

PARTICIPANTS QUESTIONNAIRE

43rd AEC ANNUAL CONGRESS 2016 & GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Academy of Music and Drama, Gothenburg, Sweden

10-12 November 2016

The AEC Congress 2016 in Gothenburg can be considered as a success. With an overall rate of 8.61 out of 10, it scored a higher mark than the previous edition (which got 7.8 out of 10), even though the questionnaire response rate was much lower. According to the participants, the AEC is making a good job keeping members updated, bringing them together, identifying interesting topics and bringing them on stage. The keynote speaker was highly appreciated and among the best rated sessions there were the MusiQuE-pre-congress Workshop, the Regional meetings, the sessions on the Learning and Teaching Platform, the session about refugees and those related to Students' participation. Student involvement in the AEC is in fact progressively increasing and becoming more structured, and participants really appreciated it. The main innovation introduced in this Congress edition (the use of an online App, an increased use of social media for networking and the "Opening Brainstorming" discussion format) were highly valued and will be further improved in the upcoming Congress editions.

Amount of respondents: 69

Amount of participants: 350

How important were the following reasons for coming to this meeting? (1= not relevant at all, 5= very relevant)

"Participation in AEC activity is utterly important for any European institution, with regard to international cooperation, innovation, didactic and artistic update".

The reasons are listed in order of importance according to the respondents:

1. Networking opportunities
2. Being updated on AEC activities
3. Topics addressed by the congress
4. Participating in General Assembly
5. Venue, place of meeting

This year again, the participants showed a strong interest in the networking opportunities the congress offers. With a grade of 4.43 and the highest number of 5/5 (43), considering the

amount participants (350) and their geographical spread, the Congress is highly appreciated for the network it creates and strengthens.

The AEC makes a good job at keeping the participants updated on the last news (grade of 4.33/5). Being updated by the AEC on the last news and projects seems to go hand in hand with the network: the attendees come to the Congress to improve/strengthen their relations with the other members and to be aware of the multiple possible and current projects within the AEC members. Indeed, several comments mentioned the “precious exchanges” and “cooperation” between the institutions. They are always interested in further international projects, joint programmes and mobility developments. In that matter, discussing “relevant topics and issues” in higher music education with other colleagues on a European level is valuable to them.

The topics addressed by the Congress received a grade of 4.07/5. The participants enjoyed the topics although some comments indicated being interested in more innovative topics in the next meetings.

Participating in the General Assembly was generally appreciated (3.9/5) despite a higher rate of lower grades (11.59% of the respondents put a 1). The General Assembly remains an important component of the Congress and the participation rate for the vote shows the interest of the participants to elect the new AEC council. This year was particularly appealing for the participant because a new President was elected.

Finally, the place of the meeting was considered less important than in previous years. With one point less than last year in the average (3.19/5 against 4.19/5 in Glasgow) Gothenburg’s venue also gathers 64% of the participants grading the place of meeting under 3/5.

Comments on the reasons for coming to the meeting:

Highlights:

- ❖ Networking opportunities
- ❖ Updates on the AEC activities
- ❖ Relevant topic and issues discussed
- ❖ Possibility to create collaborative projects
- ❖ Making plans for the future

Remark:

- ❖ Venue not very attractive

➔ **To sum-up/suggestions for the next meetings:**

- ❖ Advertise and communicate on the Congress through the network perspective as it attracts lots of participants.
- ❖ Keep updating the participants on the last news/projects
- ❖ Choose a more accessible venue for the meeting
- ❖ Keep paying attention to the relevance of the topics addressed by the congress

Relevance of the meeting
(1= not relevant at all, 5= very relevant)

“Highlights of the Congress: Discussion sessions, meeting colleagues from different parts of the world, discussing educational programs, exchanging ideas, creating new contacts, inspirational concerts, visiting a new city, and seeing alternate ways of doing things in music”.

1. How relevant was the Congress for you?
2. How relevant was the Congress programme for you?

The relevance of the meeting is evaluated at 4.51/5: 67% of the participants judged the meeting very relevant for them and their institutions. The programme also gathers high satisfaction from with an average of 4.23/5.

Comments on the different aspects of the Congress:

Highlights:

- ❖ Lots of parallel sessions
- ❖ Opportunity to interact with colleagues in small groups
- ❖ Projects implemented by the student and their concerns for the refugees
- ❖ Meeting new people
- ❖ Being inspired by what other conservatories are doing across Europe
- ❖ Updates on the AEC initiatives and projects
- ❖ Students involvement and dialogue
- ❖ Opening brainstorming

- ❖ Regional meeting
- ❖ Having a content related Congress
- ❖ Keynote speech
- ❖ Small groups in the sessions
- ❖ U-multirank
- ❖ MusiQuE workshop
- ❖ Different opinions on the music chosen for the closing concert

Overall, the Congress has fulfilled its goals in terms of providing updates on projects and network. The participants enjoyed most of the sessions which they found relevant and useful for their institutions.

→ To sum-up/suggestions for the next meetings:

- ❖ Keep having a high number of parallel sessions, which gives the choice to the participants and the opportunity to be in a small group for discussion.
- ❖ Keep having a networking approach
- ❖ Developing the topics on current/serious European issues (the refugees for example) which was particularly appreciated by the participants (over 5 positive comments about it) who were “moved” and “fascinated” about the students initiatives to integrate the refugees into their institutions and music in general.
- ❖ Keep involving the students in the events
- ❖ Keep focusing on the content and the theme of the Congress
- ❖ A quality keynote speech is much appreciated

Please evaluate the Sessions (1= poor, 5= very good)

The table below shows the marks given by the participants to each session, from the best to the lowest grade:

Rank	Name of the session	Average rade (Scale 1
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		to 5)
1	Pre-Congress Workshop MusiQuE (if attended)	4.85
2	Student Newcomers Session (if attended)	4.75
3	U-Multirank Pilot	4.63
4	Welcome to Newcomers (if attended)	4.53
5	Regional meetings with Council Members	4.39
6	Opening Event	4.36
7	Learning and Teaching Platform	4.32
8	Students' Voice	4.29
9	General Assembly 2016	4.28
10	Plenary Session I - Keynote by Anders Jormin	4.27
11	Audience engagement	4.25
12	Closing Session	4.24
13	Creative Entrepreneurship	4.23
14	Information Forum	4.20
15	Addressing the issue of Refugees in our institutions	4.16
16	Opening Brainstorming	4.06

17	Revised AEC Learning Outcomes	4.00
18	Pre-College Standards	4.00
19	MusiQuE (parallel Session)	4.00
20	Folk and World Music experiences	3.90
21	Music and Gender	3.67
22	More Music in Classroom	3.55
23	Thinking International	3.48

The most attended sessions according to the questionnaire can be found below. The list is in descending order of attendance (most attended is mentioned first):

- Opening Event
- Regional meetings with Council Members
- Keynote Speech by Anders Jormin
- General Assembly
- Information Forum
- Closing Session
- Opening Brainstorming

There is no huge gap between the evaluation of each sessions (average of 4.5/5 for the ten of them), which shows a significant satisfaction from the participants). The MusiQuE workshop and the Newcomers sessions were particularly appreciated: they should be kept in the next years.

Also, the sessions which gathered the highest grades were the ones appreciated for going “in depth” into the topic they were addressing. On the contrary, some sessions were criticized to

be too “general” and only presenting an overview of the topic instead of offering case studies or concrete examples.

Although it is not the highest grade, the session on the refugees definitely gathered the best comments in the questionnaire. The participants seemed to like a session that tackles a serious topic related to the news. Besides, the implication of the students in the cause was seen as very inspiring for any institution willing to do something for the refugees. The institutions have indeed the power “give them a voice through music”, which is a great help to remove the “refugee etiquette” they have in our societies.

Highlights of the Sessions:	Remarks:
Interactions possibilities during the parallel sessions	Parallel Sessions were too short
Topics of the sessions	Topics on cultural awareness, intercultural competences and innovation missing
Translation efforts for the Italian delegation	More translated sessions or some sessions in German, Italian or French would be nice for non-English speakers
Keynote speech (excellent and creative)	No time available to debate and react on the keynote speech
Julie Ward’s speech	
Good speakers	Speakers not well organized and informed on the development of the schedule
Opening Brainstorming (informative format)	Opening brainstorming should have been better prepared
Information Forum	Information Forum was too short
Repetition of some parallel sessions	Some free time between the parallel sessions
	Schedule too intense
	Regional meeting for Spain and Portugal was weak
	Better communication and explanation on how the elections work
	More music breaks

Many participants would have preferred longer parallel sessions to be able to properly reflect on the topic and have enough time to ask questions. Also, the parallel sessions should be separated by a short (5 to 10 minutes) break in order to reach the room of the next session on time. The information forum was also too short, mainly due to the previous activities which ended up later than expected. In that matter, the information forum is a much appreciated format that deserves to be extended and developed in the next congresses. This year’s format of repeating some of the sessions was a very good idea according to some of the comments.

The keynote speech had great comments: it was “excellent” and “creative”. Some participants would have appreciated to have a bit of time after the speech to react and reflect on it with the speaker.

The topics on the sessions were considered as relevant and interesting, as well as the theme of the Congress itself. However, more innovative topics requests are recurrent in the comments. Some participants think that this year’s topics could have been addressed 10 years ago and that the AEC should have more daring in its topics.

Some participants felt that the speakers were not well informed on the development of the sessions. A complete and clear communication with them on how the proceeding of the parallel sessions may be necessary in the next years so there is no confusion.

On the same level, some participants were not fully aware on how the General Assembly voting system works: how does the election for the council members works regarding the regional grouping, etc. A clear and concise explanation on the AEC election to all the voters should be very much welcomed next time.

→ To sum-up/suggestions for the next meetings:

- ❖ Longer lasting parallel sessions
- ❖ A bit of time off in between the sessions
- ❖ An ameliorated and longer version of the informative forum
- ❖ Scheduled time after the keynote speech to reflect and react on it with the speaker
- ❖ A moderator should be present in each room to manage the time, wrapping up and introduce the speakers with a pre-established format/guideline.
- ❖ More innovative topics
- ❖ A better communication with the speakers concerning the development of the sessions
- ❖ A better explanation of the elections to the participants
- ❖ Make sure the speakers propose an “in-depth” approach of the topic in the parallel sessions
- ❖ Repetition of the parallel sessions is a great idea
- ❖ More preparation from the speaker to present a topic

Relevance of the meeting for the institutions:

1. Do you consider your attendance to the Congress will help you/your institution in your (daily) work?
2. Do you consider your attendance to the Congress will help your institution?
3. Do you consider you receive enough information from the AEC activities during the year?

78.26% of the participants think that their attendance to the Congress will help them or their institutions in daily work (20% of “Maybe”). 85.5% think that their attendance to the Congress will help their institution in general. 87% of them consider receiving enough information from the AEC activities during the year.

The Congress has definitely a positive impact on the institution and is a great help for their work. Very few respondents indicated “No” to these three questions (4 in total - among which 3 consider not receiving enough information from the AEC).

The presence of the AEC on the social media is crucial: 34 of the 69 respondents would like to be updated through Facebook (30 of them) or Twitter (4 of them). It is paramount for the AEC to continue developing its influence on these platforms and to communicate through them as it is quick and easy to update. More and more institutions and participants use the social media and its impact will certainly increase in the next years. Still, 35 respondents indicated “Other”: lots of them specified a more frequent newsletter in the comments as well as publications/reports.

From the comments section:

Highlights	Remarks
Whova (which should be “accessible all the time to be in better contact”)	More publications
Concrete examples	A more frequent newsletter
The website	Keep improving the website and social media presence

General impact and evaluation of the meeting:

Highest to lowest in meeting the participants' expectations:

1. Networking opportunities
2. Being updated on AEC activities
3. Venue, place of meeting
4. Topics addressed during the Congress
5. Participating in General Assembly

It is, without any surprise, the networking opportunities and the updates that have the biggest impact on the institutions with respectively 4.41/5 and 4.36/5. Here, the venue has a higher grade than the topics: a large list of topic suggestion was provided by the respondents (see below). The General Assembly was the last in ranking (3.97/5) although not criticized at all in the comments. As seen before, the GA was placed 4th out of 5 among the main reasons why people come to the Congress.

Highlight:

- ❖ Good organization

Remarks/suggestions:

- ❖ Having a session providing professional development and tools for young musicians aiming at finding a job
- ❖ Although the participants "do not come for tourism", the venue difficult to navigate around and not very attractive
- ❖ It was cold in many rooms
- ❖ Too much queue to access the food and coffee
- ❖ More innovative topics

The 69 participants gave a grade of 8.61/10 for the meeting, which is one point higher than last year. 86.6% of the respondents will go to the next congress while the remaining 10% said "maybe". Nobody indicated that they will not attend another congress.

Suggestions of topics for future meetings:

- ❖ Admission procedures at undergraduate and post-graduate levels
- ❖ Data about the employability of bachelor/master graduates and the kind of job they find
- ❖ Didactics curricula
- ❖ Musical education in primary schools
- ❖ Further case studies in diversity in conservatoires
- ❖ Development of joint bachelor or master degrees
- ❖ Working more digitally
- ❖ More information/orientation for newcomers (besides the newcomers session)
- ❖ Changes after Brexit
- ❖ How organizational developments can go hand in hand with curriculum development
- ❖ Multidisciplinary conservatoires
- ❖ Employability aspects
- ❖ The state of research in publishing music
- ❖ Musicians health
- ❖ How to motivate teachers towards excellence in teaching
- ❖ Concrete examples of success and failures in shared programs
- ❖ Audience engagement
- ❖ How to stimulate Southern and marginal institutions to become proactive within the AEC
- ❖ How to make all actors in a conservatory more active in the institution

→ To sum-up/suggestions for the next meetings:

The most recurrent topics mentioned by the participants in the comments were: general management of a conservatoire, digital learning/teaching, joint degrees and employment.

The future topics should definitely include these interests, or improve them. A better communication on the General Assembly could make it look more appealing and meaningful.

Evaluation of the organisation

The following aspects are listed in descending order of their valuation:

1. Helpfulness of the conference staff
2. Registration Procedure
3. Overall organization
4. Conference Reader (4.64/5)
5. Information provided before the meeting (4.64/5)
6. Facilities, meeting rooms (4.52/5)
7. Hotel (4.45/5)
8. Catering (3.9/5)

The accessibility, usefulness and patience of the staff from both the AEC and the Academy were very much appreciated. With 4.78/5, it is the highest grade given by the respondents in the questionnaire (83% of 5/5). The registration organization is efficient (4.75/5) and the overall organization is evaluated at 4.67/5.

The conference reader, although very useful and complete, becomes less and less popular due to paper waste. Next congresses should try to make it thinner or focus a lot on the Whova (very much appreciated by the participants).

The participants had the most important information before arriving at the venue. However, all the speakers did not know some information on the development of the Congress and the participants would have appreciated a clearer explanation about the elections. The pre-congress communication should therefore be more case by case and more regular in order to avoid confusion.

The facilities and the meeting rooms were well organized and maintained although some participants complained about the cold temperature in some rooms. The host institution should make sure of the room temperatures, especially when the Congress takes place in November in a cold country. Lastly, the Wi-Fi connection could have been more accessible: a simple password available all day should be displayed by the host institution. In Gothenburg the participants had to re-connect after an hour off the Internet and the password was difficult to enter. The participants appreciate an easy and fast Internet connection which has become necessary for lots of things, including the access to Whova.

The participants invited by the AEC all liked the hotel. With 4.45/5, the hotels in Gothenburg were all easily booked nearby the venue and provided a good service despite the price.

Lastly, the food has the lowest grade of the organisation evaluation (3.9/5). Judged as “often cold” and “tasteless”, the food was only satisfactory at the gala dinner. More than one participant mention the importance of catering in this kind of event as the mingling and networking is highly appreciated around good food. Besides, as most of them paid a fee to come to the Congress, they expected good quality and warm food during the event.

Comments on the organization:

Highlights:	Remarks/suggestions:
Overall organization	Reader too thick
Concert	Cold food for lunch
Gala diner food	Tasteless food
Whova app	Better coffee and more coffee tables would be nice
	Too little food and drinks between the sessions during the meeting
	Whova management should be improved
	Wi-Fi connection difficult sometimes

→ To sum-up/suggestions for the next meetings:

- ❖ A thinner or an electronic reader to avoid paper waste
- ❖ Pay better attention to the quality of the coffee break and the food
- ❖ Pay better attention to the quality of the Wi-Fi connection
- ❖ Pay better attention to the heat in the rooms
- ❖ Whova to be further developed
- ❖ Concert should be creative (but not too much)