

Thomas De Baets, Gerhard Sammer, Adri de Vugt (eds.)

European Perspectives on Music Education **5**

International Cooperation



Helbling

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European Perspectives

on Music Education 5

International Cooperation

ed. by Thomas De Baets, Gerhard Sammer, Adri de Vugt

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Franz Niermann

Music Educational Interests in an Association

Development and Perspectives in the History of the European Association for Music in Schools (EAS)

Introduction

As a network of members, the EAS provides opportunities for encounter, and exchange of experience, and thus for personal professional development. The professional dialogue and debate, as well as the presentations of projects and research findings, at the annual EAS conferences, develop and strengthen the network. As an organization the EAS is committed to building the profile of the school subject music in general education (primary and secondary schooling). Through lobbying, it aims to influence policy-makers and the decision-making processes that affect the value and quality of music teaching in schools.

Both aspects – the personal interests of the music educators and the professional political character of the association – can be seen as two sides of the same coin. Both aspects are expressed in declarations and the publications of the association. A glance at the history of the EAS reveals the ambition to keep these two sides in a good balance – on the one hand inwardly oriented to the interests of the members and on the other, politically, thus outwardly oriented.

Music education in the schools of the 21st century

The statement regarding the “Schools for the 21st Century” can be seen as a characteristic example of the EAS as a political organization and a social influence. In 2007 the European Commission had launched a large-scale consultation examining the question of the development of schools for the future. The EAS, hand in hand with the Comenius network

meNet – Music Education Network, initiated and supervised the writing of a statement of what should be the key factors in the development of schools and of music education as follows:

“The EAS (European Association for Music in Schools) is the organisation of Music Educators (teachers, artists, scientists) who are committed to enlarging and improving music education throughout the countries of Europe. Members of the EAS are to a great extent involved in EU projects concerning music education in schools and music teacher training.”¹

Every single topic of the statement is of strong social and educational relevance: (1) Key competences for all, (2) Preparing students for lifelong learning, (3) Contributing to sustainable economic growth, (4) Responding to challenges in our societies, (5) A school for all, (6) Preparing young Europeans for active citizenship, (7) Teachers as key agents for a change.

The start of the EAS in a dramatic political situation

Already in the founding of the EAS at the European Forum *Perspectives of music education in a new Europe* such political self-confidence was visible. This forum took place in the context of a major German conference in 1990 with the theme *In borders – beyond borders*. The date of formation itself was full of dramatic political explosiveness. Specifically the new situation in Europe after the ‘Wende’ (turning point), i.e. after the end of the division of Europe into the two hitherto hostile blocs ‘West’ and ‘East’. This was connected with the vision that not only the separation of Western and Eastern countries should be overcome, but that all European countries might move closer together and understand themselves as one common Europe.

Regarding the EAS as an ‘Arbeitsgemeinschaft’ (working community), there was initially less the notion of a unified interaction but rather the idea of solidarity and cooperation among the different national associations for music education. (As an English translation of the German term ‘Arbeitsgemeinschaft’ initially the word ‘alliance’ was used, later named as ‘association’.) While calling to put across common demands and objectives “to the political public in Europe”, it states: “there must be a difference whether only one national association states demands in its particular country [...] or whether suddenly the solidarity of 20 or more professional associations of European countries stand behind these demands.” (Ehrenforth 1990, p. 141).

¹ http://menet.mdw.ac.at/menetsite/Medien/EASmeNetSchools21_EN.pdf [16.12.2015].

Political demands: the resolution of 1990

In this atmosphere of a fundamental political new beginning the EAS was founded, as mentioned before, at the European Forum in Lübeck in 1990. A statement, "Resolution of the European Alliance for School Music", that presents the principles, aims and demands of the association, was drawn up and signed by representatives of 19 European countries. The resolution began with the words: "The EAS claims for the states of Europe ..." and stated at first general demands, such as life enrichment through music and music-making, especially in the increasing leisure time and "to maintain and develop the musical traditions of Europe for future generations". Then general objectives were formulated, which are connected to music education in schools: generally an "improvement and expansion of music teaching", then "enabling the personal encounter of children and adolescents with demanding music", the "development of their creative power", and the "ability to deal with music, especially of the 20th century".

The German term 'Schulmusik'

In the last quoted citations, a way of thinking appears that has to be interpreted explicitly in the context of the concrete demands. Primarily the idea of music lessons in institutions of higher education, in the *Gymnasium* (grammar school, secondary school), rather than in the *Grundschule* (primary school, elementary school) or even in the *Kindergarten* (nursery school) was thought about. For this idea the term 'Schulmusik' is used in the German language. In the beginning of EAS it was – in an irritating way – translated into English as 'school music'. 'Schulmusik' was a term of high importance to the initiators of the EAS, notably to the first EAS president Dieter Zimmerschied; this term meant 'higher' music education with "demanding music" in the centre. Ideally, it was assumed that the teachers have been trained for this kind of music education at *Musikhochschulen* (Conservatoires, Academies of Music), rather than, for example, at pedagogical departments of universities. It was presumed that the required high quality of artistic education only can be ensured at *Musikhochschulen*, but not in the context of teacher education at general universities. Music education in the *Grundschule* as well as in the *Kindergarten* was not implicated here, unless marginally (point 7 of the requirement catalogue) as a strengthening prerequisite for higher music education in the sense of "road maps for future interest and behaviour".

Concrete claims "for the countries of Europe"

The general framework, from which the concrete requirement catalogue with seven points was stated, corresponded to the situation of music teaching in secondary schools in Germany and Austria. The initiator and moderator of the Lübeck European Forum, Dieter Zimmerschied, extended an invitation to the forum especially via the German journal *Musik und Bildung* (Music and Education), edited by himself, well known by some music educators

all over Europe. Directly at the start he underlined the problem that the colleagues in Europe know little of each other, emphasizing the German perspective:

"[...] What do we actually know about music education in other countries? Do we German music teachers know anything, for example, about the technical problems as in Ireland, in Turkey or at least in the neighbouring country France?"²

The first and most important demand of the EAS "for the countries of Europe" concerned the weight of music lessons in the class schedule in general schools, thus regarding all schools and students. "At least two hours per week compulsory class teaching" in music at all school levels as well as additional hours for "ensemble work and musical working groups" were required. This was highly optimistic and rooted in the real teaching situation in Germany and Austria. For most of the European countries this demand was utopian or unrealistic.

Similarly, this applied to the other claims: the general possibility of music exams in the *Abitur* (final secondary-school examinations, university-entrance diploma), support for gifted individuals through extended music lessons, generally available technical classrooms, materials and media, music ensembles in all schools as well as the training of educationally and professionally competent music teachers for all age-groups and school levels.

The resolution as the EAS charter

In order to add authority to these demands, a few years after "Lübeck" that resolution was declared as the Charter, thus as the basic mission statement of the EAS assuming that the national associations for music education would benefit from this Charter and use it to emphasize the formulated demands in their respective countries. In addition, efforts were made at the central European level in Brussels, for example at a conference of the European Music Council, to achieve the political implementation of these demands.

Over the years it became clear that the list of demands of the EAS Charter proved to be unrealistic, especially because of the extreme differences in the European countries. The EAS as a political organisation did not have enough influence at its disposal to enforce the catalogue of demands at a central European level. This was also true for the individual national associations which had been expected to have more activities and more enforcement possibilities based on the declared Charter.

In terms of content regarding the exchange of information and experience for the improvement of music education, the list of demands did not promote any further development. The demands concerned rather the level of the organization, specifically the educational system, in which the music lessons should receive more weight. The

² ibidem

addressees of these claims were the school ministries and the school bureaucracy. For the music teachers in the schools and the university lecturers responsible for the training of music teachers, the Charter gave virtually no impetus in terms of exchange of experiences and the debate about what might constitute improved and strengthened music education in schools.

The change of the political self-image and strategy of the EAS, which is set out below under a variety of aspects, took a long time. Although it became evident that the Charter was practically more or less ineffective, it remained the formal basis of the corporate identity of the EAS for nearly two decades.

Developing professionalism in the network: the mission statement (2009)

Reading the current mission statement³ adopted in 2009 alongside the Charter, the decisive factors of changes in the EAS are immediately apparent. There are no demands referring to the outside, for example to educational institutions or "the countries", but it is now essentially about self-declaration: The EAS defines itself as a network of members for the exchange of experiences and for one's own professionalization – and thus for the improvement of music education. For this, the self-imposed "Mission and Objectives" and the "Field of Activities" are explained.

However, there are – at the end of the document – references to the political self-image of the association, such as the reference to the "accordance with the principles of UNESCO" ("a better mutual understanding among peoples and their different cultures and to the right for all musical cultures to coexist ...") as well as to promoting the cooperation with other professional organizations, institutions and initiatives, especially with organizations such as ISME (International Society for Music Education) and EMC (European Music Council). But even here the text is marked by the "We" formulation: There are no expectations or demands to others, but it is listed, in what areas and with which activities the EAS members engage in the improvement of music education. Members are encouraged to share their interests and experiences in the network and thus to pursue the joint goal of "high quality music education accessible to all". By defining the EAS as "a forum for teachers, teacher educators, students, researchers, artists and policy makers working in school related music education in Europe", the wide range of the network is emphasized.

³ <http://archive.is/oQxpW> [21.01.2016].

Aspects of development

In the years before the mission statement was declared, some elements of development were achieved through the activation of more and more members and by the pursuing different directions. These developments are still noticeable after the agreement on the new mission statement of 2009. Here are some explanations:

The president and the board

The regulations for the election of the president and the board were revised. As opposed to the first fifteen years in which there was no time limit for membership on the board, now normally up to three biennia are allowed. In this way, a more frequent change of persons in the board of the EAS was ensured, and, in the longer term, a change of generations and thus a more dynamic development for the association.

The language as a medium of communication

For a very long time the EAS history was marked by the dominance of the German language. In alignment with that, this also shaped the way of thinking and the perspectives through the background experience and the interests of the German-speaking countries, i. e. mainly Germany and Austria. This is reflected not only in all aspects of the founding situation and in the first publications, but also in many details of the work of the board and in the procedures at the conferences. Only occasionally and incidentally explanations in English were offered to colleagues who did not understand German but English. For example, the few meetings the English President Bob Reeve, chaired, did not affect the fact that the crucial talks were held in German. And at the EAS Conference in 1996 in Prešov, Slovakia, all of the presentations and contributions were with high technical demands simultaneously translated into German and not into English.

The German-language EAS resolution of 1990 was translated into English and French, as it was the case later in the newsletters and the EAS website. However, this was only done because English, French and German were considered to be the official languages of the EU and as a consequence, an official European appearance was given to the association. In fact, EAS publications were practically disregarded in France. Of more importance would have been translations for example into one of the Slavic languages; because in this language area, particularly in Croatia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Poland, the interest in the activities of the EAS was alive. However, only those colleagues who spoke German and thus were able to actively participate in the discourse were actively involved; this was also the case, for example, with the colleagues from Turkey.

After going back and forth – and because more members were elected to the new board, who did not speak German – it was explicitly decided in Prague in 2005, to use English as the primary language of communication. This in turn led to the extension of

the number of colleagues in different countries who were willing and able to engage in the EAS.

Yet fundamental questions for a conducive communication remain unclear in the association; this is due to the fact that English is not a quasi-neutral language, as it might seem to be, which would generally be suitable, to appropriately transfer something having experienced and thought in another language. That may apply to certain levels of communication. But if serious questions about music, 'Bildung', didactics and music education are discussed, quite unexpected difficulties in communication or even misunderstandings appear. The use of the English language, as it is the case with any kind of language, implies a certain way of thinking and communication. In this sense – quite different from the German language with its mighty historical background in the humanities and educational science – the omnipresence of English in international cooperation implicates a specific kind of dominance. This refers to the effortlessness and refinement, with which so many English-speaking colleagues put forward their ideas, in contrast to the hardship, with which the others in the same communicative situation try to articulate their thoughts – or prefer to remain silent. Furthermore this affects in general the modality of thinking about the things, it relates to views of the quality of research and scientific work, of the relationship between theory and practice and so on.⁴

Christoph Richter wrote a provocative review of the 3rd volume of the EAS publication *European Perspectives on Music Education* (De Baets & Buchborn 2014), in the journal *Diskussion Musikpädagogik* (Richter 2014). The topic of this article was "Eignet sich die englische Sprache als lingua franca der europäischen Musikpädagogik?" ("Is the English language suited as lingua franca of the European Music Education?"). His outright answer is a "Nein!" ("No!"). As a reaction to this article, he received a lot of legitimate rejections due to the negative tone. However, the debate on this issue as well as finding good solutions of how to flexibly deal with both language and mindset diversity in Europe, rather than simply and solely using the English language is pending – also in the EAS.

"High quality music education accessible to all"

The German concept of 'school music', albeit unclear, yet programmatic, has been dropped. Already during the formal constitution of the EAS as a registered association in 1996 the misleading English name 'School Music' was converted into 'Music in Schools'. And in 2005 the German name was changed accordingly in "Europäische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Musik in der Schule". The abbreviation EAS, initially following the German name, was maintained.

In this case, it was not just a reformulation. As from the beginnings of EAS music teaching based on the concept of 'Schulmusik' as previously mentioned in secondary

⁴ Similarly, but much more clearly than in the EAS, this is evident in the context of ISME.

schools was the center of attention, this perspective had already widened. Representatives of all school types and the corresponding forms of teacher training were active in the EAS, including those of *Grundschulen* (primary schools, elementary schools), where there usually are no specially trained teachers for music, as well as the teacher training departments at universities, in contrast to the music academies.

A wording such as 'anspruchsvolle Musik' (demanding music), without discussing what this means in the resolution, was unimaginable in this context. The issue of quality was not anymore linked to this or that kind of music, but to music education and thus to the abilities and skills of music teachers. The decisive programmatic formulation of the mission statement 2009 in contrast to the previous EAS Charter therefore is included in these few words: "high quality music education accessible to all".

Which content requirements and standards are to be connected to the ideal of "high quality music education", can be observed in the *meNet and EAS Learning Outcomes. Music Teacher Training for Specialists and Generalists* (Hennessy, Malmberg, Niermann & de Vugt 2013). The list of descriptors, where the expected abilities and skills of music educators are described, as well as the correspondent justifications and explanations included in this document, are clearly stated.

The EAS website

The EAS site from 1998 has been completely redeveloped, and, in 2005, reconstructed in a more open design. The new logo was an attempt to react to the discrepancy between the name of the association and the acronym EAS. After the conversion of 'Schulmusik' in 'Musik in der Schule' ('music in schools'), it should have, strictly speaking, been named EAMS. This was met by the graphic insertion of a small 'm' (for 'music').

Though more important than the logo was the reflection of the multifaceted activities of the EAS and its character as a network. This was reflected in the kind of information, for example, about the self-understanding of the EAS, about projects, initiatives, statements and publications, etc., but above all through the expanded space for EAS National Coordinators (NC) and the countries they represent.

EAS National Coordinators

The founding of the EAS in 1990 was based on the idea of solidarity and joint political appearance of the national associations of music education in Europe. This corresponded with the idea that the EAS board should communicate with some selected contact persons from various countries and thus connect to a number of national associations. The cooperation with these contact persons succeeded only to a limited extent. Only a few of them were effectively active in this function, and there was hardly a sense of commitment. The contact persons, unless they were already board members took very little independent initiative. They had certainly no opportunity to feel they were a group.

In the years around 2005 this system of contact persons has been transformed into a more formalized and binding system of EAS National Coordinators (NC). These NCs actually form a link between the EAS as a European association and the respective country for which they are active in this function. At the annual conferences and, in detail, and always up to date, at the EAS website they report on the situation around music education in their respective countries. Aligned with that the countries' sites became increasingly more important for the presence of the EAS in the awareness of professionals.

There are currently 28 such active NCs.⁵ They regularly participate in the EAS conferences and intensively work together as a group and they, for instance, attend NC workshops that serve as an ongoing professional development for their work. The experiences that the National Coordinators gain with their work, are a good basis for the acquisition of additional functions in the EAS, e.g. in the forums, the Special Focus Groups, publications, and in the EAS Board.

Building on the initial idea of solidarity and cooperation of the national associations for music education, the system of National Coordinators holds a great potential: ideally, they would be the speakers and representatives of their national associations at the international level.

Student Forum, Doctoral Student Forum, Special Focus Groups

Starting in 2001, international student forums were conducted. They were better integrated over the years into the network and they are an important element for sustainable and long-term activity and effectiveness of the EAS. As another, enriching working area a doctoral forum was set up. They are, similar to the student forums, affiliated to the annual EAS Conferences. In terms of extending the circle of colleagues active in the EAS, as well as in favour of strengthening and enriching the network, 'Special Focus Groups' were set up. Currently, there is PRIME – Practitioner Research in Music Education and DigiTiME – Digital Tools in Music Education.

The topics of the annual EAS conferences

The themes of the annual EAS conferences switched from initially general political and educational policy towards more specific issues regarding music education. The more the conferences had to do with theory and practice of music education, the more likely participants were able to find space for their own experiences and interests.

The first EAS conferences (initially mainly in Germany and Austria) had no distinct themes, because they found their place as special forums in other, larger conferences. Afterwards there were political topics such as "Musikerziehung – Brücke zur europäischen Integration?" ("Music education – a bridge toward the European integration?") or "Globalisation

⁵ <http://www.eas-music.org/countries/> [16.12.2015].

and Identity". Educational policy themes were reflected in "Persönlichkeitsentfaltung durch Musikerziehung" ("Developing the Personality through Music Education"), "Moving from Teaching to Learning – Music Education in a Changing World", "Weiterbildung – Lifelong Development", "Everything Depends on a Good Start".

With the beginning of the revision of the EAS mission statement the topics directly related to teaching music, for example: "Media and New Technology in Music Education", "Music inside and outside the School", "Music in Schools: Teaching and Learning Processes", "Craftsmanship and Artistry", and, in 2015, "Open Ears – Open Minds. Listening and Understanding Music".

Publications

Publications are a further field of increased activity of EAS-members. These publications also incline towards more concrete topics for music teachers. The titles of the EAS book series *European Perspectives on Music Education* are called *New Media in the Classroom* (Gall, Sammer & de Vugt 2012), *Artistry* (Malmberg & de Vugt 2013), *The Reflective Music Teacher* (De Baets & Buchborn 2014), *Every Learner Counts. Democracy and Inclusion in Music Education* (Economidou Stavrou & Stakelum 2015), *International Cooperation* (De Baets, De Vugt & Sammer, 2016), *Open Ears – Open Minds* (Malmberg & Krämer, exp. 2016).

meNet – Music Education Network

The strongest impulse for the development of the EAS towards a network for exchange of experience and the professionalization came from a primarily political initiative: from the implementation of an EU project: the Comenius 3 Network *meNet – Music Education Network*.⁶ The work and the outcomes of this project are presented in a dedicated chapter of this book.⁷

The EAS in cooperation with other international associations

The EAS has not always easily cooperated with other associations and organizations. There has been, for a long time, a certain defence against cooperation in form and content with similar communities. Only after a decade, initially still defensive, selective forms of participation in other working group projects started, thereby also more intensive cooperation with some associations and the intensified involvement of the EAS in European policy initiatives.

In the initial situation of the EAS and still for a long time the reserve against ISME was remarkable. A group of colleagues from the German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, South Tyrol) found the content and kind of the presentations at ISME

⁶ <http://www.menet.info> [13.01.2016].

⁷ See Isolde Malmberg's chapter in this book (pp. 35–48).

conferences unsatisfactory and, in view of the situation of music education in their own countries, uninteresting. They founded a loose grouping of interested colleagues on the edge of the ISME conference in 1982 in Bristol: the ArGeSüd – Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft Musikpädagogik für die mittleren und südlichen Länder Europas (International Association for Music Education for the middle and southern Countries of Europe).

30–40 colleagues from many European countries met at annual conferences in different places. Only colleagues who were able to speak German were invited. In this circle prevailed a certain aversion to political associations. It was mainly about academic presentations and discussions as well as the exchange of experience on issues relating to music education in the respective countries. On the other hand the non-existence of a political association for music education in schools was perceived as a lack. Out of these circumstances the EAS was established in 1990 in the above-described special political situation. The distance from ISME still remained for a long time.

In the first steps to enter into discussions with the aim of cooperation on specific projects and more generally, the AEC⁸ played a particularly important role. This began with the participation of the EAS in the Leonardo project *Promuse* (1999–2001), which was coordinated by the AEC. The central content concerned Lifelong Learning, which shortly afterwards became the subject of the EAS conference 2003 in Vienna. The aim of the concept of “continuing education in music” was “to strengthen the relationship between higher music education and the professional music world throughout Europe”⁹.

Already at this point it becomes clear that, in the following years, cooperation between the EAS and the AEC as the association of the higher professional training institutions for music in Europe considerably intensified. The focus of concern was music education in secondary schools and appropriate music teacher education at the conservatoires (academies of music). Teachers at *Grundschulen* (primary schools, elementary schools) as well as teacher training in the pedagogical faculties of the universities were not or only marginally in view. This corresponded well to the idea of ‘Schulmusik’ from the early days of the EAS.

Another important step towards the strengthening of cooperation with other organizations was the involvement of the EAS in EFMET, the European Forum for Music Education and Training¹⁰, which was conducted within the framework of the EU programme *Culture 2000*. The EMC, the European Music Council¹¹, was responsible for this project in close cooperation with the AEC. The EAS was one of four members of the Scientific Committee and mainly contributed to the topic: “The roles of the Music Teacher”. The EFMET project

⁸ AEC: abbr. of “Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen”, cf. <http://www.aec-music.eu> [16.12.2015].

⁹ <http://www.aec-music.eu/projects/completed-projects/promuse> [16.12.2015].

¹⁰ EFMET Final Report: http://www.emc-imc.org/fileadmin/archiv/final_report.pdf [16.12.2015].

¹¹ <http://www.emc-imc.org/> [05.12.2015].

has been particularly important for contact with other associations of music and music education, because virtually all the relevant European associations were involved. At the presentation of the Final Report in Oviedo, Spain, in 2004 these associations were involved and they are mentioned in the report. The following quote depicts the context in which the EAS actually played a specific role:

*"15 representatives from the following 10 European organisations were present at this Final Event: the European Association for Music in Schools (EAS), the European Music School Union (EMU), the European Union of Music Competitions for Youth (EMCY), the European Federation of National Youth Orchestras (EFNYO), the European Music Council (EMC), the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation (IYMF), the European Modern Music Education Network (EMMEN), the European Federation of Youth Choirs 'Europa Cantat', the European String Teachers Association (ESTA), and Jeunesses Musicales Europe (JME). In total, the EFMET Final Event was attended by 249 participants from 38 countries."*¹²

One special event of the EFMET final event in Oviedo should be addressed in particular at this point: a joint workshop of EAS and EMU ("European Music School Union")¹³ on the role of pedagogical courses in the conservatoire curriculum. This seems worth mentioning here because, apart from that, far too little cooperation took place between the EAS and EMU, the possibly most important natural partner of the EAS. Fortunately a European Forum on Music Education¹⁴ is organised under the umbrella of the EMC in 2016 in Leiden, The Netherlands, in cooperation between AEC, EAS and EMU.

The main areas of cooperation between the EAS and other associations and projects at the beginning of the second decade of the EAS history, in particular the importance of AEC for the EAS, are mentioned here because they have formed the basis for the application and implementation of the project *meNet – Music Education Network* which is already explained above. This cooperation has given significant impetus to the development of the EAS into a completely altered self-understanding as it is expressed in the mission statement 2009 in contrast to the original EAS Charter.

One special story has to be documented here in particular: the above mentioned cooperation between the EAS and ISME. The remarkable distance between the EAS and ISME in the first phase of the EAS history has already been discussed above. That changed at first slowly from the year of 2002, but then decidedly from 2005. The first attempts, in particular at the conferences in 2002 (ISME, Bergen, Norway), in 2003 (EAS, Vienna, Austria), and in 2004 (ISME, Tenerife, Spain), did not lead to success yet. Finally, there has been a decisive step of cooperation in 2005 at the EAS conference in Prague in which both the ISME

¹² http://www.emc-imc.org/fileadmin/archiv/final_report.pdf [16.12.2015].

¹³ <http://www.musicschoolunion.eu/> [16.12.2015].

¹⁴ <http://www.emc-imc.org/events/european-forum-on-music-education/> [12.01.2016].

President, Liane Hentschke, as well as the Secretary General, Judy Thönnell, took part. And eventually a 'Memorandum of Understanding' between ISME and EAS was presented there solemnly. On this basis, in turn, the next steps of cooperation succeeded quite easily. EAS representatives were elected members of the ISME Board of Directors (Josef Scheidegger 2006–2008, Franz Niermann 2008–2012, Sarah Hennessy 2012–2014).

Representatives of the EAS regularly offer workshops and lectures at the ISME conferences. Since this consolidated basis of cooperation the EAS organizes every two years their respective conferences at the same time as ISME European Regional Conferences, such as 2007 (Piteå, Sweden), 2009 (Tallinn, Estonia), 2011 (Gdansk, Poland), 2013 (Leuven, Belgium), 2015 (Rostock, Germany).

It would go too far at this point to discuss the various forms of cooperation of the EAS with other organizations and projects.¹⁵ But to give a sense of the range of other activities of the EAS, some are mentioned here:

- the joint events with other associations on EAS conferences, most recently, for example, the symposium with the AEC and the EMU in Rostock: "Evaluation Framework for Conservatoires, Schools and Music Pedagogy"
- the partnership in the project *NET Music 1.0*, which was initiated and supervised by Italian colleagues building the basis for the EAS publication *New Media in the Classroom*,
- the involvement of the EAS in the Music Olympiad in Estonia,
- the sponsorship of the EAS for the biennial conferences of the Visegrad Countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary) with the theme "Theory and Practice of Music Education"
- the forward-looking work in the Steering Committee for the Harmonisation of European Music Education (SCHEME): "The purpose of the Steering Committee is to coordinate the efforts of AEC, EAS and EMU as they attempt to harmonise their activities for the more effective advancement of music education in Europe."¹⁶
- the involvement in the working group on "Evaluation for Enhancement", represented by AEC, EMU and EAS, with the aim "to connect the various levels of music education through a consistent quality enhancement framework."¹⁷

¹⁵ More detailed information can be found in this book.

¹⁶ <http://www.aec-music.eu/userfiles/File/FULL%20SCORE/SCHEME%20-%20Membership%20&%20Terms%20of%20Reference.pdf> [13.01.2016].

¹⁷ <http://www.aec-music.eu/projects/current-projects/full-score/b1-evaluation-for-enhancement-> [13.01.2016].

Chances

The above remarks on the EAS mission statement of 2009 and the corresponding aspects of development have shown that the EAS follows a strong path, if it is characterised by the experiences, issues and interests of the members. All those who participate in the EAS should have the sense of reliability for a good place in the network to which they contribute with their experience and where they can learn from each other's experiences. Everyone may take the chance in the EAS to develop professionally through this work.

This chance is of course firstly provided by conferences through presentations and discussions. But there are also many different forms to be active in and benefit from the participation in projects, in the forums, in the Special Focus Groups, in publications, etc. A special opportunity to amplify the professional and personal skills is provided for the National Coordinators. They represent their country, they bring in the personal experience from home into the international scene and they gain international experience as an asset for their own country. This way they offer a lot of value to the community and at the same time they open enhanced experience opportunities for themselves. Such opportunities are particularly open to those who decide to be active in a leading position in working groups, in projects or probably even in the EAS Board for some years.

Another, perhaps hitherto underestimated chance is to complement and to support the work on the pan-European level of the EAS through regional activities, as we know from Scandinavia, the German-speaking countries and the Vishegrad countries. Here the hurdles to understanding each other are smaller even in the subtleties of music education issues due to the greater cultural proximity. And the appropriate verbal communication – besides the use of the English language as a matter of course – is easier and may lead in a more direct way to come to reasonable agreements.

Sometimes it almost seems that one would learn most about the nature and the particular quality of music education in a country through participating in local schools' music lessons or in courses of music teacher training in universities followed by in-depth conversations about the actual experience. And exactly for enabling such exchanges of experiences and learning opportunities it needs the willingness and decision to use and to strengthen the EAS network and its involvement in related professional political organizations in Europe.

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