

Eurovision Song Contest



The **Eurovision Song Contest** is an annual competition held among active member countries of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU).

Each member country submits a song to be performed on live television and then casts votes for the other countries' songs to determine the most popular song in the competition. Each country participates via one of their national EBU-member television stations, whose task it is to select a singer and a song to represent their country in the international competition.

The Contest has been broadcast every year since its inauguration in 1956 and is one of the longest-running television programmes in the world. It is also one of the most-watched non-sporting events in the world, with audience figures having been quoted in recent years as anything between 100 million and 600 million internationally.



Eurovision has also been broadcast outside Europe to such places as Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, Egypt, India, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand

and Uruguay despite the fact that they do not compete. Since the year 2000, the Contest has also been broadcast over the Internet.

Grand Prix Eurovision de la Chanson Européenne 1956

1956 (Lugano)

Origins

In the 1950s, as a war-torn Europe rebuilt itself, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU)—based in Switzerland—set up a committee to search for ways of bringing together the countries of the EBU around a "light entertainment programme". At a committee meeting held in Monaco in January 1955, director general of Swiss television and committee chairman Marcel Bezençon conceived the idea of an international song contest where countries would participate in one television programme, to be transmitted simultaneously to all countries of the union.

The competition was based upon the existing Sanremo Music Festival held in Italy, and was also seen as a technological experiment in live television: as in those days, it was a very ambitious project to join many countries together in a wide-area international network. Satellite television did not exist, and the so-called Eurovision Network comprised a terrestrial microwave network. The concept, then known as "Eurovision Grand Prix", was approved by the EBU General Assembly in at a meeting held in Rome on 19 October 1955 and it was decided that the first contest would take place in spring 1956 in Lugano, Switzerland. The name "Eurovision" was first used in relation to the EBU's network by British journalist George Campey in the *London Evening Standard* in 1951.

Fifty-one countries have participated at least once. These are listed here alongside the year in which they made their début:



Participation since 1956: ■ Entered at least once ■ Never entered, although eligible to do so ■ Entry intended, but later withdrew

Year	Country making its début entry
<u>1956</u>	Belgium , France , Germany ^a , Italy , Luxembourg , Netherlands , Switzerland
<u>1957</u>	Austria , Denmark , United Kingdom
<u>1958</u>	Sweden
<u>1959</u>	Monaco
<u>1960</u>	Norway
<u>1961</u>	Finland , Spain , Yugoslavia ^b
<u>1964</u>	Portugal
<u>1965</u>	Ireland
<u>1971</u>	Malta
<u>1973</u>	Israel
<u>1974</u>	Greece
<u>1975</u>	Turkey
<u>1980</u>	Morocco
<u>1981</u>	Cyprus
<u>1986</u>	Iceland
<u>1993</u>	Bosnia and Herzegovina , Croatia , Slovenia
<u>1994</u>	Estonia , Hungary , Lithuania , Poland , Romania , Russia , Slovakia
<u>1998</u>	Macedonia
<u>2000</u>	Latvia
<u>2003</u>	Ukraine
<u>2004</u>	Albania , Andorra , Belarus , Serbia and Montenegro
<u>2005</u>	Bulgaria , Moldova
<u>2006</u>	Armenia
<u>2007</u>	Czech Republic , Georgia , Montenegro , Serbia
<u>2008</u>	Azerbaijan , San Marino