
NATIONAL ANTHEMS OF THE EU COUNTRIES

The songs and melodies that today make up the national anthems of the EU countries are the result of a secular line of thought: from their emergence, to real appropriation by the people, to finally becoming officially adopted by the nation-States. All throughout these years, these anthems, which have been listened to and sung, have resounded in the minds of people and therefore strengthened the feeling of belonging to a national entity.

The contexts underlying the appearance of the texts of the national anthems allow us to understand the similarities, cultural proximity and values shared by countries. The reference to nature, which is personified in the anthems of the Nordic countries, is just one example. In the same way, we can grasp the monarchical context of countries such as the United Kingdom, or that of Sweden and Denmark which both have two official anthems. The war-like anthems of Poland, France, Romania and Portugal glorify defence of the homeland. Conversely, in certain countries, the melody has been claimed by the people, either through consultation based on musical competitions as in Austria and Hungary, or through the famous singing festivals of the Baltic countries. The Slovenian and Maltese anthems make a clear reference to peace.

The national anthem permeates the collective imagination, drawing on shared passions. It has become assimilated with legends and offers a response to the obligation of memory, to aspirations, to suffering. This sanctified collective ritual often provokes noisy enthusiasm (sporting events) or total silence steeped in the emotion borne by the melody (the jubilee of the Queen of the United Kingdom, enthronement of the King of Belgium).

Underlying each monograph you can find the author of the song, then the composer of the melody, if they are known, and the proven dates of composition and adoption. The number of couplets sung officially differs according to national customs and may vary over time. That is how, through the choice of the verses sung, the German anthem, initially oriented towards national unity, has become an ode to liberty, justice and agreement for the past half century. The complete versions can be found on the official websites of the countries mentioned hereafter. Some of them are multilingual, showing the different groups of the population, as in Belgium or Luxembourg. Only the Spanish and European anthems are not sung.

Whether these melodies come from popular or symphonic sources, they arouse a feeling of pride and remain etched in the collective memory especially when a military orchestration strikes up added fervour. Music is a universal art that is conveyed to the very depths of mankind.

Hearing the national anthem of a country is somewhat like hearing its history: listening to its people, their hopes, their ideals and their revolts. It is by understanding how these songs were created that we can see the collective imagination of the peoples of Europe take shape.

ANTHEMS CLASSIFIED BY DATE OF CREATION		
	Created	Adopted
Netherlands	1574	1932
United Kingdom	1743	–
Spain	1761	1770
Denmark <i>King Christian</i>	1780	1780
France	1792	1879
Poland	1797	1927
Cyprus	1823	1966
Greece	1823	1865
Hungary	1823	1903
European Union	1824	1972
Belgium	1830	1921
Czech Republic	1834	1918
Croatia	1835	1990
Denmark <i>There is a lovely land</i>	1835	1844
Germany	1841	1991
Slovakia	1844	1993
Slovenia	1844	1989
Sweden <i>The King's Song</i>	1844	1893
Sweden <i>Song to the North</i>	1844	1922
Finland	1846	1917
Italy	1847	1946
Romania	1848	1990
Luxembourg	1864	1993
Estonia	1869	1920
Latvia	1873	1920
Bulgaria	1885	1964
Portugal	1890	1911
Lithuania	1898	1992
Ireland	1907	1926
Malta	1922	1964
Austria	1947	1947

