

National Report KOMU – Conference of Austrian Music School Associations

International Collaboration

A highlight of 2024 was the organization of the EMU General Assembly and the European Music School Forum in St. Pölten, which brought together around 90 participants from 24 countries. As part of this initiative, the *KOMU & friends Saxophone Orchestra* was established, comprising 17 young musicians from Austria and neighboring countries. This orchestra will also perform at the 2025 RITMIKS festival, showcasing the success of cross-border collaboration in music school education and the benefits it brings to students.

Leadership Development

A central focus of KOMU's work is the biennial Congress for Music School Leaders, scheduled to take place from November 20 to 22, 2025, in Klagenfurt. This forum serves as a vital platform for exchange and further education. Additionally, for the first time, a one-year certified study program for music school leaders is being planned in cooperation with a university, set to commence in the fall of 2025. This part-time training is tailored to the specific needs of Austrian and South Tyrolean music school directors, aiming to ensure and further develop the quality of music schools.

Future Demand for Music School Teachers

Addressing the future demand for music school teachers in Austria and South Tyrol is an urgent priority, as approximately half of the current teachers are expected to retire in the next 15 years. This issue was a central focus at the Bundesfachgruppen meeting in November 2024 in Brixen, where strategies for attracting and retaining music school teachers were developed. Awareness of this critical issue among current teachers was also raised. The KOMU has entered into a collaboration with the mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. The study "Musikschule 2035," set to be published after the summer of 2025, will analyze future demand based on KOMU statistics and identify trends and forecasts for the future development of the professional field.

Health and Outreach Initiatives

The KOMU is prioritizing musicians' health and music outreach as key focus areas. In cooperation with universities, part-time training offers are being developed, and expertise from the federal states is being exchanged. The goal is to create comprehensive recommendations and framework conditions for health promotion. Additionally, a network is being established to disseminate and promote music outreach projects, especially in Early Childhood Music Education, ensuring that these initiatives reach a broader audience and have a lasting impact.

Strategic Outlook

In addition to strengthening the KOMU's strategic advocacy work at the federal level, a major curriculum revision is planned for 2026. This revision will integrate future-oriented themes such as sustainability, diversity, digitalization, musicians' health, music outreach, and student participation. These updates aim to update the curriculum, which was published in 2007, and ensure it remains relevant and effective for the next generation of music educators and students.