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FINAL REPORT

PRE-COLLEGE EDUCATION IN EUROPE

POLIFONIA PRE-COLLEGE WORKING GROUP
## CONTENTS

1. **General introduction**  
2. **A definition of Pre-college Music Education**  
3. **Literature study “Preparing young musicians for professional training: what does scientific research tell us?”**  
4. **European survey on the preparation of students for and admission procedures to the higher music education level**  
   - Entrance tests  
   - Other requirements for admission  
   - What kind of music education did the applicant students receive prior to their admission?  
   - Some preliminary conclusions  
5. **National pre-college systems: interesting examples from around Europe**  
   - Systems for pre-college music education  
   - Some preliminary conclusions from the site visits  
6. **Pre-college Music Education systems in Europe: a mapping exercise**  
   - Descriptions of national pre-college music education systems  
   - Music Schools in Europe  
7. **A set of competences for Pre-college Music Education**  
   - Introduction  
   - Practical (skill-based) outcomes  
   - Theoretical (knowledge-based) outcomes  
   - Generic outcomes  
8. **General conclusions**  
9. **Recommendations and further steps to be undertaken**  
   - Local, regional and national governments and policy makers in education and culture  
   - Higher music education institutions  
   - Institutions and providers of pre-college level music education  
   - Institutions for general education at the primary and secondary level  
   - The European Commission  
10. **Position statement “Investing in the Quality of Tomorrow’s Music in Europe”**  

**Appendices**  
**Appendix A**  
- Links to site visit reports and other information  
**Appendix B**  
- Questionnaire on admission procedures to higher music education
1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The ERASMUS Thematic Network for Music "Polifonia", the largest European project on professional music training to date, involved 67 organisations in professional music training and the music profession from 32 European countries. It engaged 30 experts in 5 connected working groups in an intensive 3-year work programme from September 2004 – October 2007. The project¹, which was coordinated jointly by the Malmö Academy of Music – Lund University and the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC), received support from the European Union within the framework of the ERASMUS Programme. The aims of the project were:

1. To study issues connected to the Bologna Declaration process, such as the development of learning outcomes for 1st (Bachelor), 2nd (Master) and 3rd cycle studies through the "Tuning" methodology², the use of credit point systems, curriculum development, mobility of students and teachers, and quality assurance in the field of music in higher education.

2. To collect information on levels in music education other than the 1st (Bachelor) and the 2nd (Master) study cycles, in particular on pre-college training and 3rd cycle (Doctorate/PhD) studies in the field of music.

3. To explore international trends and changes in the music profession and their implications for professional music training.

It may seem unexpected to find a chapter about the pre-college level as part of a project that focuses on higher education. But there are good reasons to include pre-college education in the research on the current situation of professional music training in European higher education.

Professional musicians usually start learning music at a very young age and continue being active as musicians until or even after they retire. This makes music one of the most evident examples of lifelong learning and a subject area distinguishing itself in this sense from many other disciplines in higher education. Therefore, for professional music training institutions at the higher education level, it is essential that the pre-college level prepares students adequately for entering the higher education level. Without this preparation, students would not be able to meet the current high qualitative standards in higher music education institutions and, even more importantly, the fierce and ever-increasing competition in the music profession.

Until now, it has been commonly accepted among musicians and policy makers that this preparatory phase to higher music education was important and required support. This understanding, however, is becoming increasingly under pressure with national governments focusing mostly on the higher educational levels of professional training due to the Bologna process developments, in particular the implementation of the 3-cycle (Bachelor/Master/3rd cycle) structure. As a result, in some European countries, where professional music training was organised as a continuum starting with training at a young age up to a first professional qualification within one continuous structure, the pre-higher education levels in music have been faced with many difficulties. In addition, it seems

¹ More information about the ERASMUS Thematic Network for Music "Polifonia" can be found at www.polifonia-tn.org
² For more information about the "Tuning" methodology please see http://www.tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=172&Itemid=205
that the position of music in primary and secondary general education is weakening as well: this is another example of a lack of understanding for the necessity of a well developed pre-college music education system.

In order to assist institutions in their debates with policy makers in (higher) education and in local, regional and national governments on the necessity of a well organised pre-college system in music, the AEC decided to make pre-college training a priority in the “Polifonia” project. Through a Europe-wide investigation, arguments and examples of good practice were to be developed that could be helpful in discussions on music education for young people. A “Polifonia” pre-college working group was formed to work on this subject, which consisted of the following experts:

Philippe Dinkel [chair] - Conservatoire de Musique de Genève
Päivi Arjas - Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences, School of Music
Javier Duque - Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, Barcelona
Gábor Eckhardt - Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Budapest
Leila Faraut - Conservatoire de Strasbourg
Arthur Gieles - Koninklijk Conservatorium, Den Haag
Patricia Keir - Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cardiff

The group was supported by the following members of the AEC office staff: Edith Haverkamp, Eleonoo Tchernoff, Ester Tomasi, Friederike Vogel and Fieke Werner.

Meetings of the working group took place in Lisbon (June 2005), Lyon (October 2005), Ljubljana (March 2006), Prague (June 2006), Utrecht (March 2007), Budapest (May 2007) and Malmö (June 2007).

The investigation had the following components:

- Firstly, in order to identify scientific evidence for the fact that musicians have to start learning an instrument at a young age in order to reach a sufficient level for the music profession, an important question in the investigation was:

  “Does research exist on how young musicians learn that proves that it is really necessary to start early in music and why? Do differences in subjects/instruments exist?”

  A literature study was conducted of existing research supporting the abovementioned opinion and giving insight in how young musicians learn from a psychological, sociological, pedagogical and physical perspective [see chapter 3].

- Secondly, a European-wide mapping exercise was undertaken to describe systems and approaches in pre-college training. This was not only done to identify examples of good practice, but also to gain insight into the current situation in pre-college training in the various European countries
and to collect information that would be helpful for higher music education institutions in the recruitment and admission of future students. Especially when institutions are faced with applications from foreign students (this is rather common in higher music education, even for the 1st cycle in higher education), they often have a lack of information about the educational background of the student, which sometimes can lead to problems with the recognition of prior learning or with the admission procedures. Therefore, the following question was formulated:

“Where and how have students in higher music education been prepared for admission?”

In some countries training units for young students exist within institutions for higher music education, in others preparatory years are offered to young talented musicians who do not yet meet the level of admission to the higher education level. Other countries have well-developed systems of music schools operating within or outside the general (compulsory) education system. However organised, some connection between pre-college training and higher music education is always present and in order to improve the quality of the outcomes in both levels of music education, a good relationship between these two educational levels is essential.

This mapping exercise has resulted in a set of descriptions of national systems for pre-college music training in 26 European countries. A more in-depth investigation was held on music schools in Europe in cooperation with the European Music School Union – EMU [see chapter 6]. In addition, a survey was also circulated among a wide range of European higher music education institutions, in which they were asked to provide information on how their first year students were prepared for admission [see chapter 4].

- In order to create a link with the work done in the “Tuning” component of “Polifonia”, in which competences and learning outcomes were developed to act as reference points for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle studies in music\(^3\), the learning outcomes approach promoted by “Tuning” was also addressed by the pre-college working group. Therefore, the third and final question for the investigation was:

“What kind of admission procedures and standards exist and are these connected to or relevant / compatible with the use of learning outcomes in the 1st and 2nd cycle?”

As an answer to this question, the pre-college working group formulated a set of competences that can be used by pre-college music institutions for the preparation of their students for the higher education level and that are connected to the learning outcomes for the 1st cycle [see chapter 7].

\(^3\) For more information about the work done by the Tuning working group in the “Polifonia” project, please visit www.polifonia-tn.org/tuning.
Throughout the project, the pre-college working group gathered feedback from music institutions, music students and music professionals through questionnaires, interviews and site visits (see chapter 5). The group would like to extend its sincere gratitude to all those that have so generously shared information about this complex, but fascinating issue.
A DEFINITION OF PRE-COLLEGE MUSIC EDUCATION

On the basis of the findings of the project and the experiences of working group members in the field, “pre-college music education” can be defined as follows:

Pre-college music education is a term used to describe the specific phase within music education focused on the preparation of students for the entrance examination of higher music education institutions in order to become a professional musician.

When further developed, the definition can take into account the following aspects:

Pre-college Music Education

1. is in content the professional base on which students further develop their musical and instrumental skills;

2. takes place either in music schools and schools on primary and secondary level, or other training institutions within an organized and structured (curricula-oriented) context;

3. or in a “non-formal” setting, i.e. any organized educational activity outside the established formal system (e.g. private tuition);

4. or in “informal” settings (e.g. in bands or through self study);

5. is funded in various ways, but most commonly supported by public money.

Pre-college Music Education additionally is of great value to young people without the ambition to become professional musicians as it:

- helps young people to develop the participation in and the understanding of culture and the music and arts, which will enrich their daily lives;

- develops creative, personal and interpersonal skills that can be essential transferable skills for workers in a knowledge-based society, as referred to in the “The Economy of Culture in Europe” study⁴;

⁴ “Study on the cultural economy in Europe” – study DG EAC 03/05 executed by the partnership KEA European Affairs, Media Group (Turku School of Economics) and MKW Wirtschaftsforschung GmbH (September 2006)
• provides social cohesion and intercultural understanding, which is essential for a Europe built on cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue;

• develops the key competence “cultural expression and awareness” as one of 8 key competencies each European citizen should possess to be able to function in a knowledge-based society, as mentioned in the “Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning”\textsuperscript{5}.

Common experiences in music education indicate that music training should be started at an early stage, especially for those wanting to become professional musicians. With the aim to approach this issue also from a scientific angle, a literature study was commissioned. Entitled “Preparing young musicians for professional training: what does scientific research tell us?”, this study was undertaken by Fieke Werner. The following research questions were addressed:

1. *Should children start early with music lessons in order to become professional musicians? Is there a certain age at which children should ideally begin?*

   As the research has shown, it is clear it is indeed desirable to start early with music lessons if one wants to reach a professional level of musical performance. The majority of the children in the different studies started before the age of nine, most of them were even younger. Brain research has also shown that starting with music education before the age of approximately seven results in changes in the brain as the plasticity of the brain is largest in early childhood.

2. *Are there physical or psychological barriers that prevent starting with music lessons before the age of four?*

   This question has already been partly answered by the answer to the first question. All reviewed research suggests that it is best that children start with music lessons at the age of nine latest, but preferably around the age of seven or before.

3. *Are there other important - external - variables that influence the level of musical expertise reached by a person?*

   Research findings indicate there are indeed such external variables. Besides the internal factors of talent and motivation, examples such of factors are support from parents and siblings, teachers and peers, the amount of accumulated practice hours and the way of practising.

4. *Is there a difference between popular musicians and classical musicians in their early development?*

   When addressing any differences between popular and classical musicians in their early development, it becomes evident the majority of the studies about musical development has focused on classical musicians. Nevertheless, even the limited amount of search on popular musicians seems to indicate there are some differences in ways young popular and classical musician learn.

5. *Is there a relation between musicality, making music and intelligence and/or other general developmental skills (social, emotional)?*

   Studies show that music education has a positive influence on spatial-reasoning skills and IQ-scores of children. With regards to the apparent influence of music on literary skills more research is needed, because the available studies do not seem to provide a clear picture yet.

The complete literature study can be found at: www.polifonia-tn.org/literaturestudyprecollege.
To be able to survive in the highly competitive global music scene, training for the music profession requires long and intense preparation as well as certain personal and physical predispositions of the student. Professional music training is also very expensive as in most cases it uses one-to-one tuition or training in small groups, requiring an intensive and close relationship between teachers and students. In order to guarantee a balance between the final outcomes for the student and the resources being invested by the training institution, music students are in the majority of cases carefully selected through an admission procedure.

With the aim to collect information on existing admission procedures and standards, the “Polifonia” pre-college working group developed a questionnaire on admission procedures\(^6\), which was circulated to all “Polifonia” partners and AEC member institutions during November 2005 – January 2006. The questionnaires contained 2 parts:

- Firstly, it asked which skills are being tested by higher music education institutions with the aim to ascertain which students are suitable for a course of study at their institution.
- Secondly, the institutions were asked what kind of music education the applicant students had received prior to their admission to higher music education.

**Entrance tests**

Respondents were asked to indicate which theoretical and practical skills they test in the admission exam to 1st cycle (Bachelor) studies. Regarding theoretical knowledge, the respondents could choose from analysis, music history, technical knowledge/skills and aural skills. The category practical skills offered the options artistic expression, knowledge of different music styles, ensemble playing, prima vista playing and improvisation skills. A full version of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

The results of this study showed that there are broad similarities in the entrance tests used by institutions from a wide range of European countries and beyond. All institutions conduct live auditions. Most widely tested skills and those considered to be the most important, are:

- artistic expression (encompassing technical skills)
- aural skills
- knowledge of different musical styles

Improvisation and ensemble playing received a lower weighting, although this situation may change in the future when musicians may need to develop the ability to play different genres and music in a cross-over style.

\(^6\) A detailed analysis of the questionnaire can be found at [www.polifonia-tn.org/admission](http://www.polifonia-tn.org/admission).
Within the category "Theoretical Knowledge", aural skills were most frequently tested and received the highest weighting. An examination of open answers reinforced this finding. Analysis [music theory] was also tested frequently, 4 out of 5 conservatoires responded to test music theory at the entrance examination. It is interesting to note that music theory is tested almost as frequently as aural skills but doesn’t receive the same rating of importance. It must be pointed here, however, that the working group encountered some problems with musical terminology here: music theory or analysis have different meanings in different countries.

Other requirements for admission
The only notable factor in addition to musical skills seemed to be an interview: 4 out of 5 institutions who responded interview candidates.

All institutions accept foreign students. Language requirements are the biggest limitation for those wanting to study abroad as a full-time student: two thirds of the respondents require knowledge of the national language. The questionnaire reveals a wide range of languages – from widely used languages such as French and English to languages of small countries such as Latvian and Slovenian – used in European music education.

Around 4 out of 5 institutions impose some legal or practical requirements. In most cases, these are age limits, either minimum or maximum. The most often mentioned requirement is the secondary education diploma, although institutions do not specify whether this refers to general education or to music education.

The majority of the respondents are fairly rigorous in their admission tests, making no exceptions to the admission process. Those who make exceptions do so to assist students from distant countries by giving the option of sending a CD, DVD or video instead of attending a live audition.

What kind of music education did the applicant students receive prior to their admission?
In relation to this question, the working group was faced, again, with challenges related to terminology. Already in the working group itself, consisting of experts from various European countries, names and definitions of the various types of institutions at pre-college level (music school, conservatoire municipal, specialized school, Musikgymnasium, etc) greatly differed. Therefore the group decided to describe the various types of institutions through the following categories that were believed to cover most of the types existing in the various European countries:
Although these categories were described in more detail in the questionnaire and were even translated into 3 languages, it must be pointed out that many respondents were somewhat uncertain to which categories the types of pre-college music education in their country belonged, which led to many questions. For more information see chapter 5.

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify clear trends from the answers given. The most important one is that approximately 9 out of 10 students have received some kind of institutional education at pre-college level. The remaining students received tuition from private teachers [e.g., in Germany, Switzerland and U.K].

Out of those receiving some form of institutional education at pre-college level, a majority received this in general or specialized music schools outside the compulsory secondary educational systems. A notable role is also played by secondary level institutions and junior departments of European conservatoires. It is interesting to note, however, that in countries with well developed pre-college music education systems [e.g. in central Europe], the higher music education institutions do not have such junior departments, as apparently they can rely on the preparation being done in the lower educational levels. This observation is also confirmed by the information collected in the survey circulated to music schools in Europe (chapter 6): in countries where music schools mention to be mainly aiming at music education for amateurs and not so much at the preparation for professional training, more junior departments in conservatoires exist.

Some preliminary conclusions
Despite the abovementioned problems related to terminology in this study, some interesting conclusions can nevertheless be drawn.
It is clear from the survey results that most students in European conservatoires have attended some kind of formal music education at pre-college level beforehand. This can be viewed as evidence to the effectiveness of structured pre-college music education. It also emphasizes the lifelong learning continuum that exists in music education: similar kinds of skills are taught from the first stages through to the highest level. Without a strong pre-college system European higher music education will not be able to further develop or even maintain its current level of quality and to play an active role in the establishment of the European Higher Education Area, which is the final aim of the Bologna process. As the education systems within many countries are currently changing, it will also be essential to monitor developments at the pre-college music education level on an ongoing basis.

From the results of this questionnaire we can see, that there are many possible routes to study music at pre-college level across Europe, even within individual European countries. This is an essential point: some youngsters live in big cities with secondary schools specialized in music, while others live at the countryside with only small music schools. It is essential to realize the power and importance of the various schooling systems, as the variety gives to every talented young person equal chances to study music.

In relation to the admission procedures, further study is required on how these procedures will be influenced by the student-centred approach with the use of competences and learning outcomes in the 1st cycle, as promoted by the Bologna process developments. Further consideration of this issue can be found in chapter 7.
Music education at levels before higher music education is organised in different ways throughout Europe. This is mainly due to historically different educational systems, and the close connection of music education to the national educational and musical infrastructures. Therefore the pre-college working group collected information on where and how young musicians are being trained and described this, as explained in the next chapter, in comparable national overviews.

One of the methods to collect information on a European-wide scale was the use of site visits. During the visits, members of the group tried to learn as much as possible about the national pre-college systems and about the admission procedures to higher music education through meetings with decision makers, teachers and students. Some of the visits also included visits to music schools and Musikgymnasia whenever there was a link a higher music education institution. Special attention was given to geographically balanced venues for the site visits. This, together with the available national expertise of working group members, enabled the group to collect information covering all Europe. In total, 13 site visits in 12 European countries were conducted: Birmingham [November 2005], Esbjerg and Odense [November 2005], Riga [April 2006], Leuven [April 2006], Prague [June 2006], Dresden [June 2006], Warsaw [October 2006], Trieste [October 2006], San Sebastian [October 2006], St. Petersburg [October 2006], Salzburg [November 2006] and Pécs [May 2007]. As a result of the visits, a number of examples of good practice were also identified, which were described in more detail\(^7\).

In brief, the following issues related to pre-college music education were identified:

**Systems for pre-college music education**

- National systems

In some countries, clearly structured systems for the pre-college phase exist that lead to the professional training level. With the national systems as a framework, secondary level institutions and music schools develop courses for their own work area [often in cooperation with higher music education institutions], which often include a national standard of admission and which are aimed at developing the student from a young age to being a professional musician. In some countries, the national ministry of education is responsible for setting requirements for education at various levels.

\(^7\) These examples of good practice can be found at [www.polifonia-tn.org/precollegesystems](http://www.polifonia-tn.org/precollegesystems).
• Types of pre-college music education

In European countries - with or without a national system - the following different types of pre-college music education were identified:

→ General music schools
Institutions for music education outside the (compulsory) primary, secondary and higher education systems, offering education in music to students of all ages and all stages. Both state-funded and private music schools exist.

→ Specialised music schools or schemes
Institutions or schemes for music education outside the (compulsory) primary, secondary and higher education systems, offering special curricula preparing students for professional music training in higher education.

→ Institutions within the compulsory secondary educational system with a specialisation in music. For example:
  * A school at secondary level primarily offering general education with a specialisation in music education (e.g. the Musikgymnasia in Germany);
  * A school at secondary level primarily offering music education at an advanced level including general education (e.g. the conservatories in the Czech Republic).

In relation to this type of schools, it was observed that:
  * Many of these schools are boarding schools;
  * Teachers are often employed that also teach at higher music education institutions or are recruited as specialists in pre-college training; sometimes these institutions are formally linked to higher music education institutions. This way, there is a clear understanding at the secondary schools about the entrance requirements for the higher education level;

→ Junior department/Preparatory Class/Foundation year
These are specialised courses offered by higher music education institution preparing students for professional music training in higher education.

→ Private tuition
Some preliminary conclusions from the site visits

The site visits once again confirm the initial impression there is a great variety of systems for pre-college music education in the various European countries. Some are connected to higher music education institutions, while others are embedded in secondary education systems. Other institutions are not connected to any general education systems at all. The curricula also vary from focusing exclusively on instrumental skills to combinations of artistic and personal development. Nevertheless, from this very varied landscape, the following general observations can be made:

• **In various countries effective integrated systems exist, which combine music education and general education.** These are mostly institutions at the secondary educational level with a specialisation in music, which are often affiliated to higher music education institutions. Some of these are boarding schools. The advantage of such schools is the combination of music education at an advanced level and general schooling, leaving the option to the students to decide at the end of their studies at this level whether or not they want to continue to study music in higher education or in other subject areas, as they are often provided with a diploma that gives access to higher education in general. For those students that continue to study in other fields, this is not a "lost investment": as can be seen in chapter 3, music education can be instrumental in the development of many skills that can be of use in other professions as well as in daily life.

• **In some countries without such institutions, systems exist that are developed as a cooperative effort of music schools, higher music education institutions and (local) governments.** A well-developed example of this can be found in Denmark.

• **Another interesting system can be found in (mainly) central European countries, where music students attend specialised music education institutions that do not have higher music education status and therefore operate at a secondary education level but nevertheless offer professional training.** The advantage of this system is that there is a clear continuum in music education throughout the secondary and higher education levels.

• **A system integrating the music education continuum itself can be found in the South European countries.** In these countries, institutions can be found that provide music education from beginners’ level to professional level within one programme and one institution. At the lower levels, students combine their music education in these institutions with general education in normal secondary level schools. This system is still strong in the French system of regional conservatoires, but is being threatened in Italy, where the reform of the conservatories into the Bachelor/Master structure of the Bologna process has lead to an unclear situation of the lower levels of the conservatories.

• In addition to all these systems, **higher music education institutions in various countries have set up junior departments or preparatory classes to contribute to the preparation of specially**
talented future applicants. A problem in relation to junior departments and preparatory classes in higher music education is that they are often not being funded by the government, as funding is exclusively being given to the higher education levels.

- **Precollege music education is funded in various ways, mainly supported by public funding.** However, as can be seen in the study on music schools in chapter 6, institutions in some countries do charge fees. Nevertheless, during the site visits examples were identified in which students from families with financial limitations were exempted from paying fees.

- **The investment of the young music students is of course substantial study load.** In addition to their regular school days in general primary and secondary education, pre-college students must be prepared to invest substantial amounts of time for self-study.

One important conclusion can be drawn from all these examples: Students seem to be better prepared for higher music education when there is a structured system or curriculum with close connections between the pre-college institutions or systems and the higher music education institutions. As a result, it is vital that the results of this investigation will convince politicians and policy makers that when music education in general and a high qualitative higher music education provision in particular are seen as important, there must be a clear understanding this should be supported with appropriate levels of political attention and funding.
6  PRE-COLLEGE MUSIC EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN EUROPE: A MAPPING EXERCISE

A European-wide mapping exercise was commissioned to Eleonoor Tchernoff in order to describe systems and structures in pre-college music education. As said previously, this was not only done to identify examples of good practice, but also to gain insight into the current situation in pre-college music education in Europe and to collect information that would be helpful for higher music education institutions in the recruitment and admission of future students. The information was collected through contacting experts in all relevant countries by email and phone with targeted questions.

Descriptions of national pre-college music education systems
This mapping exercise has resulted in a comprehensive overview of pre-college systems in 26 countries, which can be found in a set of descriptions of national systems for pre-college music training. These national descriptions will be posted on the AEC Bologna process website, where general descriptions of national professional music training systems as well as more specific descriptions of music teacher training systems are already available in 3 languages. In addition, a summary paragraph on each national pre-college music education system has been drafted, which will be included into the abovementioned general descriptions of national professional music training systems. The national descriptions are made according to a standardised format, so that they can be compared. In addition to these national descriptions of pre-college music education systems, several examples of good practice were described based on the findings of the site visits, as mentioned in chapter 5.

Music Schools in Europe
As part of this mapping exercise, the “Polifonia” pre-college working group had the opportunity to work together with the European Music School Union (EMU), the European umbrella organisation of national networks in 25 European countries representing a certain type of pre-college music education: the music schools. The working group therefore decided to learn more about existing music school systems in Europe in general, but especially to collect information on the actual role of music schools in the preparation to the higher education level. A questionnaire was designed by the pre-college working group in cooperation EMU and circulated to all 25 national associations connected to EMU.

The pre-college working group endeavoured to touch upon common denominators that would be relevant for music school education in all investigated countries. The questionnaire asked for information on the following topics: legislation, structure, quality control, finances, curriculum, lesson time, aim of education, links to professional music training, student progress, starting age, entrance examinations and teachers.

See www.bologna-and-music.org, section “Country Overviews”.

8
The outcomes of the questionnaire were analysed in the study "Music schools in Europe"\(^9\), which is divided in three parts: section A describe the results of the study in both summary and detailed form, section B presents a set of descriptions of each national music school system, while section C provides appendices, such as the questionnaire used and some addition information. Please note that the country overviews in part B have also been incorporated into the overall national descriptions of pre-college music education systems mentioned above.

There are several observations that can be drawn from the information presented in the study:

- The information shows a vast range of different systems and institutions all over Europe. Although the term "music school" suggests a similarity in the various types of institutions that exist, it is in fact an overarching term applicable to a rich diversity of different institutions and systems.

- It seems that music schools find themselves in a challenging situation, operating in the border areas where education and culture come together. They often provide music education to both amateur musicians and to young students as preparation to higher music education. Choosing one point of attention above the other is often not easy or simply impossible, as music schools are expected to serve a large range of pupils. The results of the questionnaire to the EMU members show that music schools in all countries make a serious effort in trying to provide the best possible music education for as many students as possible. But is it fair to expect music schools to have the specific knowledge to provide a fulfilling educational programme for amateurs as well as for future music professionals? It is noticeable that schools with a special focus on preparing students for higher music education institutions are often not represented by the EMU and therefore not represented by the information in this survey. In any case, it seems that if music schools would want to continue with catering for such wide target groups, the financial support would need to be sufficient for such a task. Although this has not been the remit of this questionnaire, several respondents did indicate that due to financial challenging situations and continuous budget cuts it was difficult to continue provide a provision for students that needed more attention as part of their preparation to higher music education.

- The “Polifonia” pre-college working group wanted to gain some insight into how many music school students continue their studies in higher music education by comparing, on the one hand, information asked to conservatoires about where their students were coming from at admission, with, on the other hand, the question in this survey about whether or not the music schools felt they were actually preparing for the professional level adequately. The outcomes from this comparison vary, but it is clear music schools play an important role in preparing students directly for higher music education or indirectly (e.g. secondary level institutions). However, in many countries higher music education institutions have taken their own responsibility in this area by setting up preparatory classes and junior departments, which seems to indicate they are not content with the preparation taking place at the pre-college level.

\(^9\) The complete study can be downloaded at www.polifonia-tn.org/precollegesystems.
• Another question that may arise in relation to this matter, is that there may be differences in musical genres and that the preparation for students in the field of classical music may need a different routing than for students in pop and jazz. Again, these are issues that will need further investigation.

• When addressing the starting age of music students, which is one of the issues addressed by the literature study (see chapter 3), evidence supporting the results of this literature study seems to be present in this study on music schools as well: the conclusion it is common and desirable to start early with music education is confirmed by the information presented here, although, as is the case in the literature study, additional questions in relation to differences between instruments and genres arise that need further study.

• Music schools are important employers of future conservatoire graduates. More information should be collected about the competences and qualifications the music schools are looking for in their new teachers and whether the higher music education institutions provide training to obtain these. This issue is also important in relation to the increased mobility of professional in Europe: the recognition of teaching qualifications is an important issue to address from both a national and European angle.

Finally, as the questionnaire was developed from the point of view of higher music education institutions, it sought to establish whether music school students are being adequately prepared to proceed to higher education in music, and if so, how. The following recommendations, drawn from the outcomes of the questionnaire, should be read with this approach in mind:

• The questionnaire showed that countries that have music education legislation generally have a system of quality control and keep track of student’s progress. Evaluation and reflection are important tools for preserving the level of a music school.

• Countries with music education legislation often have a national curriculum as well. A national curriculum is a way of ensuring that students build up a solid musical foundation, which gives them a head start when applying for institutions that provide professional music education at higher education level. Not having a national curriculum puts a heavy responsibility on individual teachers and possibly withholds equal chances for every student. Every student deserves a well rounded education, which implies a well structured curriculum.

• Music schools that prepare students for professional music training should have formalised links with institutions that provide this type of training.
A SET OF COMPETENCES FOR PRE-COLLEGE MUSIC EDUCATION

Introduction

The variety of pre-college training models that exist in Europe show there are many possible effective approaches to nurturing young musicians. Within such diversity and in the spirit of the Bologna process, the working group proposes that the development of a series of competences for pre-college training will facilitate understanding of the common elements that exist in pre-college systems as well as articulate the connections with the learning outcomes devised for 1st cycle study.

A description of the learning outcomes for the 1st and 2nd cycle studies in higher music education has been arranged in three parts by the Polifonia Tuning working group: practical [skill-based] outcomes, theoretical [knowledge-based] outcomes and generic outcomes. The pre-college working group applied these same divisions to the pre-college level in the form of competences, as learning outcomes are a result of a structured curriculum which often is not present in the pre-college phase.

This set of competences is not designed to set standards to which level each skill should be taught at pre-college institutions. It rather emphasizes the continuum of music education and gives some ideas about the skills that would be important to gain already before the higher education level, so that a student will be better prepared to meet the demands of the 1st cycle. This method, which is currently only a theoretical model, will need to be tested. It must also be pointed out, that higher music education institutions are not expected to test all these competences during the entrance examination. The set of competences, which can be found below, can be more used as a checklist during the pre-college phase.

In developing an ideal set of competences for the pre-college pupil that will establish a strong connection between the pre-college phase and higher education, it is important to acknowledge the practical [skill-based] outcomes, the knowledge-based outcomes and the generic outcomes that are taught in primary and secondary schools. This set of competences is described in the following form:

- Practical [skill-based] outcomes

The Bologna process brings a new way of measuring practical learning outcomes. For example, it advises us not to demand a certain set of pieces a student should master, but rather emphasizes the artistic and technical learning outcomes [described as competences] a student should achieve.

The way of formulating the competences can be seen from an example that explains what “skills and artistic expression” exist after pre-college level: “At the completion of their studies, students should have begun to develop the ability to create and realize their own artistic concepts and students should be developing the necessary skills for their expression”. The same kind of definition has been created also for repertoire skills, ensemble skills, for practicing and rehearsing, reading and writing music etc.

90 The learning outcomes for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd study cycles in higher music education can be found at www.bologna-and-music.org/learningoutcomes.
The students should also master some verbal skills so that they should be able to talk and write about their music making and improvisational skills. Nowadays the ability to improvise at least at some level is already considered to be a basic skill to all musicians. In addition, performance and communication skills have gained in significance.

- **Theoretical (knowledge-based) outcomes**
  The theoretical or knowledge-based outcomes contain elements such as the understanding of musical material and the context of different issues. "Knowing a representative selection of the mainstream repertoire of their principal study" and "musical styles and history" can be mentioned as examples of these. Basic knowledge of the possibilities of modern technology is another important outcome for young musicians today.

- **Generic outcomes**
  The definition of generic outcomes is a good example of the influence the Bologna process has brought to music education. Traditionally, the focus of teaching has been mainly music-oriented, but recently the wider context (general education and personal development) is taken more into account. Institutions are expected to update their approaches to teaching and learning according to this development.
  Students applying for higher education usually have a secondary school level qualification. Therefore, entrance panels in higher music education focus on the musical (Practical and Theoretical) competences. The generic competences such as "independence, psychological understanding, critical awareness and communication skills" do not necessarily have to be tested during the entrance examination, as these competences are typically developed in general education.
However, a pre-college teacher can increase the awareness of students of the fact they will need other skills than just playing the instrument and encourage students to develop an open attitude so they can cope in a globalized and competitive world. As mentioned before, higher music education institutions do not necessarily test all generic competences at admission, but they could ask themselves if it is wise not to do so at all.

Later on, when the pre-college pupil has become a student in higher education, each subsequent level of study, e.g. 1st cycle, 2nd or even the 3rd cycle, will have its own entrance examination and its own mix of generic and musical competences. The higher the level of education, the more professional skills and knowledge will be involved.

The set of generic outcomes for the pre-college level contains four different general competences: independence, psychological understanding, critical awareness and communication skills. This division is identical to the division used for the generic outcomes in the 1st and 2nd cycle, but the way the competences have been formulated has been adjusted to be more suitable and relevant for the pre-college level. For example: after finishing the first cycle, the student is expected to work independently on a variety of issues, like gathering, analyzing and interpreting information. At the end of the pre-college level, the formulation might be: “the student has begun to develop independence in gathering and using information”. Psychological understanding, for instance, contains elements such as developing and using imagination, intuition, emotional understanding, creative problem-solving and managing performance anxiety. From this point of view, the main focus should be to encourage the student to work and develop his/her musicianship critically and as independently as possible. The main focus will then be to build a continuum from the early stages to the professional level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical (skill-based) outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills and artistic expression</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• After the pre-college phase, students should be ready to demonstrate some experience of creating and realizing their own artistic concepts, as well as some necessary skills for their expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repertoire skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• After the pre-college phase, students should be ready to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- show evidence of their experience and, where appropriate, performance of some representative repertoire of the Principal Study area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- their experience of a variety of appropriate styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ensemble skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• After the pre-college phase, students should be ready to describe their experience of interacting musically in ensembles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Practicing and rehearsing skills
- After the pre-college phase, students should be ready to demonstrate their experience of basic practice and rehearsal techniques as well as their understanding of good habits of technique and posture which enable them to use their bodies in an effective and non-harmful way.

Reading and writing skills
- After the pre-college phase, students should be ready to demonstrate sufficient skills for the communication of musical scores relating to their Principal Study area.

Aural, creative and re-creative skills
- After the pre-college phase, students should be ready to demonstrate some fluency in recognizing by ear, memorizing and manipulating the materials of music.

Verbal skills
- After the pre-college phase, students should be able to talk or write about their music making.

Public performance skills
- After the pre-college phase, students should be ready to demonstrate some awareness of the behavioural and communicative aspects of public performance.

Improvisational skills
- After the pre-college phase, students should demonstrate readiness to develop the ability to explore some of the patterns and processes which underlie improvisation.

Theoretical (knowledge-based) outcomes

Knowledge and understanding of repertoire and musical material
- After the pre-college phase, students should be ready to demonstrate knowledge of a representative selection of the mainstream repertoire of their Principal Study.
  - Students should be ready to demonstrate knowledge of the basic elements and organizational patterns of music.

Knowledge and understanding of context
- After the pre-college phase, students should be ready to demonstrate
  - knowledge of the main outlines of music history
  - familiarity with musical styles
  - a basic understanding of how technology can be used in the field of music
  - some knowledge of the music profession
### Generic outcomes

#### Independence
- After the pre-college phase, students should be ready to demonstrate
  - some independence in gathering and using information
  - some independence in developing ideas
  - some evidence of self-motivation

#### Psychological understanding
- After the pre-college phase, students should be ready to demonstrate some effective use of - in a variety of situations
  - their imagination
  - their intuition
  - their emotional understanding
  - their ability to think and work creatively when problem-solving
  - their ability to think and work flexibly, adapting to new and changing circumstances
  - a growing awareness of how to self - manage performance anxiety

#### Critical awareness
- After the Pre-college phase, students should be ready to demonstrate some ability to
  - reflect constructively on their own work and that of others

#### Communication skills
- After the Pre-college phase, students should be ready to demonstrate effective communication and social skills, including the ability to
  - work with others on joint projects or activities
  - show skills in teamwork
  - integrate with other individuals in a variety of cultural contexts
  - present work in accessible form
  - have appropriate Information Technology (IT) skills
8 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

1. Common experiences in music education as well as scientific research clearly indicate that music training should be started at an early age, especially for those wanting to become professional musicians. Further research needs to be done on the specific needs of the various music genres.

2. Music education is to be perceived as a continuum; it is therefore difficult to pinpoint the exact beginning of professional studies and to conceptualise the different phases of education. Nevertheless, pre-college music education is a specific phase in musical education and needs to be recognised as such.

3. A well-structured pre-college education leads to a higher professional standard in higher music education, and as a result, to higher quality in the music profession.

4. Students are better prepared for higher music education when there is a well-structured and continuous curriculum or system with close connections between pre-college level institutions or systems, general education institutions and higher music education institutions.

5. The current procedures for admission to the higher music education level are not yet consciously related to or compatible with the use of learning outcomes in the 1st [Bachelor] and 2nd cycle [Master], which are increasingly being used in higher music education institutions all over Europe.

6. Music education at the pre-college level can also be of great value to young people without the ambition to become professional musicians, as it helps young people to develop the participation in and the understanding of culture and the music and arts, develops creative, personal and interpersonal skills that can be essential transferable skills for workers in a knowledge-based society, and provides social cohesion and intercultural understanding, which is essential for an Europe built on cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.
9 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER STEPS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

Based on the above-mentioned conclusions, the "Polifonia" pre-college working group would like to recommend to:

Local, regional and national governments and policy makers in education and culture:
1. To acknowledge the importance of strong pre-college level music education as a vital condition for a highly qualitative musical landscape in the individual European countries;
2. To acknowledge the importance of strong pre-college level music education as a tool for the development of creative, personal and interpersonal skills, as well as social cohesion, for young people in general, not only for those having the ambition to enter the music profession;
3. To therefore give sufficient structural and financial support to pre-college level music education in order to ensure that the musical culture in Europe maintains its high level in the increasingly globalized world of music;
4. To support the establishment of creative partnerships between general education institutions at the primary and secondary level, institutions for pre-college music education, higher music education institutions and operators in the field of music for the development of inspiring and efficient learning environments that will support music education at this level;
5. To encourage more European cooperation in this field while respecting cultural diversity with the aim to exchange examples of good practice and enhance existing provision;
6. To introduce measures to strengthen the training of instrumental/vocal teachers that provide music education at the various levels;

Higher music education institutions:
1. To engage in a structured dialogue with and establish creative partnerships between general education institutions at the primary and secondary level, institutions for pre-college music education, higher music education institutions and operators in the field of music for the development of inspiring and efficient learning environments that will support music education at this level;
2. To use the set of competences for the pre-college level and the learning outcomes for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd study cycles in higher music education developed by the AEC as an opportunity to link the different levels of musical education and a tool to improve curricula;
3. To start collecting statistical information about the origins of their new students;
4. To identify the current needs for pre-college music education relative to the various music genres being offered at higher education level.

Institutions and providers of pre-college level music education:
1. To engage in a structured dialogue with and establish creative partnerships between general education institutions at the primary and secondary level, institution for pre-college music education, higher music education institutions and operators in the field of music for the development
of inspiring and efficient learning environments that will support music education at this level;
2. To use the set of competences for the pre-college level as an opportunity to link the different levels of musical education and a tool to improve curricula;
3. To emphasize the development of generic outcomes in addition to music-specific outcomes during the pre-college phase of musical education in order to encourage students to become open-minded, self-confident, reflective and communicative professionals.

**Institutions for general education at the primary and secondary level:**
1. To reinstate music as an essential part of the general education curriculum;
2. To take into consideration the needs of talented young music students in general education institutions by providing flexible learning pathways;
3. To engage in a structured dialogue with and establish creative partnerships between general education institutions at the primary and secondary level, institutions for pre-college music education, higher music education institutions and operators in the field of music for the development of inspiring and efficient learning environments that will support music education at this level.

**The European Commission:**
1. To support projects addressing the issue of pre-college music education through the various funding programmes during the EU Year for Creativity & Innovation through Education & Culture in 2009
2. To take note of the outcomes of this study in relation to the EU “Communication for a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world” and in particular when identifying issues to be addressed through the Open Method of Coordination, as suggested in the Communication.
3. More specifically, to make use of the expertise of the AEC in this area, for example by consulting the AEC in the development of issues and indicators related to pre-college music education in the framework of the Open Method of Coordination.
“INVESTING IN THE QUALITY OF TOMORROW’S MUSIC IN EUROPE”

Statement of the “Polifonia” pre-college working group of the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) on the importance of pre-college music education.

The European Association of Conservatoires (AEC), representing more than 250 institutions in professional music training in 40 European countries, aims to promote European cooperation in the professional music training sector. This is being achieved through congresses, various publications, and European cooperation projects. The ERASMUS Thematic Network for Music “Polifonia” coordinated by the AEC was recently chosen by the European Commission as an “ERASMUS Success Story”.

Within “Polifonia”, the AEC has addressed pre-college music education, the phase in music education preceding the higher education level in music. As young people often start with musical activities at a very young age, it is not sufficient to address professional training in music through looking at the higher education level only. “Polifonia” studied this issue by forming a group of experts in this field from various European countries, realising a series of site visits to identify examples of good practice, producing a literature study on scientific research on the development of young musicians, completing a substantial mapping exercise of national pre-college music education systems in 26 European countries, researching current practice in relation to admission to European higher music education institutions, and by formulating a set of competences for the pre-college phase in music education.

Based on the above-mentioned activities, the following conclusions have been formulated:

• Common experiences in music education as well as research clearly indicate that music training should be started at an early age, especially for those wanting to become professional musicians.

• Music education is to be perceived as a continuum; it is therefore difficult to pinpoint the exact beginning of professional studies and to conceptualise the different phases of education. Nevertheless, pre-college music education is a specific phase in musical education and needs to be recognised as such.

• A well-structured pre-college education leads to a higher professional standard in higher music education, and, as a result, to a higher quality in the music profession.

• Students are better prepared for higher music education when there is a well-structured and continuous system or curriculum with close connections between pre-college level institutions or systems, general education institutions and higher music education institutions.

• Music education at the pre-college level can also be of great value to young people without the ambition to become professional musicians: it helps young people to develop the participation in and the understanding of culture and the music and arts, develop creative, personal and interpersonal skills, and provide social cohesion and intercultural understanding, which is essential for an Europe built on cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.
Therefore, the "Polifonia" pre-college working group would like to make the following recommendations:

To local, regional and national governments and policy makers in education and culture:

- To acknowledge the importance of strong pre-college level music education as a vital condition for a highly qualitative musical landscape in individual European countries;
- To acknowledge the importance of strong pre-college level music education as a tool for the development of creative, personal and interpersonal skills, as well as social cohesion, for young people in general, not only for those having the ambition to enter the music profession;
- To therefore give sufficient structural and financial support to pre-college level music education in order to ensure that the musical culture in Europe maintains its high level;
- To support the establishment of creative partnerships between general education institutions at the primary and secondary level, institutions for pre-college music education, higher music education institutions and operators in the field of music for the development of inspiring and efficient learning environments that will support music education at this level;
- To encourage more European cooperation in this field while respecting cultural diversity with the aim to exchange examples of good practice and enhance existing provision;
- To introduce measures to strengthen the training of instrumental/vocal teachers that provide music education at the various levels.

To the European Commission:

- To support projects addressing pre-college music education through the various funding programmes during the "EU Year for Creativity & Innovation through Education & Culture" in 2009
- To take note of the outcomes of this study in relation to the EU "Communication for a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world" and in particular when identifying issues to be addressed through the Open Method of Coordination, as suggested in the Communication.
- More specifically, to make use of the expertise of the AEC in this area, for example by consulting the AEC in the development of issues and indicators related to pre-college music education in the framework of the Open Method of Coordination.

For more information, visit www.polifonia-tn.org/precollege or contact Mr Martin Prchal, AEC Chief Executive, at aecinfo@aecinfo.org.
APPENDIX A

Links

“Polifonia” pre-college working group outcomes at a glance:

- Literature study “Preparing young musicians for professional training: what does scientific research tell us?”
  www.polifonia-tn.org/literaturestudyprecollege

- Study “Music Schools in Europe”
  www.polifonia-tn.org/precollegesystems

- Pre-college country overviews

- Site visit reports
  www.polifonia-tn.org/precollegesystems

- Analysis questionnaire on admission procedures to higher music education
  www.polifonia-tn.org/admission

- National descriptions of systems for Professional Music Training in European Countries including pre-college information
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE ADMISSION TO HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION

PRE-COLLEGE WORKING GROUP

This questionnaire has been designed by the pre-college working group of the Polifonia project. This working group is studying issues in relation to the preparation of music students for and their admission to professional music training in higher education (Musikhochschule, Conservatoire Supérieur, University). An important aim of the group is to gain insight into the admission procedures to higher music education. This questionnaire focuses on this item.

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<th>Name Institution:</th>
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<td>Name contact:</td>
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<td>E-Mail:</td>
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<td>Phone:</td>
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</table>

1. In the admission exam to studies at a 1st cycle (Bachelor) level what of the following do you test?

1.1 Theoretical knowledge
   - Analysis
   - Music history
   - Technical knowledge/skills (e.g. music software)
   - Aural skills
   - Other, please specify:

1.2 Practical skills
   - Artistic expression
   - Knowledge of different music styles
   - Ensemble playing
   - Prima vista playing
   - Improvisation skills
   - Other, please specify:

2. Do you interview candidates?  O YES  O NO
3. Do you give candidates a written assignment?  O YES  O NO
4. Do you ask for references?  O YES  O NO

1 For further information on the Thematic Network for Music "Polifonia", please have a look at our webpage www.polifonia-tn.org.
5. How much importance do the above mentioned categories have for the admittance of a student?

*Please mark importance where applicable to your institution.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Analysis</td>
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<td>Music history</td>
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<td>Technical knowledge/skills</td>
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<td>Aural skills</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Artistic expression</td>
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<td>Knowledge of different music styles</td>
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<td>Ensemble playing</td>
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<td>Prima vista playing</td>
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<td>Improvisation skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Interview</td>
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<td>Written assignment</td>
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<td>References</td>
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6. (a) Do you make any exceptions to the admission process (e.g. asking only for single parts of the exam, CD replacing live audition etc.)?  
    O YES  O NO

(b) If YES, please explain.

7. (a) Are there any language requirements at admission?  
    O YES  O NO

(b) If YES, please explain.

8. Do you offer potential students a possibility to have an informal consultation with conservatoire teaching staff before the admission exam (e.g. information day)?  
    O YES  O NO

9. (a) Are there any other legal or practical requirements to be fulfilled before a student can be admitted (e.g. school leaving examination, age limit)?  
    O YES  O NO

   If YES, please name.

10. How is your admission panel composed?
    O Only internal examiners
    O Only external examiners
    O Internal and external examiners
11. (a) Who assigns admitted students to a teacher?
   0 Administration
   0 Admission panel
   0 Other, please name
(b) Are students’ requests for a specific teacher considered?  O YES  O NO

12. From the total number of candidates that you consider admissible to your institution, what factors other than the student’s competence will determine which of these will receive the offer of a place?
   0 Financial resources
   0 Balance between disciplines/instruments
   0 Teacher availability
   0 Other, please name

13. Do any external circumstances force you to admit students that do not fulfil your admission standards?
   0 YES  0 NO
   If YES, please name.

14. Which type of previous education have students from your country received before they enter the 1st cycle [Bachelor] at your institution? Please note: It is not necessary to have exact numbers about this issue; we are just looking for trends; your personal experience should be sufficient to answer the following question.

Please use numbers from 1-8 to mark frequency: 8 most students in my institution origin from this type of education – 1 no students in my institution origin from this type of education; 0 not applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Junior department/Preparatory Class/Foundation year</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course within the higher education institution preparing students for training in higher music education.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General music school</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent institution for music education outside of the compulsory education system and higher education, offering education in music to students of all ages and all stages.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialised music school</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent institution for music education outside of the compulsory education system and higher education, offering special curricula preparing students for professional music training in higher music education.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. (a) Does your institution charge enrolment fees from students?  O YES  O NO
   (b) If YES, How much are they?  €

17. (a) Do you admit foreign students to your institution?  O YES  O NO
   (b) If YES, is there any restriction for that?

Additional Comments

Thank you for your cooperation!

Please send the completed questionnaire by e-mail, mail or fax to: Ester Tomasi, Polifonia research/project assistant,
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Utrecht, The Netherlands
T: +31/302361242, F: +31/302361290, E: estertomasi@aecinfo.org