

Statement of the European Choral Association on the war in Ukraine

“Where words fail, music speaks”
Hans Christian Andersen

We stand in solidarity with the victims of the war in Ukraine, and support all calls for peace

We stand in solidarity with all the victims of this war from every perspective: the ones who lost their homes, those who lost relatives and friends, the many refugees, and also those who are standing up against war and in so doing are risking imprisonment or worse. We are also mindful of all those who are being discriminated against because of their origin or nationality. Wars cause division and enormous physical and mental harm to so many. The act of singing together is in stark contrast to war. As an international singing community we emphasize singing's ability to unify, demonstrate defiance and bring comfort.

We call upon the choral community in Europe and beyond, organisations and choirs alike, to also show their solidarity and join us in a call for peace and unity. Choirs can raise their voices and express their solidarity and wish for peace in many ways including: Dedicating their concerts to the victims of the war, selecting repertoire that supports their message, fundraising for humanitarian help in Ukraine or for refugees abroad, contacting their choral friends in Ukraine, offering homes to refugees in need. We also support artists and musicians from Ukraine, Russia and other countries all over the world who may be experiencing discrimination and all those that cannot undertake their artistic and musical activities at this time.

At this moment, the European Choral Association remembers its origins in unity and peace. Singing is a great unifier; it brings people together and demonstrates our shared humanity. More than 60 years ago conductors who had been soldiers on opposing sides created the Europa Cantat festival and the European Federation of Young Choirs. These two organisations were based on the belief that bringing young people, from countries previously involved in a war, together would have a positive effect. They would gather to sing together, share accommodation and meals and spend free time together. The hope and the result was that they would make friends, appreciate each other's cultures and not wish to go to war against one another in the future.

Today our association still bases its work on values of inclusion, equality and diversity. We firmly believe in the power of music and singing to overcome differences and increase mutual understanding. The Association is profoundly saddened to see the large numbers of people that are suffering from the war in Ukraine at the moment. We are particularly thinking of and supporting our choral friends and colleagues.

Since the early 90s, the European Choral Association has had members in an increasing number of Central-Eastern European countries, including Russia and recently Ukraine. Last month, just after the start of the war, we received EuroChoir applications from both young Ukrainians, some of them refugees, and young Russians. Amongst the other applications from singers many expressed their hope that singing in such a European choir would contribute to greater understanding, peace, love and hope.

“Recent developments in the Ukraine are altering my/our perception of Europe. I believe that an institution like the EuroChoir shares the value of dialogue, cares for a good cultural understanding and therefore, contributes to a vision of a peaceful Europe.”

On our Facebook page we have created a post called “Share your stories” where you can look for and share ideas, repertoire tips (you can also consult the Musica database for this), charities that you believe are worth supporting, stories about your friends in the Ukraine or refugees in your country.

Let us stand and sing together. Singing is a beacon of hope and solidarity in difficult times.