

Key Conclusions from Survey for Choirs for Future Design of Choral Events

Summary analysis of survey results (detailed analysis attached)

The purpose of this survey was to gather input from choirs across Europe on the types of choral events and festivals they would like to attend in the future. The survey, which included 79 questions, was conducted from November 2023 to May 2024 and received 88 responses from 30 different countries, including 5 responses from countries outside Europe (USA, Puerto Rico, Canada, Brazil, and South Africa). 15 of the respondents came from France, 7 from Spain and 7 from Türkiye, for the other countries we have between 1 and 4 responses.

Information About Choirs and Ensembles

- **Respondents:** The survey was predominantly filled out by conductors, managers, and board members, individuals involved in the management of their choirs, 38,6% of the respondents were singers.
- **Choir Types:** The majority of respondents represented mixed choirs (70.5%), with a significant portion from equal voice choirs or ensembles (25%).
- **Choir Size and Demographics:** Most choirs have 30-50 members (38.6%), followed closely by those with 12-30 singers (36.4%). Nearly half of the singers (45,5%) are aged between 30 and 60, with a higher proportion of women compared to men and under 10% non-binary people (or their percentage is unknown).

Participation in Choral Festivals and Events

- **Engagement:** A significant majority of choirs have participated in choral festivals/events in the last 10 years. Many choirs are actively engaged at local, national, and international levels.
- **Festival Attendance:** 8 choirs already experienced Europa Cantat Festival, 4 Choralies, and 2 Tolosa Festival, among others (11). However, 14.8% of choirs have not participated in festivals over the last decade.

Main Goals and Expectations

Choirs have diverse goals and expectations when attending choral events. Key goals include:

1. **Experience and Learning: (mentioned by 30 persons)**
 - Gaining experience, learning new techniques and repertoire, attending workshops, and learning from other choirs and conductors are highly valued.
2. **Networking and Connections: (mentioned by 26 persons)**
 - Meeting and connecting with other choirs, conductors, and organizers, and building contacts for future projects are important.
3. **Cultural Exchange and Exposure: (mentioned by 23 persons)**
 - Engaging in cultural exchange, discovering new music, sharing music, and interacting with different cultures are significant motivators.
4. **Performance Opportunities: (mentioned by 18 persons)**
 - Opportunities for performance, audience engagement, high-quality concerts, and collaborative singing with other choirs are crucial.

5. **Motivation and Inspiration:** (mentioned by 15 persons)
 - Providing motivation, inspirational experiences, and fun are also important, though slightly less prioritized.
6. **Recognition and Promotion:** (mentioned by 5 persons)
 - Some choirs seek recognition and promotion through their participation.
7. **Team Building and Personal Development:** (mentioned by 4 persons)
 - Team-building activities and personal development opportunities are valued.

If only looking at singers, priorities are slightly different and networking and cultural exchange received the highest number of responses (11), followed by performance and recognition (8) and fun and enjoyment (4).

Desired Activities at Choral Events

- **Concerts and Workshops:** The most desired activities include concerts with other choirs (92%) and workshops/ateliers where choirs learn and perform new repertoire (80.7%).
- **Workshops for Conductors/Managers:** There is strong interest in workshops specifically for conductors and managers (52.3%).
- **Open Singing and Competitions:** Open singing (51.1%) and competitive events (competition or showcase with feedback from jurors - 34.1%) are also popular.
- **Composers showcase to discover new repertoire and**
- **Trade exhibitions for publishers and other businesses:** The least interest was for these two activities with only 1,1 % = 1 person.
- It is important to note that singers have a completely different list of priorities as others that filled in the survey (activities for conductors and managers are at the end of the list of desired activities).

Repertoire Preferences

- **Variety in Repertoire:** Most respondents (69,3%) have no particular preference regarding repertoire type, though some express specific interests in classical music, contemporary music, a cappella, music from different countries, gospel/spiritual music, pop/rock/world music, traditional songs, and Eastern Orthodox music.
- **Rehearsal Time:** Optimal rehearsal time ranges between 3 to 6 hours per day (depending on repertoire and final performance), balancing rehearsal with attending concerts and free time.

Participation Preferences

- **Event Participation:** Most prefer events open to both choirs and individuals (67%).
- **Language:** English as a working language is acceptable to the majority (66%), though it presents a problem for 34%.

Age Relevance

- **Age Inclusivity:** Most respondents are open to events without specific age limits, though 19.3% prefer age-specific events, particularly among children's and youth choirs.

Optimal Festival Size and Length

- **Event Size:** Most people are indifferent to the size of the festival (53.4%), but there is a preference for smaller events with up to 500 participants (23.9%). Larger events (with over 1.000 participants) have limited appeal.
- **Event Duration:** Weekend events (45.5%) are the most preferred, followed by events lasting up to 4 full days. 12,5% think 5 days is also feasible, less than 10% favour longer events.

Travel Considerations

- **Travel Distance:** The willingness to travel increases with the length of the event. For weekend events, the optimal travel distance is between 100 and 500 km. 59,1 % would be prepared to travel by plane, 61,4% by train, and 72,7% by bus.
- **Environmental Impact:** Environmental sustainability influences travel decisions for 29.5% of choirs (partly for the choir as such, partly for individuals in the choir), with higher sensitivity noted in Western and Northern Europe.

Financial Considerations

- **Participation Fees:** Most choirs prefer to spend less than 50 euros per day on participation fees. A significant portion is willing to spend more on accommodation and travel, with total costs per event expected to range between 200 and 600 euros.
- **Accommodation Preferences:** A package price with a range of accommodation options is preferred by 53.4%. Hotel accommodation is acceptable for 80,7% of adult's choirs / ensembles as youth and children choirs are ok also with accommodation in Youth Hostel or in schools, universities (60,2%)

Key Factors Influencing Decisions

The most important factors influencing choirs' decision to participate in a choir event, ranked in order of importance, are:

1. Total costs for attending the event
2. The dates
3. Travel options
4. Distance from home
5. Event location

Additionally, the workshop programme, event length, and workshop conductors are also very important in reaching the final decision.

These key conclusions offer valuable insights into the preferences and priorities of choirs across Europe, providing a solid foundation for designing future choral events that are engaging, accessible, and fulfilling for all participants.

Report prepared in May 2024