

**To: EBBA delegates;
Representatives of bands from non EBBA countries previously
participating in the EBBC B section.**

**Purpose: To obtain the views of delegates and
representatives on the future of the B section
element of the European Brass Band
Championships.**

**Desired outcomes/timescale: To have options presented to the EBBA
general meeting in Oslo 2013, with a view to
having revised arrangements in place by the
EBBC of 2014.**

Background and format of the B section

1. The B section of the European Brass Band Championships was introduced in 1994 and has been held as part of the Championships each year since then.
2. The format of the B section has changed over the years. It was originally held on the Friday evening with the competing bands playing a set test piece (standard length) and an own choice “test” piece, both played in one sitting by each band.
3. More recently, bands have played on the Saturday morning, and since 2003 have played a 30 minute programme comprising one short test piece, and own choice music. The length of the set piece is set in the EBBA rules as “a maximum of 5 minutes” but in reality set pieces have tended to be of 7-8 minutes duration. In 2012, the EBBA Music Commission agreed to extend the test piece to a duration of 10 minutes.

Purpose of B section

4. The original purpose of the B section was to encourage bands from countries without a brass band tradition into the competition arena. Whilst originally for bands from countries who were not members of EBBA, in recent years the section has included bands from both “emerging countries” and from EBBA member countries whose bands do not feel able to compete musically at EBBA Championship level.

Number of competing bands

5. The number of bands competing in the section has varied since 1994; the biggest entry has been six, the smallest three:

2000 (Birmingham): France, Ireland, Finland, Faroe Islands **(4)**

2001 (Montreux): France, Ireland, Switzerland* **(3)**

2002 (Brussels): Germany, France, Italy, Ireland, Sweden **(5)**

2003 (Bergen): Ireland, Sweden, Norway* **(3)**
 2004 (Glasgow): Austria, Ireland, Italy, Faroe Islands **(4)**
 2005 (Gronigen): Austria, Germany, Italy, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Lithuania **(6)**
 2006 (Belfast): Austria, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Faroe Islands **(4)**
 2007 (Birmingham): Italy, Northern Ireland, England* **(3)**
 2008 (Stavanger): Germany, Italy, Northern Ireland, Norway* **(4)**
 2009 (Oostende): Austria, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Northern Ireland, Ireland **(6)**
 2010 (Linz): Austria*, Germany x2, Italy, Finland, Sweden **(6)**
 2011 (Montreux): Austria, Germany, France, Italy and Switzerland* **(5)**
 2012 (Rotterdam): Austria, Italy, Northern Ireland, Netherlands* **(4)**

**indicates band from host country invited to compete in B section*

6. The potential maximum number of countries that could compete in the B section, based on past participation, is **10**. However, particular bands from Austria and France may choose to compete in the Championship section; Sweden previously competed at Championship level; Finland and Faroe Islands have not competed for some years. Also, in recent years Austria has been permitted to enter a band in both the Championship and the B sections:

EBBA members: Northern Ireland
 Ireland
 Lithuania
 Sweden (but may compete in A section)
 Austria (but may compete in A section)
 France (but may compete in A section)

Non-members: Germany
 Italy
 Faroe Islands (have not competed in recent years)
 Finland

Participation of host country

7. On **7** occasions since 2000, the host country has been permitted by EBBA to invite a band from their country to compete in the B section. This has been in addition to the host country also having a band compete in the Championship section. The invitation has been mainly sanctioned by EBBA to help ensure a viable B section, though also on occasion in recognition of the positive effect having an “extra” band in the overall competition has had on the host country securing sponsorship and publicity for the overall event.
8. On **4** of these 7 occasions (2001, 2003, 2010, 2011) the “invited” band from the host country has won first prize in the B section.

Evaluation of the B section

9. The EBBA Executive Commission has been working hard to secure increases in the prize money available for the B section, and working in the background with potential new participant countries.

10. However, in order for the completion to be viable at least three bands from outside of the host country need to enter. This has not proven possible in 2013, and only one country – Finland – was able to provide a band for the completion in Oslo.
11. The EBBA Executive Committee and Music Commission have therefore been considering the B section and exploring its future options and potential.
12. In doing so, EBBA remains committed to its overall aim:
to further and promote the intrinsic, aesthetic and social values of brass bands in Europe
13. The EBBA EC is keen to keep the “B-Section” contest in one format or another within the European Championships. EBBA EC believes it is necessary to have this high profile platform on a European level for bands which would not have either the capacity (due, for example to “unusual” instruments like French Horns etc) or capability to play in the Championship Section. EBBA also believes the “B section” should be open to bands from countries not known for a brass band tradition as well as to bands from member countries.
14. EBBA present the following as options:
 - The “B-Section” contest should be renamed as the “European Open Brass Band Championships”
 - Participants in the “European Open Brass Band Championships” should play a test piece of around ten minutes maximum duration plus own choice music, excluding “difficult” test pieces from the Championship Section such as “Extreme Makeover” etc
 - Bands who feel strong enough to play such Championship Section quality pieces should participate in the Championship Section
 - The adjudication rules for the “European Open Brass Band Championships” should be amended so that the result of the test piece and of the one choice pieces would be weighted by a ratio of for example 70 : 30 %
 - Bands from non member countries should be allowed to play in the Champion Section; hence, in such cases the participation fee would be increased by min. € 800 to compensate for missing membership fee
 - The “European Open Brass Band Championships” can be organized at the choice of the organizer (in conjunction with EBBA) who could decide for a European Open Youth Brass Band Contest instead. These events could be on alternate years
 - Invitation to bands from non member countries should be sent out well in advance of the event so that there can be a clear decision by the organizer/EBBA which contest is to be organized
 - In case of high interest, acceptance of application should be done in the date

European Open Youth Brass Band Competition proposal

15. EBBA EC is keen to explore the possibility of a European Youth Brass Band Championship becoming a part of the overall EBBC. The Scottish Brass Band

Association (SBBA) has proposed to host a “European Open Youth Brass Band Competition” in Perth as part of the European Brass Band Championships in 2014.

16. Participation would be invited for youth bands from EBBA members and non-member countries.
17. The EBBA Executive Committee is positive about the proposal and will discuss the matter further with SBBA on practicalities, age limits, format etc, and present a more detailed proposal in Oslo.

Your views

18. Your views are important to us in helping plan for the future. We would be grateful therefore if you would take time to respond to this paper by **19 April 2013**. A further discussion with EBBA member country delegates will take place in Oslo on 2nd May 2013.

Please respond to:

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