

43rd AEC ANNUAL CONGRESS and GENERAL ASSEMBLY

10-12 November 2016

Diversity, Identity and Inclusion

The title of this year's AEC Congress refers to some crucial social and political challenges of our times: diversity, identity and inclusion are global issues the whole society is reflecting upon in the delicate historical moment we are living. The migration streams, the rise of populist movements, the terrorist threats and a growing scepticism about the idea of a united Europe are having an impact on our daily life as individual, musicians, teachers and institutions.

Music - as art and culture in general - is a crucial part of our identities. The definition of our own *identity* is fundamental to build bridges, accept *diversities* and act towards their *inclusion*. During the AEC Annual Congress 2016 in Gothenburg we would like to trigger a debate on the impact of these concepts and of the above mentioned global trends on the higher music education sector.

The AEC has already started the reflection on these themes in the past years while fulfilling the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan and defining the new Strategic Plan 2016-20, which is now at the beginning of its implementation. This reflection is taking place as well in the framework of the FULL SCORE project which is now approaching its third and final year. In particular, this year Congress is meant as the first step in developing a *Road Map* for Conservatoires, a virtual path established by the *AEC Position Paper on the European Agenda for Music* which came up as a result of the consultation among AEC, EAS (European Association for Music in Schools) and EMU (European Music School Union) members.

The *Road Map* designed for the 2016 AEC Congress gives two main indications to Conservatoires to find and define their identity, acknowledge diversity and promote inclusion in our society: *Looking Ahead* and *Looking Around*. When "looking ahead", we will focus on activities related to supporting the music students achievements towards a professional career. Conservatoire leaders will be informed and will be asked to give inputs about the AEC work in the co-creation of a future Platform for Learning and Teaching, in the development of the discourse about Audience Engagement, in the revision of the AEC Learning Outcomes and in the activities related to Entrepreneurship and Internationalization. When "looking around" we will reflect on opening ourselves towards variety and diversity by engaging in discussions about world music, gender and refugee issues, and by exploring new approaches how to give a voice to the young generation. This "looking ahead - looking around" exercise will be complemented by information about services offered by the AEC to its members to support their activity: the AEC-U-Multirank pilot project, the MusiQuE - Music Quality Enhancement Agency (now officially registered on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education EQAR) and the Student Research Projects Database.

You are warmly invited to join us in Gothenburg to join the AEC journey towards the definition of the role of the modern Conservatoires in our society.