

MEMORY



The Dunkirk Appeal

May 22nd, 2025

From these shores where Europe has known so many battles, where bombs fell in the earliest days of the Second World War, and where, amidst the ruins, the people were the last in Western Europe to be liberated,

From this city where Churchill's heroic call inspired hundreds of British vessels to rescue the soldiers trapped on the shores of the North Sea, thereby enabling, through the 'Spirit of Dunkirk', the rebuilding of the army which, a few years later, would liberate Europe from Nazism and Fascism,

Aware of the gradual fading of memory and the troubling rise of extremism, nationalism, and rhetoric of exclusion, discrimination and warmongering within our societies

Aware of the historic geopolitical upheavals currently reshaping the world, and the dire perils these pose to the survival of multilateralism and the international rule of law,

Aware of the unique and historic role of the European Union, and of reconciliation between Europeans, in safeguarding peace, and in advancing democracy and human rights across the continent,

Aware of the essential role of the United Nations in building an international legal order founded upon peace and justice, and of its ongoing efforts to prevent conflict through global policies of cooperation and sustainable development

Aware, finally, of the particular role of cities that have suffered in past conflicts in preserving memory, and thereby their historic responsibility in defending democratic and pluralistic societies, a united Europe, and an international order based on the rule of law, solidarity, openness and respect for others and for the wider world,

The Cities of Remembrance, convened in Dunkirk on 22 May 2025, solemnly call upon the cities of Europe and the world to stand united and to act in common cause. In doing so, they aim to defend the values and institutions born of the Second World War, and to continue building a peaceful world and societies rooted in progress, the dignity of the human person, universal rights, diversity, and the natural world.

They call upon all cities sharing these values and goals to undertake the following actions:

1. To keep alive, through joint projects, the memory of the suffering endured by their populations, and to pass it on to present and future generations. This must be done with scientific rigour, as well as creativity and innovation, so as to foster an active culture of peace;

2. To carry out joint local actions that effectively counter the rise of nationalism, populism and extremism — forces which endanger the cohesion and stability of our societies. This includes the development of shared initiatives embedded in inclusive educational, cultural and social policies, grounded in care and ecological transition, promoting the fight against discrimination and identity-based withdrawal, while protecting and restoring the living world;
3. To strengthen the sense of belonging to Europe and to a united humanity by fostering European and global citizenship, grounded in the universal values of progress as enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
4. To actively support supranational organisations that uphold international law, by contributing to the development and reinforcement of a culture of peace, particularly through city diplomacy, town twinning and partnerships, as well as through decentralised cooperation in line with the Sustainable Development Goals;
5. To expand transnational mobility, language learning and intercultural practice, especially among younger generations, so as to foster their direct and tangible experience of European and global citizenship;
6. To offer solidarity in practical and moral terms to cities currently facing armed conflict;
7. To deepen our commitment through the development of shared actions and our active participation in the governance of the Cities of Remembrance network, in close synergy with other networks of local and regional authorities that pursue the same goals.

Patrice VERGRIETE,
Mayor of Dunkirk

José MARÍA GORROÑO
Mayor of Guernica

Dirk HILBERT
Mayor of Dresden

Katrien DESOMER
Mayor of Ypres

Aleksandra DULKIEWICZ
Mayor of Gdansk

Anatolii FEDORUK
Mayor of Bucha

Valentina CUPPI
Mayor of Marzabotto

Philippe LACROIX
Mayor of Oradour-sur-Glane

Frank MEYER
Mayor of Krefeld

Eva-Maria KRÖGER
Mayor of the Hanseatic City
of Rostock

Romain BAIL
Mayor of Ouistreham Riva-
Bella

Rachel LANCASTER
Lord Mayor of Coventry

