Eirik Birkeland, AEC President, welcomes the AEC members, opens the AEC General Assembly and establishes that the statutory and legal provisions required for this assembly and the topics to be discussed have been complied with by the board.

1. Minutes of the 2016 General Assembly in Gothenburg

✓ The Minutes were approved by the General Assembly.

2. President’s Report: Annual Report 2016 and activities to 2017

More details for the year 2016 can be found in the AEC Annual Report 2016 (available online in English), including a summary of the 2016 Annual Accounts. In his presentation, Eirik Birkeland addresses the following issues:

- **Membership**: At the end of 2016, the AEC had 297 members (256 Active and 41 Associate Members)
- **AEC Council**: At the end of 2016, 3 new Council members were elected, and 3 Council Members were elected for the Executive Committee:
  - President: Eirik Birkeland, Oslo, Norway
  - Vice-Presidents: Georg Schulz, Graz, Austria; Deborah Kelleher, Dublin, Ireland
  - Secretary General: Harrie van den Elsen, Groningen, Netherlands
  - Council Members: Kaarlo Hildén, Helsinki, Finland; Jacques Moreau, Lyon, France; Ingeborg Radok-Žádná, Prague, Czech Republic; Evis Sammoutis, Nicosia, Cyprus; Claire Mera-Nelson, London, UK; Elizabeth Gutjahr, Trossingen, Germany; Lucia Di Cecca, Frosinone, Italy; Zdislaw Łapinski, Krakow, Poland
  - Co-opted member representing Associate members: Bernard Lanskey, Singapore
- **AEC Council Meetings**: AEC Council met three times in 2017. One of them took place in Rome, where the Council met with the Italian Ministry of Education and Research. AEC Council is indeed planning to organize one of its annual meetings outside Belgium in order to meet with its member institutions and, if appropriate, with representatives of the government. In addition, two Executive Committee meetings took place between these Council meetings and four Executive Committee Skype meetings. Both Council and ExCom worked on the following issues during the year:
  - Revising the Strategic Plan 2016-2020
  - Developing the Sustainability Plan
  - Preparing the events and platforms and monitoring their success.
  - Preparing the 2017 Congress and those in future years as well as the General Assembly 2017.
  - Monitoring AEC Projects (in particular FULL SCORE in its last year of operation and preparations for the upcoming SMS) and activities
  - Monitoring and contributing to external relations,
  - Dealing with membership matters and overseeing finances
- **Personnel changes within the AEC Office**:
  - Stefan Gies, Linda Messas, Angéla Domínguez, Jef Cox and Sara Primiterra have continued their work.
  - Nerea Lopez de Viciña has left the AEC in October after 4 years as Office Manager. Esther Nass has started in October as Office Coordinator.
  - Several student interns have joined the staff during 2017
• **Overview of 2017 Projects:**
  - AEC has finished the last year of the **FULL SCORE project (2014-2017)** in August, which has been at the centre of AEC activities in the last three years. Its Final Outcomes include the establishment of a long-lasting cooperation between the European Music Schools Union EMU and the European Association for Music in Schools EAS, the development of standards to assist institutions on the quality enhancement of their pre-college level and classroom music teacher programmes, the publication of revised Learning Outcomes and a contribution to the European Agenda for Music. Moreover, AEC commissioned a European Online Application System EASY, established a job vacancy platform, and developed a Study on Graduates and a Student Handbook.
  - AEC is also involved in the management of the **RENEW project (2016-2018)**, coordinated by the Jyske Musikkonservatorium /Royal Academy of Music Aarhus/Aalborg, aiming at promoting entrepreneurship as a component of HME programmes.
  - The **Music Master for New Audiences and Innovative Practice (NAIP)**, a two year strategic partnership aiming at the modernisation of curricula, and teaching and learning approaches in higher music education.
  - **VOXearlyMUS (2015-2018):** an ERASMUS + collaborative project focusing on cross-border cooperation in the field of vocal Early Music teaching as a tool to strengthen the quality of Higher Music Education.
  - The **European Chamber Music Academy (ECMA) - Next Step (2015-2018)** is a collaborative Erasmus + project that focuses in cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices in the field of Chamber Music.
  - ‘**Modernising European Higher Music Education through Improvisation - METRIC’ (2015-2018)**, is a cooperative project between several European conservatories and the AEC which focuses on curriculum development and intensive cooperation in the field of improvisation, with the aim of creating a European Master course for improvisation.
  - For these projects, AEC’s role is limited to promotion and dissemination, and to the appointment of an external evaluator.
  - **NXT Project - Making a living from the Arts (2015-2018),** formerly called NE©XT Accelerator is coordinated by ELIA. It involves 20 partners with relevant expertise from higher arts education institutes, incubator initiatives and cultural providers. It aims to support emerging artists to initiate successful international careers and to improve their capacity to make a living from their artistic production.

• **AEC Regular Activities 2017**
  - Pop & Jazz Platform, London (17-18 February)
  - EPARM Conference, Antwerp (23-25 April)
  - IRC Meeting, Tbilisi (21-24 September)
  - AEC Annual Congress, Zagreb (9-11 November)

• **AEC Advocacy**
  - During 2017, both the CEO as well as several Council members have been active at European and at national level in order to strengthen the AEC network and advocate for Higher Music Education.
    - The CEO was invited to give an expert statement at the joint session of the European Parliament’s Committees “Foreign Affairs” and “Culture & Education” on a draft policy paper about a new “EU strategy for international cultural relations”. He was also included in an internal feedback round discussing the draft of a “Revised Modernisation Agenda for Higher Music Education” in Brussels.
    - In addition, regular contacts to key members of the Culture Committee of the European parliament, Silvia Costa and Julia Ward, were maintained.
    - There were also a couple of opportunities to be in close touch with organizations at national level, e.g. with the Italian Ministry for Higher Education, several networks in the Nordic countries, French associations as ANESCAS and ANdEA.
  - In the framework of the **FULL SCORE project**, formal cooperation has been strengthened with:
    - The European Music Council (in relation to the Music Agenda for Europe)
The European Music Schools Union EMU
The European Association for Music in Schools EAS
The European Jazz Network

AEC has also been in regular contact with:
- The European University Association
- Pearle - the Performing Arts Employers’ Associations League Europe
- IMZ - International Music and Media Centre
- Culture Action Europe
- Opera Europa
- ELIA - The European League of Institutes of the Arts
- Cumulus - The International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media
- Cilect - The International Association of Film and Television Schools
- The International Music Council IMC

News from the Regions
The Council is keen to put more emphasis on the feedback and news from the different regions, and has discussed in April how to increase AEC’s relevance for the various regions. Besides looking at the possibility to organize specific services such as regional seminars, to plan an annual Council meeting in a country where it has members and to try to implement some of the features suggested by regions last year, the Council has decided to include a specific Congress session on topics that were raised during the regional meetings last year. It seemed important for us, as suggested by our members, to bring together the different regions.

Looking ahead - AEC in 2018
The AEC has managed to acquire new funding with a successful application to the Creative Europe’s programme which supports European Cultural Networks. The new project is called Strengthening Music in Society (SMS) and will last 4 years, from 1st December 2017 to 30 November 2021. The project will address 6 main themes:
- the impact of conservatoires on society,
- diversity and inclusiveness - in relation to music genres but also to overcoming social barriers,
- How to embed an entrepreneurial mind-set in our institutions
- The development of a L&T platform in cooperation with the CEMPE of the Norwegian Academy of Music
- Internationalisation of institutions and of students’ future careers
- Music education in the digital age

The project will also be based on cooperation with partner organisations: European Music Schools Union EMU, European Jazz Network, EJN, etc.

Upcoming events in 2018
- Pop and Jazz Platform, Pescara (9-10 February)
- EPARM Conference, Porto (22-24 March)
- Early Music Platform Forum, Bucharest (25-26 May)
- IRC Meeting, Birmingham (13-16 September)
- AEC Annual Congress and GA, Graz (8-10 November)

3. Elections to the Executive Committee

The General Assembly unanimously approves the appointment of Miren Iñarga, Musikene (Higher School of The Basque Country), and Rico Gübler, Musikhochschule Lübeck, as Election Officers.

There is 1 vacant seat available
- AEC Vice-President: current member, Georg Schulz is eligible to stand for re-election, has completed his first term.

Candidate for Executive Committee (ExCom):
- Candidate for Vice-Presidency: Georg Schulz, Kunstuniversität Graz, Graz, Austria.
4. Decision on Council election rules

- During the GA of last year, the AEC Council presented an adjustment to the voting system, as it became clear that a part of the AEC membership felt uncomfortable about the AEC Council's composition and requested the adjustment in order to ensure a more balanced regional geographic representation at Council.
- The AEC membership decided to postpone the voting to this year, giving the Council the mandate to present a revised proposal taking into account the remarks made at the GA, and to give the members the opportunity to contribute to the debate.
- The feedback gathered over the year indicated a clear tendency not to change the rules for the time being. The AEC Council therefore proposes to keep the current election rules.

✓ The General Assembly approves the proposal to keep the current election rules.

5. Approval of the revised AEC Strategic Plan 2016-2020

- The Council decided to revise the AEC Strategic Plan in 2016
  - This was done in connection with the arrival of the new CEO, and with the realization that the structure and length of the existing plan was very complicated to work with.
  - In September 2016, it was decided to simplify the Strategic Plan by the 2017 General assembly, also in order to integrate the core elements and strands that would be highlighted in the SMS application that was going to be written.
  - It became progressively clear that the revision would be deeper than anticipated, and indeed, both the structure and content have been revised. We felt that this revision was also the occasion to be clearer to external stakeholders about what AEC stands for.
- Content of the Document as presented by Eirik Birkeland, AEC President.
  - The Vision statement has been adjusted in three different sections: the motto; the three areas of professionally focused arts education; and the expression of social commitment.
  - The Mission is connected to the four different pillars developed.

Pillar 1: Enhancing quality in Higher Music Education
- Investigating, advocating and disseminating innovative practice in all three fields
- Providing guidance for capacity-building and for establishing appropriate infrastructures in those areas
- Strengthening the understanding of artistic research as a means of promoting deeper musical engagement
- Encouraging quality enhancement, including through a sustained cooperation with MusiQuE
- Supporting member institutions in the delivery of high-level pre-college music studies

Pillar 2: Promoting participation, inclusiveness and diversity
- AEC will promote the diversity of approaches to Higher Music Education
- AEC will support its members in different regions of Europe in ways that are appropriately tuned to their diverse needs and priorities
- AEC will strengthen the student voice inside the association and its membership

Pillar 3: Strengthening partnership and interaction with stakeholders
- AEC will engage with organisations dealing with higher education policy at European level
- AEC will connect the levels and branches of the music education sector, helping it to become a united voice for music within the cultural and political debate
- AEC will strengthen dialogue with organisations dealing with arts practise, arts education and culture and strengthen interdisciplinarity

Pillar 4: Fostering the value of music and music education in society
- AEC will represent and advance the interests of the Higher Music Education sector at national, European and global levels for the greater societal good
- AEC will work to increase opportunity and access to Music Education
• AEC will assist its members in engaging audiences in an evolving cultural environment and in exploring the musical needs in society
  o An additional chapter ‘Ensuring operation excellence’ was added and is dedicated to more practical matters:
    ▪ AEC will perform all the functions of an effective and efficient member association, with clear governance and a well-run, proficient and dedicated office team
    ▪ AEC will strengthen its financial sustainability and strive to become more independent from project funding
    ▪ AEC will strengthen and improve the communication to and from members and reinforce its role as an information platform and as a “trend scout”
    ▪ AEC will develop its relationship with its members
• The members did not make any suggestions or comments during the GA, but did already during the Regional Meetings. All AEC members are invited to send comments in written to the AEC Office by the end of February. AEC Council will then adopt the final Strategic Plan at its March 2018 meeting, based on the comments received.

✓ The members present approved the revised AEC Strategic Plan, with five abstentions.
✓ The members present unanimously approved to extend the period of validity of the plan from 2016-2020 to 2016-2021.

6. Approval of the AEC Sustainability Plan

• Eirik Birkeland, AEC President, presents the necessity of the AEC Sustainability Plan, especially in a situation where AEC is not dependent on project funding.
  o The fundamental principle is to keep the costs as the financial burdens on AEC members as low as possible
  o The aim of the plan is to enable AEC to maintain the high quality of its work and to progressively decrease the extent to which the Association’s income is dependent on project funding and to ensure that AEC relies on a more stable income.

• Linda Messas, General Manager, presents the Sustainability Plan and its principles.
  o The sustainability plan envisions the financial situation of AEC after the end of the SMS project (end of Nov 2021) and consists of 4 steps:
    1 - Setting targets concerning the level of expenditure AEC will have in 2022
      ▪ We should maintain a high level of activities run by an Office with the same composition as currently (rather than scale down the size of the office) with 6 full-time staff members and 2 interns.
      ▪ From 2022 onwards, travel and accommodation costs for members of Council and for 4 WGs should be covered by AEC (promote participation) - to ensure that finance is not a bar to participation in AEC at a strategic level
      ▪ We should raise AEC staff members’ wages to a fair and reasonable level in line with Belgian standards and with the level of expertise present in the team
      ▪ We should build up financial reserves amounting to 10% of AEC total annual budget, in accordance with the principles of good economic management and in order to remain fully operational even in times of economic uncertainty
    2 - Setting targets in relation to the income strands on which AEC will be able to rely on in 2022 and in relation to the proportion of the total income that they will represent
      ▪ The AEC is planning to rely on Membership fees, Events fees, Fees for services that AEC will start (or continue) to offer, Project Funding.
      ▪ MusiQuE will continue to reimburse AEC for the hours of the 2 staff members who are employed by AEC and serviced on a part-time basis to MusiQuE.
      ▪ In the plan which we are now proposing, membership fees represent 58% of the total income in 2022, events fees represent 27% of that total income, services offered by AEC represent 3 %, project funding 4% and reimbursement from MusiQuE 7%.
    3 - Revising AEC income strands
- The AEC proposes to raise the membership fees by 29%, but we are proposing a raise of the membership fee which will impact mostly members situated in a country with a relatively high GNI and/or members with more than 700 students. This is in order to ensure fairness and equity between members.

- For countries in which the GNI is lower than 35,000 international dollars:
  - Step 1: As in previous years, an inflation rate is applied to ALL membership fees (+1.5% per year).
  - Step 2: The fee (incl. inflation) is adjusted based on the number of music-related students in the institution

- For countries in which the GNI is equal to or higher than 35,000 international dollars
  - Step 1: As in previous years, an inflation rate is applied to ALL membership fees (+1.5% per year).
  - Step 2: The membership fee (incl. inflation) is raised in order to reach a proportion of the GNI that is close to 3%.
  - Step 3: The fee is then adjusted based on the number of music-related students in the institution as explained above:

- Events fees: The AEC proposes that by the year 2022, the Congress fee is raised by 100 euros, the IRC fee by 30 euros, the PJP and EPARM fees by 20 euros.

- Services fees: Pre-AEC event seminar fees will be raised to 80 euros by 2022, the number of sponsors at events will be slightly increased, and we plan to offer a new service to assist AEC member institutions with revising or writing project applications for EU or other schemes.

- Project funding: AEC is still planning to get involved as coordinator or partner in various projects to be at the forefront of our sector.

- Income from MusiQuE: MusiQuE is fully independent with regards to governance, and is only progressively becoming self-sustainable. Since 2016, 2 staff members of AEC are serviced to MusiQuE for a total of 1FTE per year and MusiQuE reimburses every year to AEC a higher proportion of these staff costs

4. Implementation of the Plan: adjusting the income strands progressively, from 2019 to 2022

- The President announced that all comments mentioned during the regional meetings will be taken into account, and discussed by Council. AEC Council will adjust the plan and propose the final version at the GA next year. All AEC members are also invited to send comments in written to the office by the end of February. The President asked the members present to comment on each of the 4 parts of the plan.
  - Claus Larsen’s (SDMK - Danish National Academy of Music) question concerned the independency between MusiQuE and AEC, given the close personal connection between the people involved in the AEC and MusiQuE: The members of the board of MusiQuE are there in their individual capacity. The European standards and guidelines are fulfilled in terms of independence, but MusiQuE is still working on the financial sustainability.
  - Isabel Replumaz’s (CNSMD de Lyon) question concerned the calculation of students per institution regarding the new membership fee: For the calculation only music students from the higher level are used.

✓ The General Assembly approves the principles of the plan (including the overall levels and the implementation of the plan from 2019).

7. Financial Report of the Secretary General

- Harrie van den Elsen, AEC Secretary General, explains the overall financial position of the Association. He shows slides of the summary overview of the accounts, which can also be found in the AEC Annual Report 2016. A copy of the forecast outturn for 2017 and first provisional budget for 2018 has been distributed beforehand, which also includes the 2016 figures for reference. The complete Annual Accounts (in English only) are available upon request. The full text of the financial report is also available to the members upon request.

- Report on the 2016 accounts:
  - (NOTES? On expenditure and income)
An online voting of the accounts was carried out by the office in June 2016. Here are the results:

- 50 active members responded to the online voting notification. Of these, 48 approved the accounts and 2 abstained. There were no votes against approval of the accounts.
- The Secretary General thanks the external auditors Paolo Troncon, Conservatorio Di Musica Di Castelfranco Veneto A. Steffani, and Peter Dejans, Orpheus Institute Gent, for carrying out this function for AEC for 2016. He informs the GA that they both recommended the approval of the 2016 accounts.

### Proposed membership fees for 2018

- In accordance with AEC usual practice, Council proposes that the new membership fee levels set out in the reader, which reflect both an anticipated 1.5% indexation rise and updated GNI figures (from 2016), are adopted for 2018.

### Forecast outturn 2017 and Budget proposal 2018

- **Income 2017:**
  - The income from membership fees and from events fees should be slightly higher than last year. The members’ contribution to the EASY Pilot Project (the European Online Application System for mobility of students and staff) has increased as more institutions joined (and are still joining) the project and as we had to raise the fee. The amount of the FULL SCORE subsidy is lower in 2017 as the project has ended on 31st August 2017. AEC is however receiving other project grants in relation to the other projects it is involved in. Finally, the costs reimbursed to AEC by MusiQuE, both for overhead costs and for staff costs, are raising every year.
  - **Expenditures of 2017** are generally at the same level as in 2016. Staff costs shall rise due to the implementation of an indexation rate and the full-time employment of the General, who was on maternity leave for 3 months last year. Costs of events and Council were not anymore covered by the FULL SCORE project, which explains their raise in 2017. FULL SCORE projects expenses have of course decreased substantially but the important investment in the setting up of the European Online Application System EASY continues in 2017, with both developmental costs and support costs amounting in total to 78’000 euros.
  - As a result, the forecast shows a negative result of about 10’000 euros.

- **Concerning the income of 2018:**
  - The membership fees will slightly increase in line with the indexed fees proposed for 2018. The income from event fees may still increase compared to what has been budgeted (which is lower than in 2017 as financial conditions of the next EMP and L&T platform are not fully clear yet). We do expect a slightly higher income from institutions’ contributions to EASY (European Online Application system) as the system should be up and running and attract more institutions than in the pilot phase - but it is hard at this stage to estimate how many institutions will still join before we even have the amount of member institutions joining in October-November 2017. The SMS grant we have requested from the European Commission is higher than the one for FULL SCORE. Finally, the costs reimbursed to AEC by MusiQuE, both for overhead costs and for staff costs, are raising every year.

- **Expected expenditures of 2018:**
  - Most of the events costs in 2018 are not covered by project funding - although there may still be changes in this regard once we start with the implementation of the SMS project. On the contrary, travel bursaries for members to attend AEC events will be included in the SMS budget and increased (up to 7000 euros while at the moment the travel bursaries themselves amount to 3000 euros). Project expenses will increase of course in relation to the implementation of the FULL SCORE project. There will still be costs associated to the running of the EASY system, as well as some costs for the further development of the system, but less than in 2017.
  - As a result, the forecast shows a positive result of about 9’000 euros.

- The General Assembly approves the Forecast 2017
- The General Assembly approves the Budget proposal 2018

### Appointment of two external auditors for the 2017 accounts
✓ The General Assembly anonymously approved the appointment of Peter Dejans and Diana Mos as external auditors for the 2017 accounts.

8. Decision on the continuation of simultaneous translation provided during AEC Congress

- The CEO presented the proposal on stopping the simultaneous translation during the AEC Annual Congress. The Council believes that the costs for simultaneous translation are not in adequate proportion with the number of participants using that service.
- Instead, it is planned to translate more written publications in more languages than before. In addition to English, French, German and Italian, this might be in particular Spanish and Polish in order to cover the six biggest language communities inside the European Union.
- During the regional meetings on Friday it became clear that there are many questions and comments from the AEC membership. The CEO asked the members present to comment:
  - Martin Prchal (Royal Conservatoire The Hague) commented that the AEC is an European organization which is challenged to be inclusive for all its members. As cultural diversity also includes linguistic diversity, he is against the proposal to stop the simultaneous translation. He suggests that speakers should be able to express themselves in their own language, and that we might at the moment exclude possible participants who do not come because they know they have to speak English.
  - Frans Koevoets (Codarts Rotterdam) commented that the AEC should listen to the minority, rather than the participants who do feel comfortable speaking English.
  - Bruno Pereira (ESMAE Porto) commented that nobody would disagree with Frans and Martin, because the AEC has to be inclusive for minorities. However, he believes that having translation to German, French and Italian does not save that diversity, as this still enables only certain participants to speak their preferred language (and not Portuguese for example). He says that this diversity could also be expressed by extending the written translations to other languages, as the AEC proposes.
- The Council decided to have a preliminary vote, given the comments above, and will reconsider its proposal and come back next year.

✓ Among the General Assembly, 52 people voted in favour of the proposal to stop simultaneous translation, 21 were opposing the proposal and 19 abstaining.

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

- After MusiQuE’s presentation the General Assembly proceeds to the endorsement of AEC Council recommendation to the MusiQuE Board in relation to the selection for a new MusiQuE Board member.
- MusiQuE Board members are nominated for 3 years. However, a rolling system was agreed by the three appointed members so that new board members from AEC membership could progressively be involved. One of the Board members appointed by AEC in 2014 will therefore step down this year.
- An open call for applications was launched in June by MusiQuE to recruit a new board member. Council considered all applications carefully and, feeling that two candidates were very experienced with quality assurance and very competent, Council has nominated two of them ex aequo.

✓ The members present endorsed AEC Council’s recommendation to the MusiQuE Board regarding the nomination of a student member of the MusiQuE board and regarding the appointment by MusiQuE of Martin Prchal for a second term as Chair of the Board.

10. Announcement of the Executive Committee election results and elections to the Council

- Announcement of the Executive Committee Election Results:
  ✓ Georg Schulz is elected as Vice-President with 104 votes.
- Elections to the Council: The election procedure is explained and the GA proceeds to vote leaving the room after the GA.

11. Confirmation of new members, withdrawals and expired memberships

- The following institutions have been accepted as Active Members in 2017 (November 2016 to November 2017):
  - Istituto Superiore di Studi Musicali “Claudio Monteverdi”, Cremona, Italy
The following institutions have withdrawn their membership:
- CRR de Strasbourg, France
- Conservatorio di Musica "G. Cantelli", Novara, Italy
- University of Salford, Manchester, UK
- Mason Gross School of the Arts, New Brunswick, USA
- Conservatorio di Musica "F. Reggio Calabria, Italy"

The following memberships have been expired in 2017 (TBC):
- CRR "Pierre Barbizet", Marseille
- Conservatorio di Musica "Giovan Battista Martini", Bologna
- Conservatorio di Musica "F. Tofrrefranca", Vibo, Valenzia
- Universitatea Transilvania din Brasov

12. Future Congresses
- The next Congress will take place at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz, November 8-10 2018.
- The 2019 Congress will take place at the Conservatorio Statale di Musica "G. Verdi", Turin, 7-9 November

Following the voting process, it was announced that both Claire Mera Nelson, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, (97 votes) and Iñaki Sandoval, University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy, (86 votes) were elected as AEC Council members. 103 votes were cast, with 102 votes being valid.

Brussels, 1. December 2017

Eirik Birkeland, AEC President