

# The World Network

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The term “world network” has two basic meanings in the context of the Council.<sup>1</sup> In the narrow sense, it is an organizational category, a pillar that gives our scholarly organization its international character and indicates its global presence. In the broader sense, it is an affective meeting place that facilitates the ongoing acquisition and exchange of new knowledge through face-to-face communication and provides a sense of a much-needed community for music and dance researchers. The World Network is an ever-evolving concept that allows for sustained growth in the Council’s membership and provides new opportunities for further development, presented later in this chapter. In 2018, ICTM had 1,344 individual members in 129 countries and regions. About one fifth of them were from the USA, while the other countries and regions in the “top ten,” ordered according to the number of members, included Japan, Germany, Australia, UK, Austria, Italy, China, Canada, and Taiwan.

The ICTM Statutes define the World Network as a system of national and regional representatives who are

expected to spread knowledge about the Council’s activities and to further its mission in their respective countries or regions. As much as possible, they act as links between the Council and individual members. (§5c)

These representatives may be individuals (one “liaison officer” per country or region) or organized groups, either pre-existing or newly formed, composed of at least three ICTM members. Under the procedure set forth in the relevant memorandum, such an organized group may be recognized by the Executive Board either as a national committee if it represents a state recognized by the United Nations, or as a regional committee if it represents “an area that is commonly acknowledged as a geographical or political region.” Each representative to the ICTM World Network, whether as a liaison officer or as chair of a national or regional committee, is expected to inform Council members in the ICTM *Bulletin* of relevant news from the area he or she rep-

resents. The Executive Board may expel representatives who do not comply with the Statutes or are inactive.

### A diachronic perspective

Looking to the United Nations, an international organization founded in 1945 on the ashes of World War II by fifty-one countries dedicated to maintaining international cooperation and peace, and to its specialized agency for education, science, and culture known as UNESCO, Maud Karpeles understood not only what kind of organization the world of music and dance scholarship needed, but also how to achieve its international reach. “Interested in international affairs, financially independent, and aware of the potential of music and dance in transcending political boundaries, she revived and promoted the idea of the International Folk Dance Council,” which was the direct predecessor of the IFMC and in which she had the role of “honorable secretary” (Pettan 2021:44).<sup>2</sup>

Two years later, in 1947, Maud Karpeles was instrumental in founding the International Folk Music Council, in which from the beginning the countries of “correspondents” and “delegates” were considered important as a sign of the Council’s global reach and inclusiveness. Thus, in the Council’s *Bulletins*, the listed names of individuals are usually followed by an indication of their nationalities. It was considered important to indicate from how many and which countries delegates came to attend an IFMC meeting.

In the first *Bulletin of the International Folk Music Council*, the “Report on the first meeting of the General Conference held in Basle, Switzerland, in September 1948” notes that the event was attended by “delegations” from seventeen countries and regions, plus a representative from UNESCO (as an “observer”), and that “140 Correspondents, representing 35 countries have been appointed by the Board” (*BIFMC* 1, Oct 1948:3–

1 I appreciate the comments of my co-editors, Naila Ceribašić and Don Niles, on an earlier draft of this chapter.

2 See also Niles and Yoder (2015) and the chapters in this volume on the origins and of the Council, and on Maud Karpeles.

4, 7–8). Likewise, “a directory of folk music organisations is being compiled. A questionnaire has been sent to 136 organisations in 31 different countries ... So far, replies have been received from 18 countries (representing 32 organisations)” (*BIFMC* 1, Oct 1948:8).

The background to the appearance of the “National Committees” is explained in the second *Bulletin*:

THE HON. SECRETARY explained that when the question of National Committees had been discussed at the inaugural conference no provision for their affiliation had been made in the Constitution. The Executive Board was of the opinion that the formation of National Committees was to be encouraged, especially to act as agents for the Council in their respective countries, for only in this way could the dangers of decentralisation be overcome. The Board therefore recommended the gradual formation and recognition of National Committees, but advised leaving the question of constitutional affiliation to a later stage. The Conference approved the Board’s decision. (*BIFMC* 2, Nov 1949:13–14)

The fifth *Bulletin*, which appeared two years later, contained a wealth of information about national committees. The Amended Statutes provided that membership should consist of “(a) Representatives of Affiliated National Committees, where such exist; (b) Correspondents; and (c) Subscribers.” Statute 6 detailed affiliated national committees in nine points reminiscent of today’s definition. Statute 7 defines correspondents as “experts and representatives of folk music organisations,” while statute 8 defines subscribers as persons “who wish to further the objectives of the Council.” National committees, “consisting of representatives of folk music organisations, scholars, and others who are in sympathy with the objectives of the Council shall be eligible for affiliation on application.” Section 8b, which is worded similarly to the current Statutes, can be interpreted to favour national committees over individual representatives: “In countries in which no Affiliated National Committee exists, the Executive Board may appoint Liaison Officers from among the Council’s Correspondents.” This wording also makes clear that the Council recognizes the existence of places where there is no organized music and dance research, and that it has an interest in being represented there as well. Statute 10 is also significant, with the General Assembly consisting of national delegations composed of members of the Council (*BIFMC* 5, 1951:23–24).

In 1957, the Amended Statutes were renamed Rules, with some notable changes relevant to the topic at hand. In Rule 4, the third membership category was changed from “subscribers” to “ordinary members” (*BIFMC* Sep 1957:21), while Rule 12 elaborated on General Assemblies and the roles of national representatives.

From the September 1960 issue to the April 1976 issue, *Bulletins* listed national committees on the last cover

page, while from October 1976 to April 2011, lists of committees were preceded by lists of liaison officers on the previous page. The number of committees increased from five in 1960 to thirty-six in 2011.

In 2001, newly elected Council President Krister Malm established a Rules Committee in which he, Egil Bakka, Anthony Seeger, and Tsukada Kenichi addressed necessary revisions to the constitutional document. One of the outcomes relevant to the current issue is the inclusion of “regional committees.” In the words of Malm,

A new organizational category of “Regional Committees” is proposed in new Rule 5. This was in response to questions from our members in East Africa who wanted to form a regional body since they are too few to form National Committees. The question was also raised once before when John Blacking started the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology (ESEM). We think that “Regional Committees” can enhance the usefulness of ICTM in certain regions. (Malm 2002:13)

In addition, new Rule 9 proposes an assembly of national and regional representatives based on the experience of the meetings of national representatives (Malm 2002:14). Malm’s explanation of the thorough revision is followed by the text of the Rules with the proposed changes (*BICTM* 101, Oct 2002:15–20). “Liaison officers” were removed from the title of Rule 5 and became replaced with “Regional Committees.” In addition, section 5b clarified that “the Executive Board shall prepare and approve a Memorandum on National and Regional Committees,” while section 5c included the previously mentioned statement in slightly adapted form: “In countries or regions in which no National or Regional Committee exists, the Executive Board may appoint Liaison Officers” (*BICTM* 101, Oct 2002:16). In contrast to the proposed changes, evidence from this period shows that there were more liaison officers than national committees, while regional committees did not yet exist or were not yet operational. For example, in the first half of 2001 there were 34 liaison officers and 24 national committees (*BICTM* 98, Apr 2001), while in the second half of 2002 there were 31 liaison officers and 28 national committees (*BICTM* 101, Oct 2002). What is the cause of this dynamic? Austria, Cyprus, Spain, and Vietnam moved in the expected direction by replacing their previous mode of representation with liaison officers to national committees, while Israel joined the network with a liaison officer.

The first appearance of the term “world network” coincides with the Secretariat’s move from Australia to Slovenia in 2011 and the start of publication of the *Bulletin of the ICTM* in electronic form (*BICTM* 119, Oct 2011). A note from the *Bulletin*’s new executive assistant and editor, Carlos Yoder, explains the change as follows:

The back cover of the *Bulletin* used to contain a list of ICTM National and Regional Representatives. Now that the idea of a “back cover” doesn’t apply anymore, those two pages have been combined into one new section entitled ICTM World Network. (Yoder 2011:4)

Minutes of the Executive Board from the 108th Ordinary Meeting, held in Shanghai on 27 June 2012, contain the first mention of the “ICTM World Network” in an Executive Board context. Interestingly, there was no recorded discussion on the adoption of the new term, although the change was not only terminological. Indeed, all three options—liaison officers, national committees, and regional committees—were combined under a single heading. The earlier expectation that the liaison officers listed on the penultimate page of the *Bulletin* would give prominence to organized scholarly activities in their countries or regions and seek committee recognition that would result in their countries or regions visibly moving to the last, more prestigious page of the *Bulletin* simply no longer existed. On the other hand, the World Network has succeeded in balancing the three modes of representation, not just visually, within a single framework.

## A synchronic perspective

Where does the World Network stand now, and what can be done to further improve it? This section presents selected cases and suggests possible new directions.

In the diachronic section, I discussed the importance attached to countries, which, with varying intensity, remain a characteristic feature of the Council today. Older ICTM members will remember the enthusiastic habit of Dieter Christensen (secretary general during the period 1981–2001), who may have inherited it from his predecessors in the Council, of providing relevant figures at the General Assemblies of the world conferences on how many participants from how many countries were present at the event. In the last two decades, this kind of evidence seems to be either less present at the assemblies or sometimes absent altogether. On the other hand, countries and regions, rightly seen as hallmarks of internationality, continue to be present on the Council’s website on the governance (including those on the Executive Board, Secretariat, and history of IFMC/ICTM governance) and World Network pages, as well as in the *Bulletin*.

During the Secretariat’s tenure in Ljubljana (2011–2017), the number of national and regional representatives, especially liaison officers, grew from 75 to 127 countries and regions. This was the result of a systematic active search based on analyzes of the situation in the “missing” countries and regions around the world and consultations with informed ICTM members and

other colleagues on the most suitable candidates. Such a strategy proved preferable to the earlier expectation that potential candidates would contact the Secretariat and express interest in representing a country or region. In this way, the Council was able to attract many new members and enthusiastic representatives, some of whom were previously unaware of the Council and the mutual benefits associated with membership and representation. During the term of the Vienna Secretariat (2017–2021), agreements were introduced to be signed between the future liaison officers and ICTM, clarifying the rights and obligations of both parties.

It is clear that further quantitative and qualitative growth of the World Network can be achieved in two main directions: (a) by identifying “missing” countries and regions and asking members to help find the optimal candidates, and (b) by contacting current liaison officers to see if they would consider establishing committees in their countries or regions.

So far, the Statutes provide for four types of ICTM scholarly meetings, namely world conferences, study-group symposia, colloquia, and fora. In practice, there is a fifth type of meeting, namely joint meetings of national or regional committees.

For a long time, official contacts between committees were limited to the biennial meetings of the chairs or representatives of national and regional committees at the assemblies of national and regional representatives held at world conferences. Together with the liaison officers representing the countries of the regions without committees, they briefly shared the latest developments at their locations. But then, in 2008, the Austrian National Committee called colleagues from neighbouring Slovenia to a joint meeting in Seggau, a castle near the border with Slovenia. The success of this rather modest initial event (*BICTM* 115, Oct 2009:51) encouraged more ambitious follow-up events with ever greater participation. In 2011, Vienna hosted the joint meeting of the national committees of Austria, Croatia, Slovakia, and Slovenia;<sup>3</sup> in 2013, Mals/Malles Venosta hosted the joint meeting of the national committees of Italy, Austria, and Switzerland (*BICTM* 123, Oct. 2013:30); in 2014, Pulfero (Udine) hosted the joint meeting of Italy, Austria, and Slovenia;<sup>4</sup> in 2015, Lucerne hosted the joint meeting of Switzerland, Austria, and Germany;<sup>5</sup> in 2016, Budapest hosted the joint meeting of Hungary and Austria,<sup>6</sup> and more. Separately, in 2015 the French and British national committees, the Société

3 <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/17996823/joint-meeting-of-the-austrian-national-committee-in-the-ictm->

4 <https://ictmusic.org/world-network/italy-national-committee/joint-meeting-2014>.

5 <https://www.mdw.ac.at/ive/verzeichnis-publikationen/>.

6 <https://www.mdw.ac.at/ive/verzeichnis-publikationen/>.





**Figure 1.** Joint meeting of the national committees of Italy, Austria, and Slovenia in Italy. Pulfero (Udine), 2014 (photo courtesy of Svanibor Pettan).

française d'ethnomusicologie and the British Forum for Ethnomusicology, respectively, held their joint meeting (*BICTM* 129, Oct 2015:17–18). In 2018, the Slovenian National Committee hosted an experimental scholarly meeting entitled “Minority sounds in national contexts as seen by ICTM national and regional representatives,” which highlighted another way to benefit from the World Network (more in Klebe 2018).

Several of these meetings took place in border regions, allowing participants to experience and better understand the agendas associated with intercultural processes related to music and dance practices, as well as the benefits of scholarly collaboration across political boundaries. The inclusion of joint meetings of national and regional committees in the Statutes would encourage such gatherings in other parts of the world, far from the European area (figure 1).

The next issue concerns publications. The first associations when one thinks of the Council's publications are the *Yearbook for Traditional Music* and the *Bulletin of the ICTM*, with the important extension to the proceedings of the study groups, the proceedings of the colloquia, and the publications emanating from the fora. But that is not all!

There is no reason to consider as Council publications the well-known and accessible publications of active independent societies that are also recognized as national

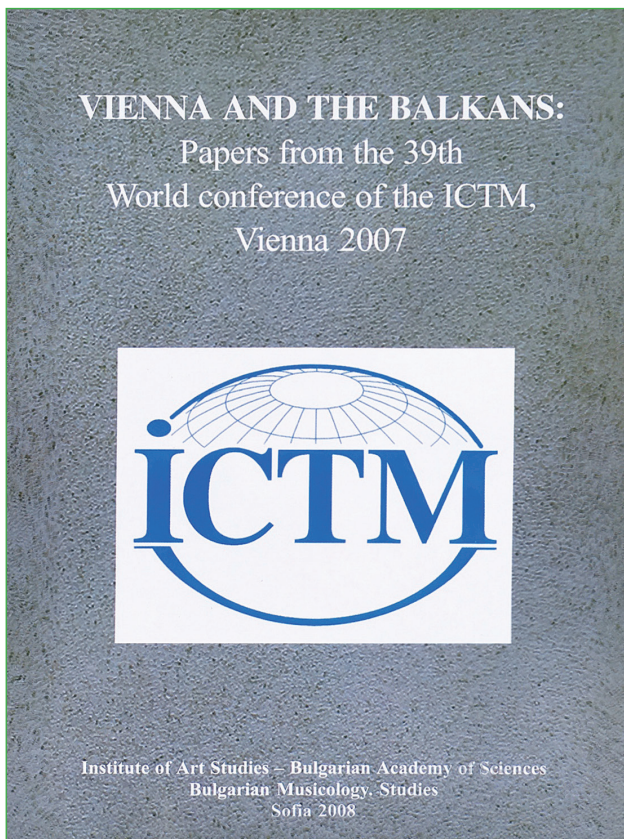
or regional committees within ICTM, the Society for Ethnomusicology being a good example. There are, however, committees that wish to have their publications recognized as ICTM publications, with Germany standing out as the only systematically documented example. An unusual example is the book *Vienna and the Balkans* (Peycheva and Rodel 2008), initiated by the Bulgarian National Committee and containing selected papers from a world conference (figure 2).

The Council has considerable historical depth in terms of its own publications, as one can see from its website page entitled “Books by or in collaboration with IFMC/ICTM.” The list considers publications by (a) IFMC/ICTM, (b) IFMC/ICTM study groups, and (c) IFMC/ICTM national committees. Section (c), which is limited to Germany, adds weight to the statement in the introduction to the page, “We realize that there are many inadequacies in this listing and probably many omissions, too. Help us improve it by sending corrections, additions, and images to the Secretariat.”<sup>7</sup> Here I can only repeat this appeal.

Another point concerns the Statutes. No matter how thorough, the revisions of the Council's most important document have failed to reflect and equalize the reality of national and regional representation, characterized

7 <http://ictmusic.org/publications/books-by-or-in-collaboration-with-ifmc-ictm>.





**Figure 2.** Cover of the book *Vienna and the Balkans* (Sofia, 2008).

by a numerical preponderance of liaison officers over committees. In the context of the Assembly of National and Regional Representatives, they have equal status, but this status is not reflected in the Memorandum on National and Regional Committees; an adjustment from “Committees” to “Representatives” would open the space for a better reflection of reality. Also, a page listing all past and present national representatives will soon enrich the ICTM website.

## Conclusion

The World Network display on the ICTM website provides quick and easy access to information on whether a particular country or region is represented, in which of the three ways, and by whom. If there is a representative, either a liaison officer or committee chair, he or she is expected to help connect scholars in his or her area to the global arena embodied by ICTM and to connect interested ICTM members from abroad with colleagues and scholarly resources in his or her country or region.

Although a look at the world map and the number of participating countries and regions clearly indicates that ICTM is successfully serving music and dance scholars in the global world, there are areas where we can and should do more. While we view with a smile the increas-

ing activities in Latin America and Oceania, additional efforts should be made to include new countries and regions in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southwest Asia.

The growth of the World Network has never been motivated by quantification, nor should it be. It is about inclusiveness, about the desire for the Council to be a truly global association that serves scholarship and peace, and brings people together by encouraging their ongoing and active participation. In the seven decades that the Council has existed, more than five hundred representatives have contributed to international and intercultural dialogue. Some of the countries they represented no longer exist today (USSR, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, German Democratic Republic), but these scholars have left a strong mark by transcending the Iron Curtain and other political, economic, and social boundaries and connecting the global East and West, North and South. There are several examples of scholars representing the countries of their research and/or chosen residence rather than their countries of birth, and there have been scholars representing different countries or regions consecutively or even at the same time.

There are several examples of scholars from more economically advantaged countries supporting the participation of colleagues from lower-wage countries in Council activities. There are several examples where the



**Figure 3.** Items from various world conferences (photo by Svanibor Pettan).

friendship and collegiality developed in the Council has lasted a lifetime. Finally, the Council has established several funds to support the participation of its members in the growing variety of scholarly gatherings. All of this is a testament to the love and appreciation for and within this scholarly community, its aims and ideals. Figure 3 symbolically illustrates the positive sentiments and creativity in producing not only programme booklets and books of abstracts for the world conferences, but also mementos ranging from ICTM pencils, to water containers, to ICTM T-shirts and towels. There is no question that the World Network will continue to benefit the world of music and dance scholarship. The fact that the prospects for Earth look bleaker than we would wish should provide us with additional motivation based on knowledge, understanding, skills, and experience to strengthen the World Network and to seek new ways to make our shared efforts more efficient and far-reaching.

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