

European Choral Association – Europa Cantat Weberstr. 59A – DE 53113 Bonn



To our
members, indirect members and friends



Bonn, 03/7/23

Invitation to our 2023 Membership Weekend with Membership Day, Project Presentation Session, General Assembly and IGNITE Workshops

Thursday 16 (arrival) to Sunday 19 November 2023
Vilnius, Lithuania

Dear members and friends of the European Choral Association,

It is our pleasure to invite you to our annual Membership Weekend consisting of


- our Membership Day with a hybrid project presentation session and 6 discussion rounds to choose from on November 17
- networking time, time to meet your friends and make new contacts
- our formal General Assembly for members and indirect members on November 18
- a workshop on how to make your events more accessible / inclusive and more environmentally friendly
- a Lithuanian Folk Music Workshop
- concerts with Lithuanian choirs
- time to discover the charm of the old town of Vilnius

For two days you will therefore have a unique chance to interact, learn, sing and meet with your fellow choral enthusiasts. This is also your opportunity to contribute to the future of the European Choral Association.

You will discover the **detailed programme** on pages 2 and 3, and the **practical information** on pages 4 & 5 (**make sure to read it carefully, hotel registration has to be done by you directly!**)

We are looking forward to welcoming you to the beautiful city of Vilnius!

With best wishes



Dermot O'Callaghan
President of the European Choral Association

Attachments:

Detailed programme (p. 2-3)
Practical information (p. 4)
(Including registration link,
Hotel information, participation fees)
Agenda of General Assembly (p. 8)

Detailed programme (subject to changes!)

Discover Vilnius on your arrival day if you have time / Thursday, 16/11/2023

All those wishing to attend our Membership Day should plan to arrive on Thursday, November 16. On this day you will have time to discover Vilnius and meet and greet other members. Dinner will not be organised on Thursday.

Membership Day / Friday, 17/11/2023 morning

Hybrid Project Presentation session at 10:00

After evaluating the online project presentation session and the Membership Weekend 2022 we decided our Membership Weekend in Vilnius can still present projects and/or watch the presentation online. **We're looking for interesting, innovative and inspiring projects**, including future projects for which you are looking for partners. Presenters must be members, indirect members (members of member organisations or of the Friends) or coming from a target country of our Regional Development Strategy. **Project presentations have to be submitted by 30/09/23** through this google form: <https://forms.gle/w8r4XRQafmxoZWhL9>



Introduction to Discussion Rounds at 11:30

Before lunch we will introduce the discussion rounds of the afternoon, to help you make a choice.

Membership Day / Friday, 17/11/2022 afternoon

Discussion rounds between 14.00 and 16:30

Representatives of the member organisations and indirect members of the European Choral Association are invited to talk about the future of our association, bring in new ideas and develop new models with their peers. We will offer **6 discussion groups in 2 slots**, inviting participants to

1. as “newcomers” discover the history, strategy & activities of the European Choral Association
2. discuss cooperation within our sector – how can we “break down walls” between different genres, between professionals and amateurs or between the performers and the audience?
3. learn about and discuss gender diversity in the choral sector with our Youth Committee
4. find out what choirs and event organisers wrote about their wishes and challenges and contribute with their own experience (based on surveys from April/May 2023)
5. brainstorm on topics that national and regional choir associations could talk about with their members or train them on, and on possible solutions (e.g. how to deal with the lack of boys and men in amateur choirs? / how to deal with changes in the singers’ lives that impact their participation in choirs? / how to engage choirs and conductors in advocacy work?)
6. become creative and imagine they were founding the European Choral Association today and designing its main events and activities – what would this be?

Moderated networking time with coffee at 16.30

Dinner / Concert with Jauna Muzika in the Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas Lukiškės church at 20.00, followed by optional visit of the prison

General Assembly / Saturday, 18/11/23, morning, 9.30-12.30 (tbc)

As usual, we will look back on the last year, including everything we achieved in our new network funding project **IGNITE**, co-funded by the EU Creative Europe programme, and other activities during the past 12 months. And we will look ahead at our plans for the years 2024 and beyond. (See Agenda on page 5).

Time to learn and discover - Saturday, 18/11/23, afternoon

Workshop on “Making your events more environmentally sustainable and inclusive” and opportunity to learn Lithuanian repertoire to sing along in the evening concert

On Saturday afternoon we will move to the Lithuanian National Culture Center for an afternoon of finding out how to make your events more environmentally sustainable and inclusive or learning some Lithuanian Folk Music to prepare a sing-along in the evening’s concert.

It is time to shape our future and learn how we can contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Sophie Dowden (UK/FR) and a second speaker to be confirmed will offer you tips and tricks on how you can make your events more environmentally sustainable and more inclusive in future.

In parallel singers and conductors will have the chance work with a Lithuanian conductor and learn some Lithuanian Folk Songs they will be able to sing along in the evening concert.

Reception in the Town Hall and concert by Liepaitės Girls Choir at 19h (tbc.)

Please carefully read the practical information on the following pages where you will also find the registration link and hotel information.



Important practical information

Registration

The detailed programme, practical information for your stay and necessary documents for the General Assembly will be sent out to registered delegates beginning of October 2023. Please note that English will be the main working language of the General Assembly, Membership Day and Conference, but individual support may be provided if needed and possible.

How to register? Deadline 30 September 2023

To attend the event, please fill in the online application form under <https://forms.gle/3Nn4tHxJtguB7YUa9>



Accommodation

Our conference hotel will be the **Artis Hotel**, in the centre of Vilnius. The hotel is offering participants of our Membership Weekend special rates:

Double room used as single: 73 EUR per room & night / **Single room:** 69 EUR per room & night
Double room for 2 people: 84 EUR per room & night / **Business room:** 93 EUR per room & night

These prices include breakfast, the city tax, the use of the gym, & tea-making facilities in the room.

IMPORTANT: Other than at our membership weekends until 2021, the accommodation will NOT be included in the participation fees published below and participants to our Membership Weekend will have to book their hotel rooms themselves to simplify the process and avoid cancellation costs.

If you would like to stay at Artis Hotel and you would like to profit from these special rates, please book your rooms by sending an e-mail by October 1st 2023 with the reservation code **“ECA GENERAL ASSEMBLY”** to reservations.artis@centrumhotels.com indicating which rooms you would like to book from which date to which date.

You can also book additional nights before/after our Membership Weekend for the same rates.

You will have to pay the hotel directly, and the preferential rules are only valid until 02/10/2023!

If you would like to stay in a cheaper hotel or hostel, you can check these options (we have not reserved any rooms there and have no responsibility for the quality):

<https://downtownforest.lt>, <http://jamaikahostel.com> & <http://25-hours-hostel.vilnius-hotels.net/en>

Optional visit of the prison on 17/11 after the concert

On Friday, 17 November our schedule will feature an exclusive opportunity to visit the “Lukiškės prison 2.0”, an artistic centre. On Friday evening, we will listen to a concert by Vilnius Municipality Choir “Jauna Muzika” at the prison’s church. If you are interested in visiting the prison itself after the concert, you will be able to book the tour in your registration form. The visit is offered free of charge to you by the Vilnius municipality. More about the prison:

www.lukiskiukalejimas.lt/pasivaiksciojimai/en/home-eng/ and on p.7.

Free participation for participants from Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe

In order to increase the involvement of (potential) member organisations Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in the activities of the association we have the opportunity, within the frame of IGNITE, to offer a free participation including accommodation and meals as well as a subsidy to the travel expenses for maximum 1 representative per organisation and a total maximum of 4 grants. If you are interested in such a grant, please contact us before September 15th 2023 at Jozi.Vovk@EuropeanChoralAssociation.org.

Participation fees

The fee includes meals as described below, as well as all coffee breaks, concerts and performances on Friday and Saturday, and participation in the different events. **It does NOT include accommodation (see above).** You will receive an **invoice from the organisation Cantates public entity, local partner in cooperation with Lithuanian National Cultural Centre** with payment modalities sometime after your online registration, latest mid-October 2023.

Fee per participant for representatives of member organisations, indirect members and members of the Friends of the European Choral Association (non-members pay 20 € in addition):

- **Full package:** Participation including Membership Day and lunch on Friday
Country Group 1: **135€** Country Group 2: **45 €** Country Group 3: **25 €**
- **Small package:** Participation without Membership Day and lunch on Friday
Country Group 1: **115€** Country Group 2: **40€** Country Group 3: **20 €**

Country groups	Country Group 1	Country Group 2	Country Group 3
Countries by country group	AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, HK, IE, IL, IS, IT, LI, LU, MT, NL, NO, SE, UK and some overseas countries, see below*	CZ, CY, EE, GR, HR, HU, LT, LV, PL, PT, SI, SK and some overseas countries, see below*	AL, AM, BA, BG, BY, GE, KZ, MD, ME, MK, RO, RS, RU, TR, UA
* For countries outside Europe the rule is that countries belong to group 1 according to the HDI index used by IFCM (see http://ifcm.net/membership-fees), countries belonging to HDI groups 2 and 3 are in country group 2. Country group 3 is only reserved for European countries. If you are not sure which country group you belong to, write to info@EuropeanChoralAssociation.org			

Cancellation rules

Please note that you will have to pay the participation fee if you cancel your participation short-term! **Please note that we are not responsible for the cancellation rules of the hotel, we suggest that you take a travel insurance.**



For the environment: If you know in advance, even if we can unfortunately not reduce costs for single meals, please let us know if you are planning NOT to attend a meal so that we do not need to waste so much food.

How to reach Vilnius, Lithuania and the Artis Hotel as main venue

There is an airport in Vilnius. If you must fly, please consider the environment and check if you may do part of the trip by train or bus to avoid indirect flights and thus reduce your carbon footprint – you can find all direct flights to Vilnius here:

www.vilnius-airport.lt/en/before-the-flight/flights-information/flight-map.



Otherwise, you can find more information on how to get to Vilnius by buses and trains here:
www.govilnius.lt/plan-your-trip/arrival

To get from the airport to the hotel:

Take the bus route 88 and get off at “MO muziejus” stop. Then walk 750 metres to the Artis Centrum Hotel. Or take the bus route G3 and get off at “Mikalojaus Konstantino Čiurlionio” stop, then walk 1200 metres to the hotel.

Alternatively, download the BOLT app and take the taxi from the airport to Artis Centrum Hotel, you can pay cash or add your card details into the app. You can also take a normal taxi from the airport, but this will be more expensive than a BOLT taxi.

Main venues

Our main venue for the Membership Weekend will be **the Artis Hotel**.

The Membership Day on Friday morning and afternoon as well as the General Assembly on Saturday will be there, and we will have lunch on Friday and Saturday as well as dinner on Friday at the hotel. We can also meet in the bar in the evenings to discuss the day’s events, talk and sing together. **We suggest that participants book a room there (see above, page 4)**, though you are free to also choose another accommodation if you prefer.

On Saturday afternoon we will be in the **Lithuanian National Cultural Centre** which is located in Barboros Radvilaitės st. 8, 01124 Vilnius.

On Friday evening the concert will take place in the **Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker** (Lukiškių skg. 6, 01108 Vilnius)

The reception and performance on Saturday evening will be hosted by the town of Vilnius in the **Town Hall** which is situated in Didžioji st. 31, 01128 Vilnius.



Please try to walk, cycle or use public transport to move around within Vilnius and avoid using your own car.



Artis Hotel does not have an official eco-label. However, you can contribute to **reducing your carbon footprint** by asking the reception not to clean your room every day or use the “do not disturb” sign to signal this, and by giving preference to vegetarian food over meat.

Tourism

Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania, located along the Neris and Vilnelė rivers. It is a beautiful and bustling city with a unique Old Town that combines the heritage of many cultures.

Centuries-old architecture, modern buildings and untouched nature right in the city are what makes Vilnius special. It is one of the greenest capitals in Europe, where the contemporary atmosphere of the city goes hand-in-hand with the stories and legends of the Old Town. Vilnius is turning 700 this year, which means it is full of special festivities.

The magical Old Town of Vilnius, where our Membership Weekend will take place, holds many secrets and a long history. The cobblestone streets lead you on a romantic walk through the UNESCO World Heritage site. Vilnius is home to many talented contemporary artists, and every month there's a theatre, film, dance, or a culture festival going on. At night, Vilnius turns into a different city where people dance until sunrise amid a booming club and bar culture.

There is a lot to explore in your free time in Vilnius, and you can find the best recommendations here:

<https://www.govilnius.lt/visit-vilnius>

The Lukiškės prison

For 115 years, Lukiškės Prison was guarded by high walls and barbed wire, but today the site is open to the public. From prison to artistic venue, a new version – Lukiškės Prison 2.0 – is home to 250 creators and artists, and a place where curious spirits can learn and explore. Visitors can sit down for a refreshing drink, attend a concert or take a tour to get a glimpse of life in the former prison. This unique space has become a star on the silver screen as well, serving as the backdrop for the TV series Stranger Things season 4.

On 17 November, On Friday evening, we will listen to a concert by Vilnius Municipality Choir "Jauna Muzika" at the prison's church. If you are interested in visiting the prison itself after the concert, you will be able to book the tour in your registration form. The visit is offered free of charge to you by the Vilnius municipality.

More about the prison: www.lukiskiukalejimas.lt/pasivaiksciojimai/en/home-eng



Agenda of the General Assembly 2023

Saturday, 18/11/2023, 9.30 – 12:30 (tbc.) in the Artis Hotel, Vilnius (Lithuania)



0. Opening
1. Approval of the agenda
2. Minutes General Assembly 2022
3. Report of the President
4. Activities' reports 2023, including report from the Membership Day
 - 4.1 Artistic Vice-President on behalf of Artistic Strategy Group
 - 4.2 Year 2 of the IGNITE project - including regional development and new strategies and policies on inclusion and environmental sustainability as well as presentation of fair remuneration guidelines
 - 4.3 Cooperation Agreement with EAS signed in 2023
 - 4.4 Other activities and events in 2023
5. Report of the Treasurer: Finances 2022 - 2023, Preliminary Budget for 2024
6. Discharge of the Board of Directors
7. Welcome to new members
8. Presentation of the "Friends of the European Choral Association" ?
9. A look into the future:
 - 9.1 Proposal for network funding application 2025 - 2028
 - 9.2 Activities 2024 - 2025
 - 9.2.1 Programme of events 2024
 - 9.2.2 Leading Voices 2025?
 - 9.2.3 Europa Cantat junior 2026
 - 9.2.4 other activities in 2024, 2025
10. Presentation by the Youth Committee
11. Invitation to General Assembly 2024, 15 - 17/11/2024, Flanders, Belgium
12. Presenting other European and International networks
 - 12.1 TENSO - the European network of professional chamber choirs
13. Miscellaneous

Subject to changes!

**We look forward to seeing
you in Vilnius
in November 2023!**