

19 May 2016

Mr Tibor Navracsics,
European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport
By e-mail

We are writing as the President, Immediate Past President and President Elect of the International Society for Music Education to express our shock and disappointment at the news of the closure of the European Union Youth Orchestra.

The International Society for Music Education draws its 2000 plus members from 90 countries around the world – including most of the 28 countries from which members of the orchestra are drawn. All of our members believe passionately in music's ability to change lives and to impact on well-being, identity and social justice. There is a plethora of scientific evidence that supports the importance of music. A prestigious orchestra available to talented young people across Europe, along with the training and instruction involved, provides an aspirational aim that can further improve their development.

Not only does the work of the EUYO contribute to the music development of the next generation of musicians, the EUYO also provides a unique forum in which young people from diverse ethnicities and backgrounds may meet and work together in a common enterprise. During a period when our world is riven by ethnic divisions these opportunities to work with and learn about the lives and experiences of others have never been more important.

Investment in the European Union Youth Orchestra is an investment in the youth of Europe and sends a message about the importance of music and culture across Europe and the World. In addition it provides a focus for the pride of the European nations in their youth.

I speak for our thousands of members, and millions of affiliate members when I ask that you reconsider your funding decision and provide the vital support that will enable this orchestra to continue.

Yours Sincerely



Sheila Woodward
(South Africa / USA)

President, ISME



Margaret Barrett
(Australia)

Immediate past President, ISME



Lee Higgins
(United Kingdom)

President Elect, ISME