Factory
- **Sara Primiterra,** AEC office, IRC Survey 2026 results on AI

Moderated by **Dimitrios Marinos,** IRC Working Group Chair

View the presentation by Olivier

View the presentation by Sara

Watch the session

3. Transition into the Profession: aspects and impact of learning environment, internationalisation and curriculum

How far do we concretely support students' transition into the labour market? This round table explored the added value of exposure for students in Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs), across classical, jazz, and popular music fields.

Drawing on the results of the survey conducted by the AEC Education and Profession Working Group on the Transition from Higher Music Education Institutions to Professional Life, the panellists discussed the most frequently identified needs and challenges faced by students and alumni at this pivotal stage of their careers.
The discussion also examined how mobility opportunities can help address these needs by supporting the development of professional skills, networks, international perspectives, and career opportunities.

In a World Café setting, participants explored several key questions derived from the main themes and findings of the survey. The discussion also addressed disparities between countries in terms of cultural ecosystems, funding structures, and industry access, examining how these factors influence both curricula and career opportunities.
By sharing practices from different institutions, the session aimed to identify how international experiences can be better embedded into career preparation strategies.

- **Jan-Gerd Krüger,** Kielzog (Hoogezand, The Netherlands), AEC E&P WG
- **Ema Proso Šepec,** Academy of Music, University of Zagreb (Croatia), AEC E&P WG
- **Sarra Douik,** Student, Conservatorio di Musica "Arrigo Pedrollo" (Vicenza, Italy), Mentee AEC-ECSA-EJN-JMI Mentorship Programme
- **Oana Balan-Budoiu,** Academia Națională de Muzică "Gheorghe Dima" (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), AEC E&P WG

Introduced by **Sarah Low,** IRC Working Group



View the presentation

Participate in the survey!

4. Hope Beyond Borders: the Ukrainian Experience

This session, focused on Ukraine, presented the experience of the Trento Conservatoire in hosting Ukrainian students, the experience of two students from Ukraine studying in Trento, and that of two international relations coordinators from music universities in Ukraine working with European partners to organise the mobility of their students and staff.
The testimonies were followed by an open floor for questions from participants.

- **Olha Dolhopolova and Natalia Kulak,** Ukrainian students at Conservatorio di Trento
- **Bohdan Rumiantsev,** IRC, Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, Kyiv
- **Tetiana Sovhyra,** Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts

Moderated by **Calogero Di Liberto,** Director of Conservatorio di Trento e Riva del Garda



View the presentation by Tetiana

5. Managing BIPs

This session provided practical insights and actionable tips for organising Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs), drawing on experiences from Riga, Krakow, Parma and Graz.

Participants followed a realistic time scheme covering the design of internal processes, partner engagement, curriculum alignment, logistics, digital setup, delivery, and post-implementation evaluation.
A concise to-do list clarified stakeholder roles, risk management, accessibility, assessment alignment, and communication milestones.

The presentation was complemented by time for reflection, feedback, and interactive improvement from the audience, as well as by the presentation of survey results on BIPs by Riccardo Mascia.



- **Sigita Razminovica,** Riga
- **Karolina Jarosz,** Krakow
- **Riccardo Mascia,** Parma, IRC Working Group

Moderated by **Anika Stiawa,** Graz, IRC Working Group

View the presentation on managing BIPs

View the presentation IRC Survey 2026, results on BIPs

6. Whose Safe Space? When Institutional Rules Meet Cultural Reality

Safety frameworks, codes of conduct, and institutional rules are rarely as universal as they appear. This session brought together International Relations Coordinators and DEI practitioners to explore what happens when the assumptions behind a "safe space" intersect with the diverse cultural frameworks students bring with them. Drawing on concrete experience from conservatoire practice, including the particular complexity of highly international, multi-institutional programmes, the session explored how the same rule can carry entirely different legitimacy depending on who is reading it, and why group dynamics tools designed to foster inclusion can themselves carry cultural assumptions. Through case scenarios and practitioner dialogue, participants were invited to reframe the IRC role not only as rule enforcement, but as cultural mediation of safety.

Case study presented by **Susanne Van Els,** Lyon/Hamburg

Presentation and moderation by **Monica Vejgaard** and **Steven Faber**

View the presentation



Concert of the AEC BIP Orchestra and Choir Trento

The day ended with a concert by the AEC BIP Orchestra Trento 2026 and the AEC BIP Choir Trento 2026. The programme featured Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58, with Tommaso Dalpiaz at the piano, and Antonio Vivaldi's Gloria in D major, RV 589.

Lucrezia Masia, soprano I
Iris Kißner, soprano II
Eva Maria Ruggeri, mezzo-soprano
Beatrice Zanon, oboe
AEC BIP Choir Trento 2026, conducted by Salvatore La Rosa
AEC BIP Orchestra Trento 2026, conducted by Andrea Raffanini

The concert was followed by a dinner in the garden of the MUSE.

Watch the Concert





4 September

AEC Talk 2

Going Global – how to prepare for critical situations?

The second AEC Talk opened with a presentation of the AEC Global Strategy by Finn Schumacker, AEC Executive Director, followed by a keynote by Adam Lipski on how to prepare for critical situations.

As higher music education institutions continue to expand their international activities, IRCs operate within a rapidly changing and uncertain global environment. Political instability, armed conflicts, public health threats, travel disruptions, rising costs, and evolving security concerns directly affect the organisation of international mobility for students and staff. International Relations Offices are therefore required not only to facilitate mobility, but also to anticipate risks, support travellers, and ensure institutional resilience.

This keynote session explored how higher education institutions can better prepare for critical situations linked to international cooperation and mobility, providing participants with concrete approaches to risk assessment, crisis preparedness, and traveller support.

Particular attention was given to the realities faced by small and medium-sized international offices working with limited resources and increasing responsibilities. The keynote addressed how geopolitical instability can influence educational exchanges both directly and indirectly, including through safety concerns, changes in travel routes, financial pressures, and uncertainty surrounding international partnerships. Examples such as the impact of the war in Ukraine on Erasmus mobility and international travel planning illustrated how global events can affect mobility activities even within Europe.

The session also examined broader aspects of international risk management, including health-related incidents, emergency procedures, intercultural considerations, and destination-specific preparation. Practical examples demonstrated how institutions can implement risk management strategies, emergency planning procedures, and traveller preparation processes adapted to their institutional context.
By combining practical recommendations with strategic reflections, the keynote aimed to provide participants with useful tools and perspectives to deal with the growing complexities of internationalisation. Ultimately, the session highlighted that preparing for critical situations is now an essential component of responsible, sustainable, and resilient international mobility management.

Bio

Adam Lipski is a senior internationalisation and mobility professional at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, working primarily within the International Office. He heads the International Compliance unit, which coordinates matters of Mobility Safety, Dual-Use and Knowledge Security. In that function, he serves as one of the university's key Safety Managers for Global Mobility, where he is involved in risk assessment, duty of care, and crisis response for student and staff mobility. This includes managing procedures related to travel safety and institutional risk management for international exchanges and stays abroad. His work sits at the intersection of mobility management and internationalisation strategy, with a strong emphasis on ensuring that international academic exchanges are not only expanded, but also compliant, safe, and operationally resilient. He has also contributed to institutional efforts to develop structured compliance systems for international cooperation and mobility governance.



- **Finn Schumacker,** AEC Executive Director
- **Adam Lipski,** Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences

Q&A moderated by **Dimitrios Marinos,** IRC Working Group Chair



Watch the session

View the presentation

ESCI+ and EASY MO Updates

Sara Primiterra gave the latest updates on ESCI+ and EASY MO and introduced and moderated the Information Forum, in which participants pitched their future projects



View the ESCI and EASY MO presentation

View the Information Forum presentation

Watch the session

Match Making

Participants had the opportunity to find project partners within a space and time provided for match-making.

Information Forum and Information Market

The Information Market that followed offered a space for the dissemination of ongoing, completed and new projects through posters, giving participants the opportunity to connect directly with the presenters and gather more information about their initiatives.





Discussion Groups

1. No stupid questions about Erasmus

This free discussion on Erasmus offered participants a safe space to share their questions and doubts, even the most "stupid" ones.

Moderated by **Veronika Kuzelova** and **Ivana Mijanović,** IRC Working Group



2. Challenges, integration, financial support and job perspectives of students from enlargement countries

This session, focused on the point of view of students coming from EU Enlargement countries, aimed to establish a dialogue with students from Ukraine and Albania on challenges, integration, financial support and job perspectives. The discussion was initiated and moderated by Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson, who is writing his PhD thesis on EU enlargement, and the floor was then opened to conference participants.

- **Kejsi Çoku and Ebi Çoku,** students from Albania, KUG Graz
- **Olha Dolhopolova** and **Natalia Kulak,** Ukrainian students at Conservatorio di Trento

Moderated by
Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson, IRC at Malmö Academy of Music, PhD student, former member of the EPASA board, IRC Working Group

View the presentation

3. Seamless Mobility: information online, respecting deadlines, academic calendars, grading issues, DLAs and course catalogue

Which are the major obstacles preventing mobility flows from running smoothly between institutions? Through group discussions, participants reflected on published information, respect of deadlines, synchronisation of academic calendars, grade conversions, course catalogues and DLA signatures, asking what the IRC community can do and agree upon to make things run smoothly when managing mobility.

Introduced and moderated by
Sara Primiterra and **Riccardo Mascia**



View the presentation

Watch the session

4. Best practice IT tools for admin: how can you save time on your daily tasks?

The daily work of an IRC is highly varied and involves extensive, detail-oriented processes, making it essential to work efficiently in order to meet all requirements. This session invited participants to learn from each other how to save time and work more efficiently by using appropriate IT tools and optimised processes.
Anika Stiawa and Linn Eriksen kicked things off with practical examples: Anika demonstrated the advantages of working with a user-friendly, free project management tool, while Linn gave insight into how she uses AI in her daily work. All participants were then invited to share their own best practices.

Moderated by **Anika Stiawa** and **Linn Eriksen,** IRC Working Group

View the presentation

5. Travel Differently: Exploring Green Mobility in Higher Music Education

This session explored the challenges of low-carbon travel, shared the best examples already implemented by individual institutions, and examined how the AEC, and in particular its newly established Network of Green Officers, can contribute to promoting environmentally friendly travel practices across the sector.
A central thread of the discussion was the question of what hinders greener travel, whether structural, financial, cultural or logistical, and what role students play in pushing for change or shaping institutional priorities. Participants were encouraged to draw on concrete experiences from their own contexts, including cases where green travel policies exist on paper but struggle to take hold in practice. Useful and practical tools and resources on green travel were also shared for participants to bring back to their institutions and use in their daily work.

Moderated by **Ashkhen Fixova,** Manager of the AEC Network of Green Officers

View the presentation

6.AI in Music Education and Practice: Some Provocations to Situate Opportunities Within an Ethical Approach and the European Context

Following an introduction to the topic by Raul Giancarlo Maria Masu, participants discussed the following provocations.
On the one hand, AI in music education offers significant opportunities (real-time feedback, personalised learning, democratised (?) composition). On the other hand, recent research identifies critical challenges: AI models function as "black boxes" without explaining musical choices; datasets can be, and often are, biased; and while AI can support and speed up creative processes, it may stifle individuals' creative confidence. The EU classifies educational AI as "high-risk", prohibiting emotion-recognition systems in schools as well as discouraging AI for grading. Overall, hybrid models, achieved by combining AI analysis with human instruction, arguably provide maximum educational value, ensuring technology enhances rather than replaces the human dimension of music making.

Introduction by
Raul Giancarlo Maria Masu, Professor of Electronic Music, Conservatorio di Trento
Discussion moderated by **Dimitrios Marinos**, IRC Working Group Chair

View the presentation

Watch the session

Trip to Riva del Garda

In the afternoon, participants had the opportunity to join a networking trip to Riva del Garda, including a tour of the Riva site of the Conservatorio and a boat trip on Lake Garda.





5th September

AEC Talk 3 – Focus on Enlargement Countries

Higher Music Education in EU Enlargement Countries: Cooperation, Resilience and Artistic Freedom

What does EU enlargement mean for higher music education institutions, musicians and artistic communities in countries where the European integration process has become increasingly uncertain?
In this keynote, Ivana Perkovic reflects on the experience of higher music education in Serbia, examining how political and institutional developments affect music academies, students, teachers and opportunities for international artistic cooperation. The session will consider the role of music institutions not only as educational organisations, but also as spaces for artistic freedom, critical reflection and civic engagement.
Particular attention will be given to participation in European initiatives such as the IN.TUNE alliance, which represents one of the most tangible forms of European integration available to higher music education institutions in Serbia. The keynote will explore how such cooperation can support artistic exchange, curriculum development, institutional resilience and a sense of belonging to a shared European music community, while also considering its vulnerability when domestic political conditions move in the opposite direction.
The session will conclude by asking how European higher music education institutions and networks can provide meaningful, sustainable and reciprocal support to colleagues working in politically and institutionally challenging contexts.

Keynote speaker: **Ivana Perkovic,** Professor and Head of the Department of Musicology, Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade
Moderator: **Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson,** Lecturer in Socially Engaged Music and PhD Researcher in European Studies, specialising in EU enlargement, Lund University; member of the AEC IRC Working Group.





Watch the session

View the presentation

Discussion Groups

before the closing session, participants once again split into discussion groups moderated by members of the IRC Working Group and the AEC Office. Three of Friday's groups were repeated (AI in Music Education and Practice, No Stupid Questions About Erasmus, and Seamless Mobility), while a new group on Transnational Academic Networks in Times of Political Turmoil explored how institutions can act collectively when facing challenging situations, building on the keynotes by Adam Lipski and Ivana Perković. Two further groups invited participants to reflect on the event and share proposals for future editions.
The Safe & Brave Space, moderated by Steven Faber, took place parallel to the discussion groups, offering participants a confidential and moderated environment to speak freely about their experiences at the event and within their home institutions.

1. Safe & Brave Space

The AEC Safe & Brave Spaces:

- Provide a confidential and moderated environment where participants can speak freely about their experiences at the event and within their home institutions.
- Focus on themes such as diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, gender equality, and non-discrimination.
- Encourage participants to reflect on power relations, discrimination, and institutional culture in higher music education.
- Are facilitated by members of the AEC's DEI Allies network / Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Task Force, ensuring a respectful and structured dialogue.
- Serve as a channel for collecting feedback that informs AEC policy and future event design, helping improve inclusion and safety across the network.

moderated by **Steven Faber**

2. Transnational Academic Networks in Times of Political Turmoil

Resilience, responsibility, and the role of Higher Music Education in divided societies
While the keynotes deliverd by Adam Lipski and Ivana Perkovic, focused more on the options and responsibilities of individual institutions when facing challenging situations, this session explored how institutions can act collectively, and how we build a common understanding on behalf of the wider community. This includes finding answers to difficult questions like: how do we create a shared vocabulary and navigate between neutrality and engagement, between artistic mission and political responsibility. And – if at all possible – how do we give space to individual voices, at both institutional and personal levels?
This session was organised in the frame of AEC's wider journey towards a Framework for ethical decision making in times of conflicts and crises.

introduction and moderation by
Finn Schumacker and
Alessandra Callegari, AEC Office



3. Feedback on the Conference and suggestions for future events

Reflection on the event and proposals for future edition by participants .

moderated by **Sarah Low** and **Linn Eriksen** IRC wg.

4. Feedback on the Conference and suggestions for future events

Reflection on the event and proposals for future edition by participants.

moderated by **Anika Stiawa** and **Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson**



Closing Session

The closing session of the AEC Annual Meeting for IRCs began with a key update from Finn Schumacker, AEC Executive Director, who shared the latest news from the AEC. Following this, the host of the next IRC Meeting in 2027 was announced: participants discovered that the **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow** will welcome the meeting from **8 to 11 September 2027**. The session concluded with closing remarks by Riccardo Ceni, member of the AEC Council.



View the presentation

Watch the session

Special Thanks

The AEC office would like to thank the whole team at the F.A. Bonporti Conservatoire in Trento, in particular the Director Calogero di Liberto, the IRC Massimiliano Mainolfi, the head of administration Giulia Testa, the technical director Sebastiano Beozzo, the admnistrative officer Erica Giacomoni, Barbara Pollini and Virginia Savoia from Orikata and the photographer Lucio Tonina for their kindness, efficiency and fruitful cooperation.











Photo Gallery

















Photo Gallery

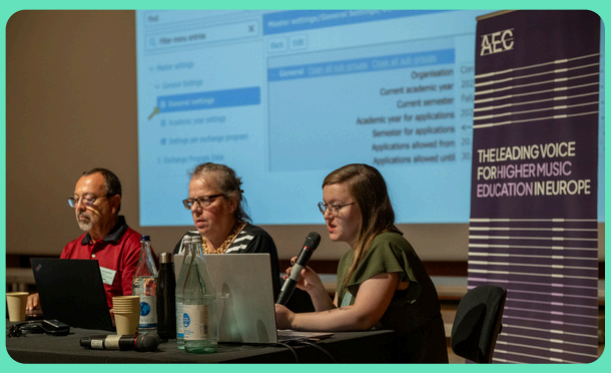















Photo Gallery

















THANK YOU!

WHO

The Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC) is a European cultural and educational network with around 309 member institutions for professional music training in 64 countries. The network is co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme.

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AEC IRC 2026

CONSERVATORIO DI MUSICA
DARIO BONPORTI
Trento | Riva del Garda - Italia

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Common Ground – Diverse Pathways

26th AEC Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators (IRCs) 2026

Wednesday 2 September

12:30 – 13:30 Registrations and Welcome Coffee | **Corridor and Courtyard**

13:30 – 14:30 EASY Workshop - Plenary Session on ESCI and EASY MO | **Auditorium**

14:30 – 16:00 EASY MO System Parallel Simulations - Part 1 | **Auditorium**

14:30 – 16:00 Simulation DLA - Part 1 | **Aula Magna Crispi**

16:00 – 16:30 Networking with Refreshments | **Courtyard**

16:30 – 18:00 EASY MO System Simulations - Part 2 | **Biblioteca Crispi & Aula Insegnanti Crispi**

16:30 – 18:00 Simulation DLA - Part 2| **Aula Magna Crispi**

18:00 – 19:00 Parallel Groups | **Auditorium, Aula Magna Crispi, Aula Arte Crispi**

19:00 Let's celebrate: 10 years of EASY | **Courtyard**

Thursday 3 September

9:00 – 9:30 Registrations and Welcome Coffee | **Corridor and Courtyard**

9:30 – 12:30 Pre-Conference Workshops:

1 – AI in International Relations Offices | **Aula Magna Crispi**

2A – Project Writing for Beginners | **Aula Arte Crispi**

2B – Project Writing Advanced Level | **Aula Insegnanti Crispi**

3 – Lost in Translation? Turning Intercultural Moments into Action | **Biblioteca Crispi**

12:15 Registration Opening with welcome coffee | **Corridor and Courtyard**

12:45 – 13:30 Introductory Session for Newcomers and Buddy System | **Aula Magna Conservatorio**

13:30 – 14:30 Free time for lunch in town

13:45 – 14:15 Tour of the Conservatorio | **Registration Desk**

14:30 – 15:00 Opening Session | **Auditorium**

15:00 – 15:30 AEC Talk 1 - Building Cross Continental Collaborations | **Auditorium** | Consuelo Giglio

15:30 – 15:50 Networking with Refreshments | **Courtyard**

15:50 – 16:10 Speed Dating | **Corridor / small Courtyard**

16:15 – 17:30 Parallel Sessions:

1 – Flexible learning pathways: IN.TUNE's approach to joint educational offers | **Aula Arte Crispi**

2 – AI in HMEIs International Offices | **Aula Magna Conservatorio**

3 – Transition into the Profession | **Aula Insegnanti Crispi**

4 – Hope Beyond Borders: the Ukranian Experience | **Aula Musica Crispi**

5 – Managing BIPs | **Aula Magna Crispi**

6 – Whose Safe Space? Institutional Rules Meet Cultural Reality | **Biblioteca Crispi**

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17:45 – 19:00 Parallel Sessions REPEATED:

1 – Flexible learning pathways: IN.TUNE's approach to joint educational offers | **Aula Arte Crispi**

2 – AI in HMEIs International Offices | **Aula Magna Conservatorio**

3 – Transition into the Profession | **Aula Insegnanti Crispi**

4 – Hope Beyond Borders: the Ukranian Experience | **Aula Musica Crispi**

5 – Managing BIPs | **Aula Magna Crispi**

6 – Whose Safe Space? Institutional Rules Meet Cultural Reality | **Biblioteca Crispi**

19:15 – 20:30 Concert of the Conservatoire's Orchestra | **Auditorium**

21:00 Dinner | **MUSE Science Museum**

Friday 4 September

09:20 Registration continues - Guided Tour of the Conservatoire | **Registration desk**

10:00 – 11:00 AEC Talk 2 - Going Global | **Auditorium** | Adam Lipski

11:00 – 12:00 ESCI+ udpates and Information Forum | **Auditorium**

12:00 – 12:30 Information Market on past and new projects | **Corridor**

12:30 – 13:00 Match Making | **Aula Magna Conservatorio**

13:00 – 14:00 Networking Lunch | **Courtyard**

14:00 – 15:30 Discussion Groups:

1 – No stupid question about Erasmus | **Aula Arte Crispi**

2 – Challenges, integration, financial support and job perspectives of students from enrlargement countries | **Aula Insegnanti Crispi**

3 – Seamless Mobility: information online, respecting deadlines, academic calendars, grading issues, DLAs and course catalogue | **Aula Magna Conservatorio**

4 – Best practice IT tools for admin | **Aula Magna Crispi**

5 – Travel Differently: Exploring Green Mobility in Higher Music Education | **Aula Musica Crispi**

6 – AI in Music Education and Practice | **Biblioteca Crispi**

15:30 – 20:45 Networking Activity | **Riva del Garda**

Saturday 5 September

10:00 – 11:00 AEC Talk 3 - Higher Music Education in EU Enlargement Countries: Cooperation, Resilience and Artistic Freedom | **Auditorium** | Ivana Perkovic

11:00 – 11:30 Networking with Refreshments | **Courtyard**