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**Minister Ben Weyts**

Flemish Minister for Mobility, Public Works, the Vlaamse Rand, Tourism and Animal Welfare

**Minister Sven Gatz**

Flemish Minister for Culture, Media, Youth and Brussels Affairs

## **The World Choir Games in Flanders**

### **Come sing with us!**

**From 5 to 15 July 2020 Flanders will be the stage for the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Choir Games. It will be following in the footsteps of Tshwane (South Africa) where approximately 500 choirs from more than 80 countries competed in 30 different categories last summer. There will be a total of more than 20,000 enthusiastic voices making up this cultural top event which not only includes the competitions, but an array of public performances and friendship concerts outside the walls of the concert hall as well. Antwerp and Ghent will be your hosts for this international top event, but the whole of Flanders will be able to enjoy this gigantic choir celebration.**

The World Choir Games are the second initiative to be given concrete form in this administration's ambition to invest more in top events in Flanders. Flemish Minister for Tourism, Ben Weyts: *"We want to bring more international top events to Flanders in the near future. Events like the World Choir Games put Flanders on the map as a destination where people from all over the world are welcome to sing together, share knowledge and experience, and have a great time, all in the fantastic historical framework of our cultural cities."*

The World Choir Games will open on 5 July with a spectacular opening ceremony at the Sportpaleis in Antwerp. For eleven days the participants and the general public can take part in competitions, workshops, celebration concerts, friendship concerts and open singing sessions. The World Choir Council meeting will be held on 10 July in the FMCCA in Antwerp, followed by a spectacular Parade of Nations through the city of Antwerp on 11 July - Flemish Community Day.

The World Choir Games will conclude with a spectacular closing ceremony in which the host for the next World Choir Games will be announced. Media figure and presenter Thomas Vanderveken will be the ambassador for the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Choir Games and composer and conductor Maarten Van Ingelgem will be the artistic director.

The World Choir Games are an international top event where everyone is welcome and where everyone can participate. The organisers also want to make sure it is an inclusive event. Therefore there is extra focus on risk groups in Flanders. The event strives to connect choirs and singers from all over the world, no matter what their nationality, ethnic background or religion. Flemish Minister for Culture, Sven Gatz: *"Flanders together with the cities of Antwerp and Ghent, is committed to spare no efforts in creating the setting for what will be the most inclusive, open and successful World Choir Games yet"*.

For the Flemish choir community the World Choir Games are a unique opportunity and at the same time a huge challenge. Flanders is home to approximately 1,000 choirs that together have about 35,000 members singing every week. *The Flemish Government is investing around 7.4 million euros in organising the World Choir Games. The practical organisation has been entrusted to Koor&Stem vzw. They will in turn create their own organisational structure for this event. Together with Road World Championships 2021, the World Choir Games is the second top event that EventFlanders has brought to Flanders.*

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*The World Choir Games is an international choir event from INTERKULTUR and will be organised in Flanders in 2020 on the initiative of EventFlanders, a collaboration with VISITFLANDERS, the Department of Culture, Youth and Media, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the city of Antwerp, the city of Ghent and Koor&Stem vzw.*