

THE EUROPE PRIZE



The top European award
for towns and municipalities



Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



ABOUT THE EUROPE PRIZE

ORIGINS

” The Europe Prize was created in **1955** by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Strasbourg to reward towns and municipalities that have been especially active in promoting the European ideal.

HOW IT DEVELOPED

— Awarded each year, the Europe Prize is open to the municipalities of the Council of Europe's 47 member States, regardless of their size and number of inhabitants.

- ▶ It was an instant success in the years following the **Second World War**, with numerous French and German towns and municipalities applying in order to consolidate new bonds of friendship after the events of the past.
- ▶ In the **1990s**, new countries joined the Council of Europe in the wake of change in eastern Europe, enabling more towns to apply for the Europe Prize.
- ▶ The Europe Prize has constantly gained in popularity **over the years**, inspiring both small municipalities and big cities and involving many European countries.



ITS AIMS

— The Europe Prize is awarded to towns and municipalities distinguishing themselves through their commitment to Europe, twinning activities, exchanges in the spheres of education, culture and sport, organisation of European events, membership of organisations of municipalities or local authorities and solidarity initiatives.

- ▶ It helps towns and municipalities to become more **visible on the European scene** and forge **new links** with other municipalities.
- ▶ The winners also receive a **cheque for 20 000 euros**, making it possible for numerous young people to visit the European institutions in Strasbourg.

HOW IT WORKS

— Each town or municipality looking to win the Europe Prize must apply successively for the following awards (listed from lowest to highest level):

1. The European Diploma
2. The Flag of Honour
3. The Plaque of Honour
4. The Europe Prize

REMINDER: the Council of Europe and the European Union

Council of Europe

This international organisation set up in 1949, with its headquarters in Strasbourg, brings together 47 European States. Its mission is to promote democracy and safeguard human rights and the rule of law in Europe.

European Union (EU)

The EU has 28 member countries which have delegated part of their sovereignty to it so that it can take democratic decisions at European level on matters of common interest. To date, no country has joined the Union without first being a member of the Council of Europe.



THE EUROPE PRIZE TODAY

■ In June 2015, the 60th anniversary of the Europe Prize was celebrated in Strasbourg with a host of parliamentarians and representatives of prizewinning towns and municipalities in attendance.

■ The Europe Prize has moved with the times and its procedures have been simplified to boost its profile.

- ▶ Towns and municipalities now apply online, and the number of criteria has been reduced to four.
- ▶ The Europe Prize is gaining in popularity and becoming known in new countries.

The Association of Towns awarded the Europe Prize:

Set up in 1984, this association, with its current membership of almost 80 Europe Prize-winning towns and municipalities, meets at least twice a year. Chaired by one of the prizewinners, it forms a real platform for

discussion, debate and exchanges of good practices for municipalities, covering a wide range of topics: youth, education, migrants, social rights, public transport, climate change, renewable energies, etc.

PHASES

15 January

Deadline
for the receipt
of applications



End of April

Announcement
of the winners



May to December

Presentation
Ceremonies

HOW TO BECOME THE NEXT WINNER OF THE EUROPE PRIZE

Who can apply?

How to apply

- ▶ Any of the municipalities in the Council of Europe's 47 member States.

- ▶ **Only online.**

- ▶ Each municipality has to enclose a letter from the mayor and a **report**, which may be supplemented by press articles. The report must cover the **4 criteria**:



twinning activities, relations with foreign municipalities, co-operation and partnerships;



European events, Europe Day (5 May) and promotion of the European ideal;



European and international solidarity;



membership of local authority associations.

Deadline

How to apply for a higher award

- ▶ The online application form must be filled in and sent by 15 January.
- ▶ After winning an award, a municipality can then apply for the award at the next level. To do so, it must demonstrate a progressive level of European commitment.





AFTER THE WINNERS ARE ANNOUNCED

European Diploma

Winners are invited to take part in the **award ceremony** in Strasbourg in **June**.

Flag of Honour or Plaque of Honour

Winners organise a **public ceremony** actively involving young people, at which the award is presented by an (honorary) member of the PACE.

Europe Prize

The winner receives a cheque for **20 000 euros** for the town's young people during a **public ceremony** by the Sub-Committee on the Europe Prize.



What the Europe Prize can do for you!

The Europe Prize can help your town or municipality become known and forge lasting links with other European municipalities. Check out the map of Europe on our webpage to see if your town is a winner.



www.assembly.coe.int/europe-prize/winners.asp



2019 Europe Prizewinner

Mr Eneko Goia, mayor of Donostia-San Sebastián (Spain)

■ Your city, Donostia-San Sebastián, was awarded the 2019 Europe Prize. Why is this award especially important for Donostia-San Sebastián?

It is because our city has worked to promote European values over the last few years. The award is a recognition of this work and the change that has taken place in our city during this time. We experienced difficult times in the past and, after many years of dictatorship, our city suffered particularly from terrorist violence. However, major steps have been taken over the last decade that have allowed us to make significant progress in terms of coexistence and respect for human rights.

■ Can you tell us what kind of initiatives your city used to make citizens more aware of Europe and its values?

I would highlight the preparations for and staging the European Capital of Culture in 2016. It was intense work with a clear theme: "Culture for Coexistence". A lot of work went into its preparation and the staging of it. Its subsequent legacy is to promote human rights, to rebuild bridges in our community and to collaborate with other European cities. We used culture as our means for doing this.



But that work did not end with the city's status as a capital; it has continued with various initiatives that seek to heal wounds through recognising victims, recovering historical memory and promoting human rights, especially among the young.

■ **After receiving the Europe Prize, have you forged new links with other municipalities?**

With some municipalities yes, but the truth is that the difficult circumstances we are currently experiencing as a result of the pandemic is not making this easy. In any event, I am sure that, once we have gotten through this situation, it will be possible to forge closer links with other municipalities that share our values.

■ **What advice would you give to a municipality seeking to apply for the Europe Prize?**

That the key is to work to promote coexistence between different people, and that the best investment a city can make to achieve results is in culture and education.



PERSPECTIVES

***Rik Daems,
President of the Parliamentary Assembly***

”2020 marked the 65th anniversary of the Europe Prize. Sixty-five years of closer ties and friendship among peoples thanks to twinnings and meetings between citizens of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities. Sixty-five years of solidarity, of sharing experiences and mutual understanding and sixty-five years of celebrating Europe in all its richness and diversity.

In establishing the Prize in 1955, our Parliamentary Assembly sought to recognise and pay tribute to the crucial role played by municipalities in building a democratic

consciousness. It is precisely at the local level that this emerges, takes shape and develops. It is therefore essential to support this process by disseminating as widely as possible the Council of Europe’s values – democracy, the rule of law and human rights – in municipalities, and to ensure that they are passed on to every citizen, and particularly to young people.

The Europe Prize, which is the only prize that exists for European municipalities, has performed this role to the full for the last 65 years, and as President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I can only be proud



of the work done until now. In particular, it is thanks to the European activities and projects conducted by municipalities in connection with the prize that thousands of young people come together every year in the 47 Council of Europe member States. When their municipality wins the Europe Prize, these young people can also visit our European institutions. All these activities help them to understand that the Europe that they know today – strong, united and mutually supportive – has not always existed, and that it is an asset for their future. It is, therefore, more essential than ever that the Prize continues to perform its role, enabling new towns and villages, and future generations, to be better integrated in Europe.

I would also like to mention another important development in the history of the Prize. In 2019, our Assembly launched a major competition for young people in the 47 member States to come up with a new trophy for the Europe Prize. A French design school won the competition by creating a trophy made of materials that are both noble and authentic, with a sleek design.

Like my predecessors, I would encourage all European municipalities, whatever their size, to take measures to develop the European spirit among their citizens, and particularly among young people, and to apply for the Europe Prize if they have not already done so.

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Rik Daems

President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe



For more information:

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www.assembly.coe.int/europe-prize/



Europe Prize of PACE



PACE_Europe_Prize

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. The Parliamentary Assembly, consisting of representatives from the 47 national parliaments, provides a forum for debate and proposals on Europe’s social and political issues. Many Council of Europe conventions originate from the Assembly, including the European Convention on Human Rights.



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