

# The Voice of Singing Europe

Did you know that there are 37 million people in Europe who practice collective singing?

*Press Release by European Choral Association – Europa Cantat*

On January 23rd 2017 the European Choral Association – Europa Cantat (ECA-EC) and the Representation of the State of Hessen to the European Union co-organised the event “The Voice of Singing Europe” in the seat of the representation in Brussels.

After welcome words by Friedrich von Heusinger (Director of the Representation of the State of Hessen to the European Union) and Gábor Móczár (President of ECA-EC), live music showed the audience what the event was all about. The youth choir of the Monnaie, La Chorale, conducted by Benoît Giaux, demonstrated to the audience how singing together can bring joy to the singers as well as to the listeners. Sonja Greiner, Secretary General ECA-EC then presented the “Singing Europe” study which was developed in the frame of the VOICE project, funded by the EU Culture Programme and selected as “success story” by the European Commission.



Have you sung in the last 12 months?

The core question of the “Singing Europe” study was: “How many people in Europe practice collective singing?” (meaning that people deliberately gather to sing together in any form, usually on a regular basis), a question ECA-EC asked in 2012, not quite sure what the results would be and bring.

The detailed results of the study can be found and downloaded on [www.SingingEurope.org](http://www.SingingEurope.org), the main result being that 37 Million people in Europe regularly sing together, which represents 4,5 % of the population. In the European Union alone there are around 22.5 million choral singers; which corresponds to the added population of London, Berlin, Madrid, Rome and Paris.

For the choral world in Europe this was a surprisingly positive result and the proof that collective singing is not a “niche art form”, but rather one of the most commonly

practised cultural free-time activities. In most European countries there are even more choral singers than registered soccer players – who would have believed this?



Common song "Viva la musica" conducted by Carlo Pavese

The qualitative data-collection (a survey answered by around 5,000 choirs or ensembles) showed further interesting results, such as the age and gender distribution of singers in the different countries, but also explored the reasons for people to gather and sing: A high percentage of choirs wish to contribute to the well-being of singers, to the social integration and the inclusion of people in danger of exclusion. It also showed that while collective singing is mostly an amateur art, it is also an economic factor and it contributes to job creation, with around 120,000 paid conductors in the EU, as well as soloists and instrumentalists accompanying the choirs in concerts.

The audience could directly experience the power of collective singing by learning the canon “Viva la Música” with Carlo Pavese, Vice-President of ECA-EC, before Sonja Greiner invited Barbara Gessler (Head of Unit, Creative Europe Programme – Culture, General Directorate for Education and Culture) on stage to discuss the point of view of the European Commission on data collection and research and the priorities of the Creative Europe Programme.

Almost 200 people attended the event live while another 200 followed it digitally via live streaming, which is now available as video on <http://www.europeanchoralassociation.org/VoiceOfSingingEurope>

*Edited by Ellen Murnane, USA*