

# 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

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## 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

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■ 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 76 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** of 15 pages maximum, 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

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### 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](http://www.assembly.coe.int/europe-prize/winners.asp)



## 2016 Europe Prizewinner

***Ms Marta Madrenas i Mir, mayor of Girona (Spain)***

■ Your city, Girona, was awarded this year's Europe Prize. Why is this award especially important for Girona?

It is recognition for all the people of Girona who have done so much over the years to instil and live by values such as respect, participation and tolerance in their everyday lives. This award is an encouragement to pursue our efforts and is greatly appreciated by our citizens.

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

We could say that, since the country's return to democracy, Girona openly declared itself resolutely European. We needed to learn from our neighbours and pursued a strong policy geared to this, by entering into numerous twinning agreements, participating in European projects, celebrating Europe Day every year, making Girona a city of education from all points of view and passing on the message and values of Europe to schools and community centres, just to name a few initiatives.





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

The first nice surprise we had was to find that we are now a member of the Association of Towns Awarded the Europe Prize, which opened up new perspectives for us. In August, for example, I travelled to Kharkiv to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Ukraine's independence alongside representatives from many other towns.

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

Preparing a good application is not everything. It is important, of course, but what really matters is how citizens and the municipality conduct themselves on a day-to-day basis. Their representatives must be political leaders passing on values.





## PERSPECTIVES

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***Pedro Agramunt,  
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe***

” I am particularly pleased to see that the Europe Prize continues to appeal to more and more European municipalities. This award is of very special importance, having been created by the Parliamentary Assembly in 1955 at a time when, in the wake of a devastating world war, towns felt the need to draw closer and forge bonds of friendship and mutual trust.

Sixty years on, the prize has constantly demonstrated its unfailing capacity for adaptation and renewal as historical events have unfolded: firstly in the 1990s, following the upheavals in eastern Europe, the prize enabled towns and citizens in all European countries to come together, exchange, discover new cultures and so contribute to building Europe as we know it today: free, open, multi-faceted, proud and respectful of its diversities.



Today, when there are sadly still some tendencies towards hatred and division, this prize is a symbol that reminds us of our common values and principles and enables us to come closer and consolidate lasting links between Europe's towns and cities, to be stronger together, year upon year, and to face the challenges of today and tomorrow.

I strongly encourage all European towns and municipalities to continue to strive for the Europe Prize and support the aim it embodies: to build bridges at local level, for a more united Europe that is stronger, more just and confident in the future.



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*Pedro Agramunt*

*President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*



For more information:  
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[www.assembly.coe.int/europe-prize/](http://www.assembly.coe.int/europe-prize/)  
 "Europe Prize of PACE"

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are 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.

