

From: Parncutt, Richard (richard.parncutt@uni-graz.at)

Sent: Mittwoch, 27. August 2025 15:09

To: 'Saarikallio, Suvi' <suvi.saarikallio@jyu.fi>; 'Caroline Curwen' <caroline.curwen@durham.ac.uk>; 'Andrea Schiavio' <andrea.schiavio@gmail.com>; 'Niels Chr. Hansen' <nchansen@cas.au.dk>; 'Nicola Di Stefano' <nicola.distefano@istc.cnr.it>; 'Luck, Geoffrey' <geoff.luck@jyu.fi>; 'Loui Psyche' <p.loui@northeastern.edu>; 'Patricia Vanzella' <pvanzella@yahoo.com>; 'Masanobu Miura' <miura.masanobu@kunitachi.ac.jp>; 'Amanda Krause' <amanda.krause1@jcu.edu.au>; 'Renee Timmers' <r.timmers@sheffield.ac.uk>

Subject: Petition "ICMPC/ESCOM 2027 must be inclusive and sustainable"

Dear Suvi, dear committee members of ESCOM and ICMPC,

As I wrote previously, a petition entitled "ICMPC/ESCOM 2027 must be inclusive and sustainable" has been signed by over 100 international colleagues in the field of music perception and cognition. That's perhaps 10% of all colleagues in all countries, including advanced doctoral students. The details are here:

<https://www.openpetition.eu/petition/online/icmpc-escom-2027-must-be-inclusive-and-sustainable>

The automatic analysis of responses within the petition software suggests that:

- The largest group of signatories were European, presumably because ESCOM kindly agreed to share the petition announcement with members.
- Many signatories were German, because DGM also agreed to forward the announcement to its members.
- Many were Argentinian, because members of the local music psychology community were informed. Perhaps that reflects the success of the 2018 multi-hub ICMPC.
- Colleagues from North America were remarkably reluctant to sign, although I wrote to many directly.
- Most signatories indicated that they "feel responsible", suggesting they perceive this to be an important moral issue.

Here are two more general interpretations:

- Data on the age of signatories was not collected, but my impression is that younger colleagues were more likely to sign. For names that I did not know, I could usually find a publication or thesis topic, and the author was usually young. Global warming will have a bigger effect on the lives of younger people.
- Generalizing from the response from Argentina, there might have been a particularly strong response from the Global South, if colleagues in those regions could have been contacted directly. They would benefit most from virtual and multi-hub conferences.

The petition would have been signed by more colleagues, but for two main hindrances:

- Two major academic societies in our field, SMPC and SEMPRES, refused my request to inform their members about the petition. I personally wrote to many colleagues, but my outreach was limited.
- Colleagues near the middle of their careers seemed reluctant to sign. Perhaps some guessed that their academic superiors – those who might review their journal submissions and grant applications – tend to fly more often or further, and might therefore oppose the petition.

Taking these various interpretations into account, the response to the petition is consistent with the following thesis:

If all colleagues working in music perception and cognition had been informed, including all doctoral students in all countries, and if voting had been confidential (secret ballot), over half of all colleagues would have supported the petition.

In recent years, most ICMPCs have been high-carbon, single-location events. The exceptions were in 2018 and 2021. Surveys at those two conferences were consistent with the thesis. A clear majority of respondents supported more sustainable and inclusive conference formats.

Typically, about 95% of emissions from single-location conferences is from transport. Of that, about 75% is from intercontinental flying. The multi-hub model makes most intercontinental flying unnecessary, reducing overall emissions by about 2/3. At the same time, it treats all participants equally, regardless of financial means. Almost all international colleagues can participate, improving cultural diversity. The status of talks on the program depends only on reviewers' evaluations and not on the financial means of the first author.

Both formats – multi-hub and single location plus remote presentations (hybrid) – allow more colleagues to participate: perhaps 100% more for multihub (e.g., 7 hubs) and 20% more for hybrid. At the same time, total emissions fall by about 2/3 (7 hubs) and 4% (hybrid). The 4% estimate assumes that 20% of the hybrid program is virtual and 20% of remote presenters would have flown if remote presentation had not been possible. The reduction *per person* in the hybrid case is roughly 20%, but we should be aiming higher. For example, the emissions targets specified by Finland's Climate Act are -60% by 2030, -80% by 2040, and -90 to -95 % by 2050, compared 1990.

Multi-hub conferences are not difficult to organize. The technology is like that of a hybrid conference with all presentations streamed. Relevant technologies are gradually improving. The head technicians of previous multi-hub conferences, Nils Meyer-Kahlen (ICMPC/ESCOM 2018) and Connor Kirts (ESCOM 2024), can provide further information. To help you organize the conference, I can send a list of ten colleagues who agreed either to organize hubs on different continents or to help find hub organizers in their regions. I can also personally help, as part of your team. Major tasks can be delegated to different hubs, all hubs being nominally equal (no central hub). For further details, including details of program structure and timing, see Parncutt (2025).

On behalf of all signatories, I ask you to respond to this petition and this email on behalf of the ESCOM committee.

Yours sincerely
Richard Parncutt
University of Graz, Austria
ESCOM president, 2015-2018
ICMPC executive committee member, 2018-2025

Acknowledgment. I am grateful to Renee Timmers for feedback on a draft.

Reference. Parncutt, R. (2025). The global multi-hub conference: Inclusion, sustainability, and academic politics. *Sustainable Futures*, 10, 100915.