Minutes of the
2025 General Assembly meeting

Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen

Mozarteum University, Salzburg, Austria
8 November 2025, 14:30-16:30

1. Minutes of the 2024 General Assembly

- The Council presents the minutes of the 16 November 2024 General Assembly for approval.

✓ The voting is done in presence, by raising hands. The GA approved the Minutes of the 16 November 2024 General Assembly.

2. President's Report: Annual Report 2024 and activities to November 2025

- At the 2024 General Assembly in Milan, the AEC Strategy 2030 has been adopted, which updates understanding of a rapidly changing world and sets out objectives for how we, as an organisation, can remain in the driver's seat when developing higher music education in Europe.
- In 2024 many working groups under the ARTEMIS project completed their work and delivered an impressive collection of reports, recommendations, and tools that are now available to all AEC members to support their work on curriculum development, DEI, advocacy, and much more.
- AEC joined the SHIFT eco-certification for cultural networks and after a peer-review and audit, achieved a certification for 2024.
- AEC continued its ongoing advocacy activities, in 2024 particularly following the elections of a new European Parliament and a new European Commission.
- AEC again delivered successful and well attended events in Odense, Ljubljana, Dublin, and Milan, bringing together colleagues from across the membership.

- **<u>AEC Council</u>**

The AEC Council and ExCom continued their work, including through discussions groups to brainstorm on current and future activities. In particular, the Council:

The AEC Council and ExCom continued its work, and throughout the year, in cooperation with the Office, we worked on a range of topics, in particular:

- Finalised a new AEC Strategy 2030 which we look into under point 4 at the agenda
- Established a new Trad-Folk-Global Working Group
- Worked with an advocacy toolkit and template that was part of the Pre-Congress workshop on 6 November 2025
- Approved a Sustainability Policy and Action Plan for AEC
- Published a statement on the conflict in Gaza
- Monitored the 2024 activities, such as:
    - working groups, meetings and events, and in particular the AEC Congress
    - project work, and in particular the work conducted within the framework of the ARTEMIS project
    - advocacy activities, in particular a new advocacy toolkit and template
    - external relations, and communication

- Considered the feedback from the regional meetings as well as general membership matters
- Monitored staff performance and finances

In 2025, the AEC Council consisted of the following representatives

President:	Deborah Kelleher	Ireland
Vice-Presidents:	Elisabeth Gutjahr	Austria
	Jeffrey Sharkey	United Kingdom
Secretary General:	Ivana Perković	Serbia
Council members:	Bruno Pereira	Portugal
	Claire Michon	France
	Małgorzata Sternal	Poland
	Keld Hosbond	Denmark
	Riccardo Ceni	Italy
	Barbara Maria Willi	Czech Republic
	Gyula Fekete	Hungary
	Jan Philipp Sprick	Germany
Co-opted:	Anothai Nitibhon	Thailand
	Abra Bush	United States
	Miranda Harmer/	EPASA
	Monica Vejgaard	EPASA

AEC Office

The AEC office team has continued its high level of activity and commitment:

- During 2025, the team was composed of 7 permanent members, supported by two interns.
- The collaboration continued with AEC former Director Stefan Gies, who served as Senior Advisor.
- AEC Network and Finance Manager, Alfonso Guerra has decided to leave AEC after 6 years.

AEC office activities for 2025 included:

- Preparing and managing our four annual events with an ever increasing numbers of participants.
- Working in collaboration with our close partners on advocacy engaging in dialogue with the European Commission on topics related to Artistic Research, STEM/STEAM, evaluation of the big European funding programmes, and introducing the new Members of the European Parliament. AEC participated in the European Bauhaus Festival and supported advocacy initiatives such as the Cultural Deal for Europe and the State of Culture.
- Supporting members threatened by autocratic regimes, and together with Uniarts Helsinki we continued our financial support to our members in Ukraine.
- Supporting various ARTEMIS WGs and TFs: ensuring that the WGs is on track, organising workshops, cluster meetings, seminars, coordinating the important changes in the EASY online mobility system which occurred this year and preparing a manual, sending out surveys and analysing results, communicating about the project and its progress

- Joining the SHIFT eco-certificate pilot project with the aim to make the operations of the AEC greener and more sustainable, including our event.
- Continued support to EPASA

Advocacy

- Advocacy is central to AEC's activities, and 2025 has been particularly busy post-European elections.
- New legislative term (lasting 5 years) coincides with EU budget negotiations (lasting 7 years).
- Political priorities have shifted: focus is now on competitiveness, defence, resilience, and regulatory simplification.
- The proposed multiannual budget reflects these priorities.
- Emergence of a Culture Compass guiding EU cultural policy.

At a European policy level, AEC supports the demand for:

- Better protection and fair remuneration for artists.
- Effective implementation of the AI Directive.
- Improved mobility for artists and students
- Collaboration with partners (Culture Action Europe, ELIA, EMC) along two main lines: Demonstrate how culture and education contribute to major EU agendas like competitiveness and defence; Emphasize that culture and education are more than skills and digital consumption, contributing to cohesion, well-being, and human value.

AEC stresses the importance of speaking with a stronger voice to defend culture and education.

Further details on advocacy will follow after Linda's update on other 2025 activities.

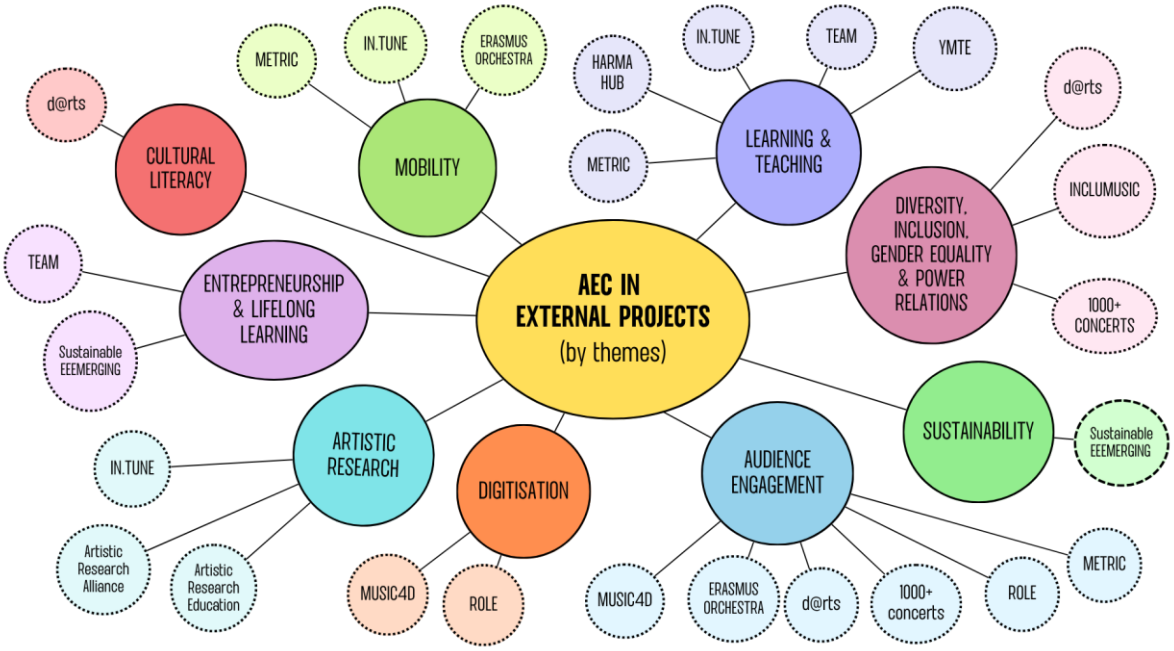
AEC's strategic objectives under "Promoting excellence, quality and diversity"

AEC will:

- Promote the continued development and integration of digital tools in the institutions' curricula and operations
- Strengthen capacity building
- Advocate for close collaboration with students, student organisations and society stakeholders
- Support quality enhancement and its ongoing development
-

Projects in which AEC is involved:

In addition to the projects below a new Creative Europe Network Grant (– i.e. the same type of grant that funded the ARTEMIS project) has been granted to the AEC for the next 3 years.



AEC Working Groups 2025

1. International Relations Coordinators – IRCs Working Group
2. Technical group: EASY Mobility Online Task Force
3. European Platform for Artistic Research in Music - EPARM Working Group
4. Pop and Jazz Platform - PJP Working Group
5. Traditional, Folk and Global Music - TFG Working Group
6. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – DEI Panel of Experts
7. Music, Society and Sustainability Working Group
8. Education and Profession Working Group
9. Special Education Needs Working Group
10. Digitisation Working Group

Key themes AEC addressed in 2025:

- How language shapes artistic identity, repertoire choices and pedagogy approaches in jazz and popular music education during the Pop and Jazz Platform (PJP) in Pamplona.
- Artistic research drawing on new relationships, different musical fields or contexts, as well as the practical dimensions of co-created artistic research, during the European Platform for Artistic Research in Music (EPARM) in Tallin.
- Future of mobility and internationalization during the 25th International Relations Coordinators (IRC) meeting in Budapest. The AEC also submitted a Position Paper in October, to inform a consultation about the European Commission on the Digitization of Erasmus+ procedures, so it advocates for inclusive and tailor made solutions for our sector.

- Support teaching staff members to supervise artistic research projects with the initiative Artistic Research Education (ARE)

Continuous development opportunities for the members:

- A call has been launched for institution interested in hosting a workshop on DEI as well as Power Relations and Special Education Needs.
- A call to participate in the Artists as Teachers seminars, which is designed to enable teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching and coaching conservatoire students.
- A mentorship program for female and non-binary emerging musicians, to support them entering the music profession sector.

AEC also financially supports EPASA, the European Performing Arts Association.

AEC looking ahead

- AEC is evolving to meet the changing music ecosystem and is preparing several new initiatives.
- Lifelong Learning Platform: AEC will offer Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for leaders, staff, teachers, and emerging artists; currently mapping projects and analyzing needs for a sustainable model.
- Digitisation & Data: A new working group will explore how AI and data collection can support benchmarking, strategic planning, and advocacy for Higher Music Education Institutions.
- Event Structure Review: The AEC Council is evaluating whether current events meet the needs of all members, considering visibility, diversity, and balance between breadth and depth; potential changes may start with the 2028 cycle.
- Members are encouraged to provide feedback on events and initiatives.

Update on AEC's communication initiatives and challenges

New Communication Strategy is being drafted for 2030 based on analysis of trends and opportunities, such as:

- Funding transitions, social polarisation, risks and opportunities linked to AI
- Recognition of shifts in Europe's cultural and educational landscape
- Need to move beyond education defined only by *skills* towards stronger narratives
- Aim to help the sector anticipate change rather than react to it

Current reach of AEC's communication channels

- Facebook: 5,100 followers
- LinkedIn: 2,366 followers
- Instagram: 1,970 followers
- Newsletter: 3,900+ subscribers
- Events: 1,000+ attendees per year

Current challenges:

- Large volume of publications and outputs from past initiatives
- Fragmented communication channels
- Inconsistent terminology and visual identity

- Reduced clarity, coherence, and visibility
- Need to improve dialogue and engagement

Looking ahead:

- AEC as a living, connected network
- Increased exchange of stories, knowledge, and impact among members
- Cohesive narrative and visual identity at national, European, and global levels
- Clear, accessible, values-driven communication
- Strategy as a compass, not a fixed roadmap
- Adoption of an antifragile mindset

AEC Priorities from 2025 to 2030:

1) **Communication for Change** – turning advocacy into collective action. Narrative themes can include access to music education, student empowerment, stable funding, advocacy for the rights of artists, and artistic/academic freedom for a democratic society.
2) **Inclusivity and Language** – communicating so that everyone feels seen and respected. Ensure communication is inclusive and accessible, promote multilingual visibility and showcase different voices.
3) **AI and the Human Voice** - using technology ethically, without losing humanity. Develop ethical AI use guidelines aligned with the EU AI Act and Creative Europe principles, promote transparency, offer peer-learning and training on ethical use of AI.
4) **Learning culture** – building capacity across the network through the AEC Comms Exchange (a peer-to-peer network for communication professionals within the AEC), to share ethical templates, best practices, crisis management plans, and to empower smaller institutions through collective knowledge.

The Network at the centre

Creation of a peer-to-peer exchange group for communication professionals as a pace to share questions, experiences, and knowledge in order to learn through collective practice

Key Milestones

- Late 2025: Launch of AEC Comms Exchange
- End 2025: Final Communication Strategy adopted
- Spring 2026: New AEC visual identity launched
- End 2026: Inclusive Language Charter published
- 2027–2030: Annual learning reports and expanded campaigns and storytelling initiatives

3. Elections to the Executive Committee and Council

3.1 Appointment of Returning officers

The Council recommends Thora Einarsdottir from Iceland University of the Arts and Matthias Hermann from HMDK Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart as returning officers for 2025.

✓ The Returning officers have been endorsed by the GA by raising hands.

3.2 Presentation of the candidates for the Executive Committee

This year, the President and the two Vice-Presidents are finishing their first term and are all applying for a second term. Thus, there are three vacant seats on ExCom and we have received these three applications:

- Deborah Kelleher
- Jeffrey Sharkey
- Ivana Perkovic

Elisabeth Gutjahr invites the returning officer Thora Einarsdottir to the stage to explain the voting procedures.
In order to be elected, the candidates need to reach the absolute majority of voters present or represented. As there are 118 registered voters, each candidate needs 60 votes to be elected.

✓ The voting ballot is sent out. For results, see the item 5.

4. AEC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy 2030

- The AEC DEI Policy 2030 was developed to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion principles are consistently and visibly integrated into the organisation's daily work, long-term development, and decision-making processes. This policy aligns with the broader vision and mission of the AEC, as well as the objectives of the Creative Europe Programme for 2025–2028.

- The DEI Policy 2030 is built on shared values around diversity, inclusion, equity, accessibility, and power relations.

- Strategic Guidance: It provides recommendations to embed DEI in structures, procedures, working culture, recruitment, and selection processes.

- Recruitment Focus: Ensures equitable, transparent, and welcoming participation in Working Groups, Office Team, and Council.

Action Areas:

- Inclusive recruitment and representation
- Embedding equity in project delivery
- Reflecting DEI in communications and culture
- Training beyond bias awareness
- Data collection, reporting, and transparency
- Community engagement and external partnerships
- Critical reflection on power and privilege

✓ The AEC DEI Policy 2030 has been endorsed by raising hands.

5. Elections to the Executive Committee and Council

5.1 Elections to the Executive Committee: Announcement of the election results for the vacant seats on the Executive Committee

The results for the AEC Executive Committee elections are announced. The candidates that passed the threshold of 60 votes, which is the majority of the registered votes, have been elected to the Executive Committee.
Thora Einarsdottir comes on stage, while Ashkhen shares the screen with the results.

Elisabeth Gutjahr reads the results:

- Deborah Kelleher received 96 votes
- Jeffrey Sharkey received 90 votes
- Ivana Perković received 89 votes

✓ Deborah Kelleher, Jeffrey Sharkey and Ivana Perković are thus re-elected to the Executive Committee.

5.2 Elections to the Council: Presentation of the candidates for the Council

There are four vacant seats and four applications were received from

- Riccardo Ceni, applying for the second term
- Sandrine Desmurs, applying for the first term
- Keld Hosbond, applying for the second term
- Vicent Sanchis Caparrós, applying for the first term

In order to be elected, the candidates need to reach the absolute majority of voters present or represented. As there are 118 registered voters, each candidate needs 60 votes to be elected.

✓ The voting ballot is sent out. For results, see the item 9.

6. Financial report of the Secretary General

2024 has been a positive year for AEC's financial situation. Both overall income and expenditure have increased compared to 2023. The main sources of income remained unchanged: membership fees, European Commission subsidies, and event registration fees. On the expenditure side, staff costs, project-related costs, and costs related to events, travel, and office operations continued to represent the largest shares. As a result, AEC ended the year with a surplus of 5.202,00 EUR, bringing the total reserves to over 107.000,00 EUR.

Annual Accounts for 2024 (for information)
The Secretary General Ivana Perković informs that the full annual accounts for 2024 have been checked by the following two external auditors: Dimitrios Marinos, from the Athens Conservatoire College of Music (appointed for 2023 and 2024) and Diana Mos, from the National University of Music in Bucharest (appointed for 2024 and 2025).

They both recommended approval of the 2024 Accounts. Ivana Perković expresses gratitude for their work.
The Annual Accounts for 2024 had been approved approved through an online vote: there were 90 votes casted, out of which 85 in favour and 5 abstentions.

Proposed membership fees for 2026

- In 2026, the membership fees are indexed at 2%.
- As in previous years, a discount of 5% will be applied to the figures listed in the document, if the payment to AEC is made before 01/04/2026.
- A discount is offered to member institutions who are member of both AEC and ELIA.

Forecast outturn 2025

The expected result for 2025 is € 1.212.509,65 €

Income 2025

- Membership fees have increased compared to 2024, in line with the indexation rate of 2.5%;
- Event fees have decreased due to limitations on the number of participants at the events in 2025;
- Project income has decreased, in connection with the activities of the new Creative Europe Network project planned for this year;
- Regarding EASY, the income has slightly decreased, reflecting the number of members transitioning to the new EASY MO system;
- The amount reimbursed by MusiQuE to AEC for staff and overhead costs has increased compared to 2024.

Expenditures 2025

- Staff costs have increased compared to 2024, due to the implementation of a new salary scale;
- Event costs have increased in line with the volume of participations and the locations of the events;
- Office costs have decreased, and other travel costs have remained stable;
- Creative Europe Network project expenses have decreased, whereas other project-related costs have slightly increased;
- Finally, the EASY service fee will increase compared to 2024.

Proposed budget for 2026

Ivana Perković presents the proposed budget which shows a result of over 6.000 €.

Income of 2026

- An inflation rate of 2% should apply to membership fees in 2026;
- The income from event fees is expected to remain stable in 2026;
- Regarding project, the second instalment from the Creative Europe Network grant has been allocated. All other project funds should decrease;
- The income from EASY is expected to increase, and the income from METRIC coordination should remain the same level as in 2025.

Expenditure 2026

- Staff costs are expected to increase slightly;
- Event and office costs are expected to increase, while other travel costs should remain stable;

- Project expenses are expected to rise in line with the activities of the Creative Europe Network project planned for 2026;
- EASY expenditure is expected to increase, as already announced at the last IRC Meeting in September.

Appointment of two auditors for the 2025 accounts

- The Council suggests to the GA Diana Mos from the National University of Music Bucharest and Miren Iñarga Echevarria from Musikene - Centro Superior de Música del País Vasco as external auditors for the 2025 accounts.

6. Voting on the financial report of the Secretary General

✓ Dimitrios Marinos, from the Athens Conservatoire College of Music (appointed for 2023 and 2024) and Diana Mos, from the National University of Music in Bucharest (appointed for 2024 and 2025) have both recommended approval of the 2024 accounts.
✓ The General Assembly approves the proposed membership fee levels for 2026 by raising hands.
✓ The General Assembly approves the forecast outturn 2025 by raising hands.
✓ The General Assembly approves the proposed budget for 2026 by raising hands.
✓ The General Assembly approves, by raising hands, the appointment of Diana Mos, National University of Music Bucharest (since 2024), and Miren Iñarga Echevarria, Musikene - Centro Superior de Música del País Vasco, as external auditors for the 2025 annual accounts.

7. Matters related to the European subject-specific quality assurance agency for music, MusiQuE

- MusiQuE presented its 2025 activities including 4 programme accreditations (Netherlands, Thailand, Switzerland, Germany), 1 micro-credentials accreditation (Netherlands), 3 Quality Enhancement Reviews (Thailand, Austria, Switzerland), 1 pre-college music education review (Qatar), 3 ongoing Critical Friend Reviews (Netherlands, Sweden, Singapore) and 1 completed Critical Friend Review (Belgium).
- Other MusiQuE activities include Peer-Reviewers Trainings at SEADOM 2025 and AEC Congress 2025, building on previous trainings in Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok and further developing role-play and report-writing components, as well as a successful pre-college training in Salzburg. MusiQuE also continues updating its standards, with revised Standards for Pre-college Music Education and Classroom Music Teacher Education (published January 2025) and new standards in development for micro-credentials and for reviews of university alliances in music and arts.
- MusiQuE itself went through a review by ENQA

Upcoming changes in MusiQuE board:

- **Members proposed by AEC:**
  - Jacques Moreau (Chair)
  - Lies Colman (Secretary and Treasurer)
  - Orla McDonagh
  - Ankna Arockiam (Student member) is replaced by Tymon Zgorzelski
- **Members proposed by EAS:**

- Gerhard Stammer
- Asbjorn Keiding

- **Members proposed by Pearle:**
  - Iiris Lehtonen
- **Member proposed by EMU:**
  - Michaela Hahn replaced by Csilla Gal

8. Membership matters

The following institutions have been accepted as Active Members during 2025:

- Conservatorio Antonio Buzzolla in Adria (Italy)
- Accademia Nazionale del Jazz in Sienna (Italy)
- Hochschule für Musik Mainz (Germany)
- H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University (Ukraine)

The following institutions have been accepted as Associate Members:

- Chinese University of Hong Kong (China)
- Sharjah Performing Arts Academy (UAE)
- Rice University, Shepherd School of Music (USA)

The following institutions have been re-admitted to the network:

- Manhattan School of Music (USA)
- Université Antonine (Lebanon)
- Communication University of Zhejiang (China)
- Conservatorio Lorenzo Perosi in Campobasso (Italy)

The following institutions have withdrawn their membership:

- Qatar Music Academy (Qatar)
- Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi in Como (Italy)
- Conservatorio Claudio Monteverdi in Cremona (Italy)
- Conservatorio Superior de Música Andrés de Vandelvira in Jaén (Spain)

Memberships with 2 years of non-payment of the membership fee are expired. The following memberships have been expired in 2025:

- New England Conservatory in Boston (USA)
- BAU Bahçeşehir University Conservatory (Turkey)
- Conservatorio di Reggio Emilia e Castelnovo ne' Monti (Italy)

AEC ends 2025 with 314 members (271 Active members and 43 Associate members), setting a new milestone within the AEC community.

A member of the GA raised a concern regarding the decision to waive the AEC membership fee for the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. It was explained that the Executive Committee of the Council had approved the waiver under the authority delegated to it by the AEC Constitution, continuing the Council's decision to waive the fee in the previous year. The Chair agreed that the member's objection to the decision would be formally recorded in the minutes, as reflected here.

9. Announcement of the Council election

AEC Secretary General Jeffrey Sharkey asks Ashkhen Fixova to share the screen with the results and announces the candidates who reached the absolute majority of the votes cast and were elected as Council members:

✓ The AEC GA elects Riccardo Ceni, Sandrine Desmurs, Keld Hosbond and Vicent Sanchis Caparrós as new AEC Council members.

The returning officer Matthias Hermann confirms the information provided by the voting software and announced by the Secretary General of the AEC Council.

10. Next Congress and GA

- 2026: Hamburg