

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 46 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 46 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 27 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 87 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?

- ▶ Any of the municipalities in the Council of Europe's 46 member States.

How to apply

- ▶ **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

- ▶ The online application form must be filled in and sent by 15 January.

How to apply for a higher award

- ▶ 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



2025 Europe Prize winner

Ms Fatma Şahin, Mayor of Gaziantep (Türkiye)

■ Your city, Gaziantep was awarded the 2025 Europe Prize. Why is this award especially important for Gaziantep?

The 2025 Europe Prize is both a great honour and a responsibility for Gaziantep. It represents recognition of our long-term vision based on solidarity, sustainability, and international cooperation. Our local development strategies are aligned with the European Green Deal, EU climate objectives, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Through initiatives such as the Mechanical Biological Treatment Facility, renewable energy investments, and sustainable mobility policies, we are building a resilient and environmentally responsible city. Gaziantep also demonstrates a strong commitment to European values, social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, and its identity as a sports city, youth city, and green city.

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

Gaziantep promotes awareness of European values through educational, cultural, and participatory initiatives. Europe Day activities organised with schools and universities allow young people to experience first-hand the principles of European citizenship, democracy, and solidarity through interactive programs. Each year, Europe Day on 9 May is celebrated with concerts, exhibitions, and public discussions. In addition, European Mobility Week activities highlight sustainable transport, environmental awareness, and active lifestyles. These initiatives help transform European values into a visible and practical part of everyday life for citizens.



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

Gaziantep has long developed strong partnerships with European municipalities, and these relations have been further strengthened after receiving the Europe Prize. Our city actively participates in international networks focusing on sustainable urban development, green city practices, and inclusive governance. After winning the Europe Prize in 2025, Gaziantep became a member of the Association of Towns Awarded the Europe Prize. Hosting the Association's General Assembly this year will create an important opportunity to deepen dialogue among cities, develop joint projects, and expand the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

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

My main advice to municipalities considering applying for the Europe Prize is to ensure that all initiatives are aligned with the city's long-term vision. Projects should be regularly monitored in terms of sustainability, effectiveness, and continuity. Strong coordination among municipal departments and a culture of shared responsibility are essential. In the application, the city's vision should be presented clearly and convincingly. It is also important to demonstrate, through concrete examples, how engagement with Europe strengthens local policies, institutional capacity, and innovative public services.



PERSPECTIVES

***Petra Bayr,
President of the Parliamentary Assembly***

”Europe is currently going through a period of tension, marked by war and a worrying decline in democracy. Against this backdrop, the Europe Prize takes on a particular significance: it is an essential tool for promoting European values, local democracy and European unity. Peace and democracy can never be taken for granted; they require vigilance, dialogue and participation.

In the face of democratic backsliding, the Parliamentary Assembly is actively contributing to the **New Democratic Pact for Europe**,

an initiative launched in 2025 by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. This Pact aims to strengthen the resilience of democratic institutions in the face of disinformation, authoritarianism and attacks on the rule of law.

Local democracy plays a vital role here. Cities and their elected representatives are indispensable key actors for raising awareness of Europe, its values and opportunities, encouraging citizen participation and forging links with other cities, thereby actively contributing to the construction of a European identity.



In 2025, the city of Gaziantep was honoured with the Europe Prize for its commitment to intercultural exchange, dialogue and hospitality. I warmly congratulate Gaziantep and all the winners from recent years, who are true ambassadors of the European spirit, and I invite all cities in Europe to continue their efforts to make European values a reality for everyone across the continent.

Finally, it is important to strengthen the link between the Council of Europe and all citizens, and particularly with young people. Raising awareness of the Organisation's mission and importance – as the guardian of human rights, democracy and peace in Europe – is a major challenge. In this regard, the Europe Prize plays a vital role in encouraging cities to organise European activities for and with young people.

Long live Europe, long live democracy.

” Europe is currently going through a period of tension, marked by war and a worrying decline in democracy. Against this backdrop, the Europe Prize takes on a particular significance: it is an essential tool for promoting European values, local democracy and European unity. Peace and democracy can never be taken for granted; they require vigilance, dialogue and participation.”

Petra Bayr

President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe



For more information:

europeprize.pace@coe.int

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



Europe Prize of PACE



PACE_News

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. The Parliamentary Assembly, consisting of representatives from the 46 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.



Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE