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Dear colleagues,

The AEC has great pleasure in inviting you to the next edition of

**The AEC Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators in
European Institutions for Higher Music Education (IRCs meeting)**

which will take place at the

**Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
United Kingdom, 13-16 September 2018**

What for and for whom?

The Annual Meeting for IRCs is meant for administrative and/or teaching staff members in conservatoires who deal with international relations and European programmes (such as ERASMUS+). The meeting is open also to students interested in the international dimension of their learning. During the meetings, relevant topics in the field of mobility and international cooperation are discussed in plenary sessions, workshops, discussion fora and parallel sessions. The meeting is also a unique platform for networking at European level: participants have the opportunity to develop relations with fellow IRCs, meet project partners and potential partner institutions and show projects and activities that have been developed within their home institution.

Beyond Europe: bringing the world to our institutions

Higher music education is currently facing unprecedented changes as today's graduates need extended skills, awareness, and knowledge to find their personal and professional way into a complex and interconnected world. The international dimension is no more an optional feature of the learning experience but has become a key factor for a successful career and the development of a mindful global citizenship. Accordingly, the focus of internationalization in higher music education institutions has shifted towards the core element of their provision, the **curriculum**. The curriculum connects the broader institutional strategy with the student experience, thus playing a paramount role in the success or failure of the institution's internationalization agenda as well as on the global employment opportunities of future professional musicians. What it means and how it can be achieved is not always addressed as strategically as it should.

This theme will be explored in the 2018 edition of the AEC Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators, taking place in Birmingham on 13-16 September, as the first of a four-year pattern supported by the EU Creative Europe Programme within the **AEC - Strengthening Music in Society** project. The international relations coordinators of the AEC are involved in the project strand on *internationalization and transnational mobility aimed at helping music students and teachers to internationalize their careers and activities*. The renewed and more powerful information network created with the support of the AEC's FULL SCORE Project (2014-2017) provided a supporting structure for IRCs combining *capacity-building sessions* - in the form of pre-conference seminars for continuing professional development - with *online tools* such as the AEC website database, the AEC Job Vacancy Platform and the European Online Application System for Mobility (EASY). In line with this well established format, the IRCs Meeting 2018 will feature the following 3 pre-conference activities:

- **EASY Workshop** (Thursday 14:00 - 18:00) - *Presentation and live simulations in groups*. This year, the workshop will be held by the members of the EASY task force with the support of the IT company Dreamapply. After an introduction about the system, group members will meet old and new users in breakout groups in order to make step-by-step simulations and reply to questions. This workshop is free of charge and open to all institutions. A short plenary session dedicated to updates on EASY will also take place during the conference.
- **Seminar I on Internationalization of Curricula** aims at connecting theory and practice in internationalizing the curriculum in higher music education institutions. An extensive review of the available tools, case studies and a group assignment will provide valuable insights into the concept of internationalization of the curriculum to participants, providing guidance to managers and administrative staff interested in the internationalization of their curricula.
- **Seminar II on Fundraising** - *"Making sweet music together: building enduring relationships with donors, funders and volunteers"* is meant as a practical guide to fundraising for Conservatoires at all stages of development, featuring a panel of industry experts from the cultural and higher education sectors. Through a variety of scenarios and case studies this interactive workshop will show participants how fundraising connects with all other institutional activities, and look at the potential to develop philanthropic giving at international level.

Moving from last year's theme "Diversity: independently together", symbolically debated in the furthest location the IRCs Meeting has ever taken place, this year contributions will look even further to the Far East, where countries like China (but not only) are, in their turn, shaping and influencing the present and the future of European HMEI's in terms of composition of the student body, curricula, teaching methods, projects, international collaborations and ways of perceiving the music profession as a whole. How are we facing this situation? What are the cultural implications involved? What are the ethical challenges that managers, administrators, teachers and students have to face when looking "beyond Europe"? How do we "bring the world to our institutions"? How can our institutions "embrace the world" when the political situation goes towards the (BR) EXIT?

The keynote speaker **Dandan Zhu, International Relations Coordinator at Shanghai Conservatoire** will kick off our journey beyond Europe: how did music education in China has evolved in the recent years? What is the relationship between Chinese students and European

conservatoires? How did the perception change in the years, from the Chinese perspective? How is China influencing the global music education market?

Opportunities to “grab a coffee and think” together will not be missing, as well as the longstanding singing tradition which will see the participants singing together a traditional English song. Two well established projects between Europe and Asia - Malmoe with Vietnam and Copenhagen with China - will be presented as *best practices* and will trigger group discussion on ethical challenges in international and intercultural collaborations. We will finally come back to Europe to hear from the coordinating and participating institutions of the many strategic partnership and other kind of projects and initiatives related to the internationalization of curricula: what have been the challenges of these projects? How did the results impact the curricula of the involved institutions? how can they have a potential external impact on institutions Are the tools developed within these projects/initiatives relevant for other institutions?

Last but not least, all participants will “bring their world to their international colleagues” during the Information Market, where the possibility of presenting projects and activities of international relevance will be given to the audience (please subscribe for this via the registration form) and during the closing *Networking with internationally shared refreshments* sessions, where all participants will be invited to bring typical food and drinks from their country! Finally, on Sunday we will enjoy a full networking day while discovering Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare's birthplace, with a special guided tour at the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Looking forward to meeting you again...beyond Europe!

Practical information and procedures to attend the meeting

Further information, such as the programme of the meeting, information on travel, accommodation and participant fee payment, as well as the links to the online registration can be found at www.aec-music.eu/irc2018

We are very much looking forward to seeing you in Birmingham in September!

Kind regards,

The AEC Office Team and the IRCs working Group