

## AEC Statement on the Joint Policy Debate between Ministers of Finance and Education

Dear Ministers of the Council of the European Union,

the *Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen* (AEC) is an association of European Higher Music Institutions. Covering the great majority of those institutions that are active in the field, AEC can rightly claim to be the leading voice of higher music education in Europe.

We welcome the initiative by the Finnish Presidency-in-exercise of the Council of the European Union to hold the first-ever **Joint Policy Debate between Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Education** on Friday 8 November next.

We acknowledge the importance of the upcoming meeting in order to raise awareness about spending in education. However, we would like to share our concerns about the exclusively economic-driven approach that is set to lead the conversation.

Effective and high-quality education is without any doubt key “to achieve a strong economic base for Europe”, as the agenda item reads. As representatives of higher art education and the arts, we are aware of our responsibilities and contribution to the European economic development through the creative sector.

However, we believe that the arts and art education are also essential for **personal and societal development** and thus to enable future generations to fulfil their role as responsible **European citizens**.

Against this backdrop, we must recognise the **vital role of the arts and humanities** in understanding the society and the world around us.

Dear Ministers,

In light of the above, we call on you today to consider in your Conclusions that:

1. The arts are a vital part of any educational setting and need to be mainstreamed through the **STEAM education approach**, bringing together Science, Tech, Engineering and Mathematics with Arts.
2. The arts and art education empower people’s **creative, innovative and critical thinking** and help in developing **intercultural skills** that are crucial for today’s global citizens.
3. The arts and art education enable people to lead a **fulfilling life**, to develop **emotional intelligence**, ultimately **contributing to society as a whole**.



(AEC President)



(AEC CEO)