

PRESS RELEASE

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EBU ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO EUROVISION SONG CONTEST VOTING RULES TO STRENGTHEN TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

- *EBU unveils major overhaul of Eurovision Song Contest voting framework*
- *New measures for 2026 build on extensive Member consultation and reinforce trust in the world's largest live music event*
- *Stronger limits on promotion to curb disproportionate third-party influence, including government-backed campaigns.*
- *Voting cap halved for 2026, encouraging fans to spread support across more entries.*
- *Professional juries return to Semi-Finals with expanded, more diverse panels including young jurors aged 18–25.*
- *Enhanced technical safeguards to detect and block coordinated or fraudulent voting activity.*

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) has announced a series of important updates to the **voting framework** for the **Eurovision Song Contest** designed to strengthen trust, transparency and audience engagement.

The changes follow an extensive consultation exercise with EBU Members following the 2025 Contest. An independent advisor, commissioned by the EBU's Executive Board,

led an in-depth review of participation, engaging closely with Directors General from participating broadcasters and other global event organizers. Their recommendations aligned with feedback from the Heads of Delegation and have informed measures to further strengthen the Contest's voting framework.

"We've listened and we've acted", said Martin Green CBE, Director of the Eurovision Song Contest.

"The neutrality and integrity of the Eurovision Song Contest is of paramount importance to the EBU, its Members, and all our audiences. It is essential that the fairness of the Contest is always protected.

"We are taking clear and decisive steps to ensure the contest remains a celebration of music and unity. The Contest should remain a neutral space and must not be instrumentalized".

"Alongside the changes we are announcing today, we will also strengthen enforcement of our existing rules to **prevent any misuse of the Contest for example through song lyrics or staging**. And we will work closely with Members to ensure they fully understand and are also accountable for upholding the rules and values that define the Song Contest."

Key Changes for 2026

1. *Clearer Rules on Promotion*

The **Voting Instructions** and **Code of Conduct** for the competition, which all participating broadcasters must abide by, are being strengthened to further protect the Contest from attempts to unfairly influence the vote.

The updated Voting Instructions support appropriate promotion of artists and their songs (which is very much part of the professional music industry), but "**discourage disproportionate promotion campaigns...**particularly when undertaken or supported **by third parties, including governments** or governmental agencies."

Participating broadcasters and artists are not permitted to actively engage in, facilitate or contribute to promotional campaigns by third parties that could influence the voting outcome and, as outlined in the updated Code of Conduct, any attempts to unduly influence the results will lead to sanctions.

2. *Fewer maximum votes*

As part of the annual review of voting, changes have been made to the system to support audience participation.

For the 2026 Contest, the **maximum number of votes per payment method** (online, SMS and phone call) will be **reduced from 20 to 10**.

Fans will be actively encouraged to share their support across multiple entries.

3. *50/50 Voting Return for Semi-Finals and Juries Expanded*

Professional juries of music experts will return to the Semi-Finals for the first time since 2022 - creating a roughly **50/50 split** between jury and audience votes as in the Grand Final*.

This change is intended to encourage the optimum musical balance and diversity in songs that qualify for the Grand Final, ensuring that high-quality entries with broad artistic merit are recognised alongside those with popular appeal.

The number of jurors will increase from **5 to 7** and the range of professional backgrounds that jurors can be chosen from will be expanded to include music journalists and critics, music teachers, creative professionals such as choreographers and stage directors and experienced music industry figures. To reflect the appeal of the Contest with younger audiences, each jury will now include **at least two jurors aged 18 - 25**.

All jurors will have to sign up to a **formal declaration** to confirm they will vote independently and impartially, will not co-ordinate with other jurors before the Contest, and be mindful of their social media use i.e. not sharing their preferences online before the Contest concludes.

4. Enhanced Technical Safeguards

Alongside these enhancements, the EBU will continue to work closely with its voting partner Once to expand the Contest's advanced **security systems**, which detect and prevent **fraudulent or coordinated voting activity**, and strengthen **monitoring of suspicious patterns** to maintain **trust in the results of the audience vote**.

"These measures are designed to keep the focus where it belongs – on music, creativity and connection," added Martin Green.

"While we are confident the 2025 Contest delivered a **valid and robust result**, these changes will help provide stronger safeguards and increase engagement so fans can be sure that every vote counts and every voice is heard.

"The Eurovision Song Contest must always remain a place where music takes centre stage - and where we continue to stand truly *United by Music*."

All updates were approved by the Eurovision Song Contest's Reference Group, the event's governing body representing all participating broadcasters. Their impact will be monitored and reviewed following the 2026 Contest to inform further improvements.

Members meeting at the EBU's General Assembly at the beginning of December will be asked to consider this package of measures and safeguards and decide if they are sufficient to meet their concerns around participation without having a vote on the topic.

After the General Assembly we will be working with Members to confirm participation in next year's Contest.

The full list of participating broadcasters in next year's competition will then be revealed before Christmas.

The 70th Eurovision Song Contest will be hosted by ORF at the Wiener Stadthalle, in Vienna, Austria, on Tuesday 12, Thursday 14 and Saturday 16 May 2026.

*The Rest of the World audience vote awards points equivalent to one additional voting country meaning the precise weight of votes is 50.7% for the audience and 49.3% for the juries.

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