

November 1st 2025

To Richard Parncutt and other signatories of the petition: ICMPC/ESCOM 2027 must be inclusive and sustainable

We have carefully read and considered the petition *ICMPC/ESCOM 2027 must be inclusive and sustainable* that was addressed to the committee members of ESCOM and ICMPC. The issues raised in this petition are of mutual concern and importance to both committees and the organizers of the ICMPC/ESCOM 2027. There is a full acknowledgement that today's world faces several concerning developments that involve issues ranging from human rights to global security, principles of democracy, equity, and environmental sustainability. All these concerns are of high relevance to the future of our civilization and our planet. Therefore, while the main purpose of music perception and cognition societies (ESCOM, APSCOM, SMPC) is to advance research in our field, this research should be advanced in ways that also consider broader global matters.

One issue needs to be made absolutely clear from the beginning of this response. All members involved in organizing ICMPC/ESCOM 2027 share a genuine will to promote the inclusivity and sustainability of this conference. The local organizing teams at University of Jyväskylä and University of Helsinki hold broad expertise in organizing international conferences through various formats that have aimed at reducing environmental impacts such as fully virtual (e.g. ISME Research Commission, 2020) and hybrid (Neuromusic, 2024) conferencing. In preparation of the ICMPC/ESCOM 2027 conference, issues related to cost, travel, facilities, environmental sustainability, inclusivity, and equal opportunities for participation have already been, and will continue to be, carefully considered.

Many arrangements to support inclusivity and sustainability have already been elaborately discussed and agreed upon between the organizers. ESCOM/ICMPC 2027 will be organized as a hybrid conference including a global online participation option available for all participants. Hybrid format is chosen to advance cross-continental dialogue within the field

and to avoid coordination efforts at multiple sites. It allows us to direct coordination resources to global virtual participation, accessibility tools, and travel grants. In this way, we can maximise both reach and responsibility within our available means. A hybrid format offers a reduction to carbon emissions, allows each participant to choose their level of engagement and travel, removes local infrastructure duplications of hubs, and supports the creation of a cross-continental sense of music cognition as a unified field.

The critical aspect of a global, hybrid conference is to facilitate full inclusion of those participants who choose not to travel but to attend virtually, whether for reasons regarding environment, health, family, finances, time etc. Many practicalities relating to this important issue have already been set up. Virtual participation in all sessions will be available, and high-quality virtual experiences will be ensured by using up-to-date web-conferencing space such as Gather.town. The host institutions hold cutting-edge technical expertise and wide experience of virtual platforms and technical solutions. Technical assistants will be systematically trained to ensure smooth conferencing in all parallel sessions. Registration fee for the virtual participation will be of significantly lower cost than for on-site participation. Attendance from different time zones will be considered when scheduling the programme.

As the conference preparations continue, specific chairpersons will be nominated to coordinate the programme, local and virtual arrangements, finances, sponsorship, publicity and communications, and diversity and inclusion. Plans for further actions will be consolidated, such as tiered registration fees and travel grants to improve accessibility for students, early-career researchers, and participants from underrepresented regions. Following previous ICMPC conferences, up to three students and young researchers will receive a Young Researcher Award and further negotiations with actors such as SEMPRES and other sponsors will be initiated to secure awards and technical solutions that support global and online participation. More detailed features regarding the technical infrastructure of the off-site participation will be set up and solutions that foster global dialogue and networking will be considered. These include virtual coffee rooms that can be hosted daily at rotating times to accommodate participants across different time zones. This also includes encouraging online participants to create local, self-organized spaces/screens to join the conference remotely together.

All local actors are actively committed to reducing the environmental impact of the conference through practical solutions such as paperless actions and sustainable food choices. Hosting institutions and the conference venues are committed to efforts to reduce environmental impacts of their actions in their policy notes. We also plan to measure and publicly report estimated emissions from the conference, both from travel and on-site operations, as part of a post-event sustainability report. This transparency will help us and future organisers assess progress toward our environmental goals.

In summary, there is a strong will and concrete plans to make ICMPC/ESCOM 2027 a conference that will promote research in music perception and cognition with care and consideration for inclusivity and environmental sustainability. All decisions regarding the conference aim at reaching the best possible balance in holding responsibility for addressing several global challenges and in advancing music perception and cognition research. We wish to confirm that a multitude of perspectives has been carefully discussed and will continue to be responsibly addressed during the upcoming conference preparation. We deeply appreciate all voices brought to our attention and take them into account in our decision making to the best of our capacity. This petition has prompted us in carefully dialoguing and planning several practical solutions regarding the next ESCOM/ICMPC, well ahead of the conference. At the same time, it is essential to note that decisions regarding conference organisation remain the responsibility of the duly elected ESCOM and ICMPC committees, in accordance with their statutes and constitutions. With this response we have shared our reasoning in how we attempt to support the inclusivity and sustainability of this event. The committees wish to confirm that the conference format has been decided and we look forward to moving ahead with the preparations. We hope and firmly believe that ICMPC/ESCOM 2027 will be an inspiring and globally dialogical conference for us all.

On behalf of the committee members of ICMPC and ESCOM,



Prof. Suvi Saarikallio
President of ESCOM
suvi.sarikallio@jyu.fi