

European Choral Association - Europa Cantat [www.eca-ec.org](http://www.eca-ec.org)

**Presentation SingingEurope.org – EMC Forum On Music – Bern – 21/06/2014**

Sonja Greiner: Secretary General

Côme Ferrand Cooper: Project Manager- The VOICE project



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*Since we were the last presenters, we decided to set up a short play. Below is the text of the dialogue with a few pictures from the powerpoint we used.*

## Prologue

SG: (Sonja Greiner) invited the audience to welcome the new Minister of Cultural Affairs of the European Union.

CFC (Côme Ferrand Cooper): interrupted her, reading a message from the UE on his smartphone, explaining that there is no such minister and that they provided an “emergency kit”, containing a tie and a speech. CFC then turns himself into the non-existent minister and the play starts

## Play

CFC: Dear Sophia Grüner, welcome to my brand new European Ministry For Cultural Affairs, please just don't touch the walls, the paint is still fresh. I'm a great fan of your work, and you know, my grandmother sings in a church choir too, maybe you know her?

SG: My name is Greiner, Sonja Greiner. I'm very honored, and want to thank you for your interest in Choral Music on behalf of the European Choral Association – Europa Cantat.



CFC: Very well, in the name of Europe, let me thank you for your effort for our senior citizens! You see, I have a hobby too, I'm a hunter, and, If I dare put a personal note here, I'm a proud member of the “European Hunters Association”

So, as a hunter, I do have a great personal interest in endangered species, we must not let the choral singers disappear from Europe. You see, my grand mother may be singing in a choir, but she is already 95 years old, she won't be singing much longer!

I must say that it is a very positive experience for such old people, they are having fun and it is good for their memory and socialisation.



SG: Old people? Your excellence, I think there is a misunderstanding here, there are singers of all ages in Europe. I'm sure singing is very good for your grandmother, but citizens of all ages are singing in choirs! And what you say is true, singing even has positive effect on the immune system and contribute to the personal and social development of singers. That has been proved by a lot of scientific studies, and we are now working with different research institutes on these questions!

CFC: Did you say citizens of all age? You mean, people who go to vote without a wheel chair? Now you are talking! Tell me more, how many are they? What can I do to turn them into happy voters?

SG: How many singers in Europe? That's a very good question! But between you and me, we don't really know!

CFC You don't really know? Can't you ask the national hunting federations? Sorry, I meant the national choral federations? They should have accurate registers of singers!



SG: It's funny that you mention hunting, my grand mother is also a founding member of your European Hunters Association. She told me once that your association is representing seven millions hunters in Europe. But hunters have to register somehow, if only because they tend to use guns for their hobby, and they need some insurance. Fortunately most choral singers don't carry guns, and unfortunately, not all choirs are affiliated with national

organisations. So we cannot be so sure!

CFC: It's a shame, with numbers I could do something for you! How do you want to have any influence without excel tables and pie charts? I can tell you for example that here in Switzerland hunters represent 0,4% of the population, or in France 2%. With numbers you can have some political weight!

SG: You are right your Highness, and we decided to address this issue with the help of Europe! We are now working on a research programme to answer this question.

CFC: With my help, good!

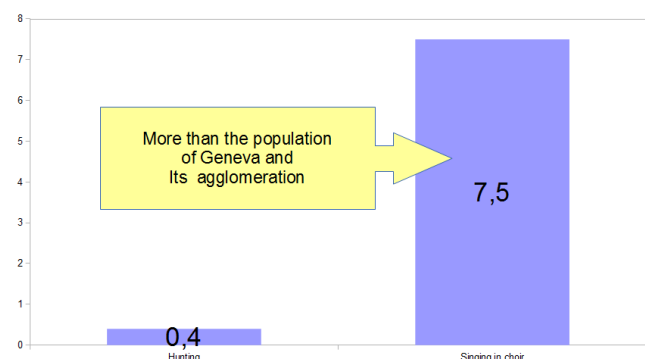
SG: Yes, we are coordinating the VOICE project, a European multiannual cooperation project that runs until may 2015, you can ask your assistant to check our website. And in this frame we developed the Singing Europe initiative.

CFC: Singing Europe?

SG: Right, remember that name: Singing Europe, it is a pilot research programme we've set up to gather reliable data on collective singing in

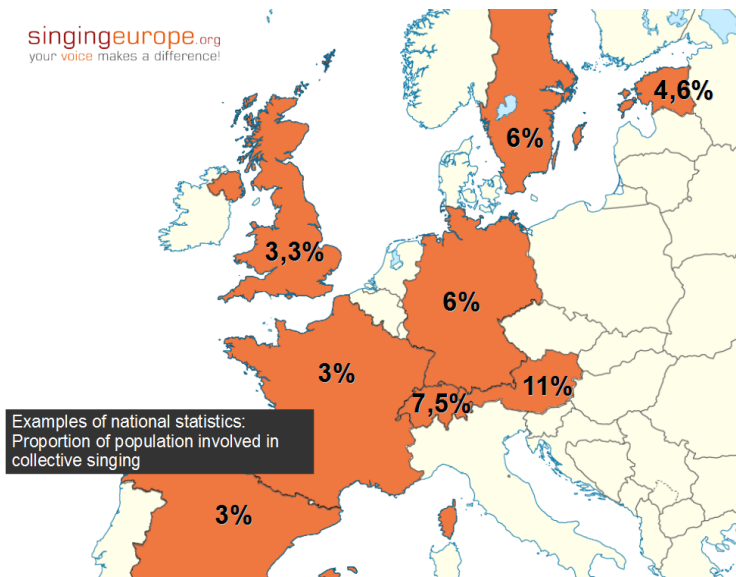
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### Hunting vs. Singing in Switzerland



Europe. We are working hard to find out in each country what national statistics may exist on choral singing, and we turn them into comparable data. For example, since you mentioned that there are 0,4% of hunters in Switzerland, we found that there are about 7,5% of choral singers here!

You see, these singers represent a larger population than Geneva and its agglomeration for example!



Or in your country, France, you have 2% hunters, but at least 3% choral singers.

See, here is a map of some existing data we've collected so far.

CFC: So you can produce Excel tables and diagrams after all! Good!

SG: Yes, but we want more than pie charts. We want to produce a complete report covering Europe, a report that everybody can read with information about what the choirs are singing, who they are, their age range, their economic situation, what

are their aims and many other topics!

CFC: Wait a minute, you just told me that you are gathering existing data in the European countries. Can you find all this information in national statistics?

SG: No quite, your majesty: when national statistics exist, they can't answer all of our questions. So we decided to produce our own data by asking choirs all around Europe to provide us with more qualitative information.

We are running an online survey in 23 languages, and we have more than 4000 answers in 10 month! These data will allow us to give a more detailed image of the situation.

CFC: Perfect, so in a few month you can tell me how many singers vote in Europe!

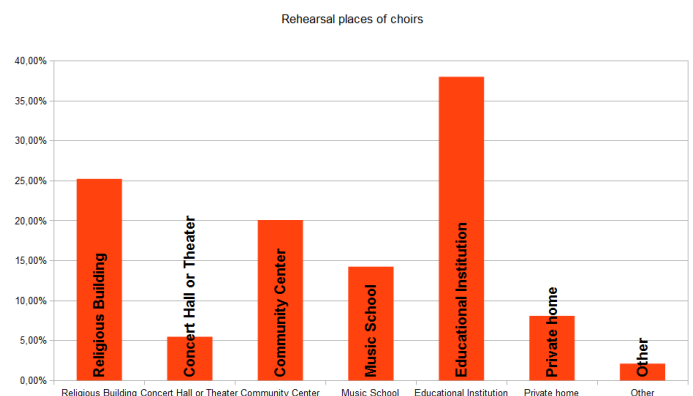
SG: Sorry to disappoint you, but no! We will have a much better estimation than today, based on the data we can find and produce.

But I can already give you some partial figures, if you want, since nobody is listening to our conversation.

For example, based on our survey, we discovered that most choirs do not rehearse in churches (like your grandmother), but in schools! Just have a look at this beautiful excel diagram

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## Where do choirs rehearse?



We can also say that conductors are being paid in about half of the choirs, and not always

for the concerts...

But this is still a pilot project and I'll come back to you then, it is a promise, with a method to know for sure!

CFC: with a budget proposal then?

SG: of course, in a beautiful excel file with pie charts like this one!

CFC Oh my, 85% of Choral voters want more financial support! God, I'm convinced now!  
Let's stay in touch dear Sophia Grüner!

SG: thank you!

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**85% of choirs think that vocal music  
should receive more financial or  
material support from the authorities**

