



NEWS & EVENTS > 2019 Europe Prize awarded to city of Donostia/San Sebastián (Spain)

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The 2019 Europe Prize – the highest level of the Prize which is awarded each year by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to the town most active in promoting the European ideal – has been awarded to Donostia / San Sebastián in Spain.

Donostia / San Sebastián is the administrative capital of Gipuzkoa, one of the three territories that make up the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country in Spain. Located 30 km from the French border in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, it constitutes an important social, economic and tourist development pole in the south-east of Europe. The city has two official languages, Basque and Spanish.

The city has celebrated Europe Day since 1999. San Sebastián is twinned with six towns and is working towards further twinnings. In 2016, the city created a Twinning Committee.

Through its Department of Education and Social Promotion, the city organises many youth exchange activities in schools and with schools from other European cities. Exchange programmes also take place through Erasmus.

Solidarity is also a strength of Donostia / San Sebastián: for example, the Municipal School of Music and Dance collected musical instruments for schools in Syria and organised a charity concert for Guatemala in 2017.

The city holds a wide range of long-established and internationally prestigious festivals such as the International Festival of Cinema, the International Jazz festival or Human Rights Film Festival. Donostia / San Sebastián has always been a very dynamic city in terms of culture and became the "European Capital of Culture" in 2016, together with the Polish city of Wroclaw.

Five other towns, namely Bamberg in Germany, Boleslawiec in Poland, Issy-les-Moulineaux in France, Izmir in Turkey and Münster in Germany were also shortlisted for the Prize, and the committee commended their applications.

Created by PACE in 1955, the Europe Prize is the highest distinction that can be bestowed on a European town for its actions in the European domain. The prize consists of a trophy, a medal, a diploma and a scholarship to be spent on a study visit to European institutions for young people from the winning town.

The committee also awarded 7 Plaques of Honour, 7 Flags of Honour and 8 European Diplomas – awards which also form part of the Europe Prize.

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