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# 45<sup>th</sup> AEC ANNUAL CONGRESS and GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## 8-10 November 2018

### Strengthening Music in Society

The title of this year's AEC Congress refers to some crucial social and political challenges of our times. How can we contribute to give access to music and arts education and to cultural participation to more people than before? How can we make the work of music education institutions important to as many people as possible? At the same time, we have to ask what contribution politics and society as a whole has to make to enable Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEI) to fulfil our mission both now and in the future.

Culture and education issues are currently, as it seems, attracting more attention from policy-makers in the European Commission and from members of the European Parliament than in the past. Concurrently, political decision-makers express more and more on specific requirements for what they expect from fostering and promoting culture, education and the arts. These should contribute to creating new jobs and economic growth, to tackle the digital shift and to promote integration to push back populism.

The title of this year's congress is also the title of AEC's new, EU funded Creative Europe project: *Strengthening Music in Society (SMS)*. The project idea of AEC-SMS is based on the conviction that the concept of freedom of the arts and expectation of an artist to take social responsibility is not a contradiction, but a tension that needs to be lived. The objective should be to insist on, to promote and to live for the freedom of the arts without abandoning to take responsibility for life quality and the well-being of our diverse and democratic societies. However, with this enduring tension in mind, the AEC Congress 2018 will discuss and explore constructive and forward-looking approaches for our work for Strengthening Music in Society.

As usual, this congress will offer a whole gathering of workshops, discussion forums, best practice presentations, panels and plenaries to further investigate the question of how to put the intention of strengthening music in society into concrete action and how to implement and to embed it into the day-to-day work of HMEIs. In terms of content, this will include: the role of symphony orchestras and of primary school classroom music education; globalisation issues, as well as power balance in a teacher-student relationship which is characterised by one-to-one tuition.

To sustainably follow up on discussions that has been previously initiated, the main topics of the previous two congresses will also be further pursued in Graz. Both the topic of *Diversity, Identity and Inclusiveness* (2016) and leadership issues (2017) are closely linked to the question of the societal responsibility of the arts and the social mission of higher music education.

With these themes in mind, you are warmly invited to Graz to join the AEC journey towards Tomorrow's Conservatoires in our society.