

# **IFCM Meets the All-Russian Choral Society, The start of a new collaboration**

*By Francesco Leonardi, IFCM Project Manager*

Growing and being an all-inclusive movement are the first mission of IFCM, giving all people the opportunity to learn new music, learn new ways to be a choir, share ideas, and be an inspiration to others. In this context, the recent mission to Russia found fertile ground, thanks to an encounter with Mr. Pavel A. Pozhigaylo, Director of the All-Russian Choral Society.

On February 29<sup>th</sup> in Moscow, future scenarios for collaboration between the All-Russian Choral Society and IFCM were discussed, using their shared knowledge and current projects as a starting point for reaching concrete proposals for partnerships, especially in the way of choral education (directors and singers) and communication to help make choral music increasingly visible worldwide.

Russian choral singing, both in the way of music production and the number of practitioners, has a seemingly endless heritage: adult choirs alone number about 48,000 in the 85 provinces or regions where the All-Russian Choral Society has a coordinating role.

Choral singing is becoming much more increasingly widespread, thanks to government investments that are moving towards the creation of a choir for each school and recognising the artistic and social value of doing so. One of the projects that we talked about during the meeting addressed the very issue concerning education in schools and training of conductors for approximately 75,000 Russian schools: To date,

only 40,000 of them have formed a choir that has put itself through the initial test of a national choral festival. Consequently, given the growing need for professional experts in choral practice here in this respect, the floor is wide open for joint collaboration.

We talked not only about what IFCM could do for Russian choirs, but also about how our organisation could help spread the word about Russian choral music worldwide by exposing the world to old and new composers and giving visibility to projects and performers.

The rest of the speech then focused on the crucial point of communication coming in and out of Russia, namely the real possibility for IFCM members to dialogue with the Russian world through regular translation of ICB and e-NEWS articles, as well as the possibility for the Russian choral movement to speak about its projects and opportunities.

At the end of the meeting, we bid farewell until May so as to continue our exchange of ideas, but very concrete plans were agreed upon for the coming months.

This meeting was a consequence of the new way of working at IFCM, made possible thanks to its new legal status and the opening of regional offices that were inherently willing to listen to the national associations, with their developmental strategies and projects in pursuit of our mission.

*Edited by Steve Lansford, USA*