

Press Release

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Szeged in Hungary wins the 2006 Europe Prize

Strasbourg, 12.05.2006 – The **2006 Europe Prize** has been awarded to the Hungarian town of **Szeged** in the Csongrad District. The decision was taken unanimously by the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) meeting today in Paris.

Created by PACE in 1955, the Europe Prize is the highest distinction that can be bestowed on a European town or local authority 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 within Europe for young people from the winning town.

This university town, situated on the country's southern border, neighbouring Romania and Serbia and Montenegro, is the main town of Csongrad County. It is twinned with eleven other European towns, including former winners of the Europe Prize, such as Darmstadt (Germany), and the Flag of Honour, such as Cambridge (United Kingdom), Odessa (Ukraine), Timisoara and Tirgu Mures (Romania).

European events of major importance have marked the city's history: the festival of twinned towns, a new twinning arrangement with Pula (Croatia), the launch of the European campaign "Szeged is the gateway to Europe" and the recent commemoration of the 125th anniversary of the Great Flood which struck the town in 1879.

Szeged, which was already awarded the Flag of Honour in 2000 and the Plaque of Honour in 2002, is the first Hungarian town to receive this award.

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The **Plaque of Honour**, which is the second highest distinction after the Europe Prize, was awarded to ten towns:

Germany	Bamberg (Bavaria) Borken (North-Rhine-Westphalia) Celle (Lower Saxony) Recklinghausen (North-Rhine-Westphalia)
Hungary	Kiskunfelegyhaza (Bacs-Kiskun District)
Italy	Corciano (Province of Perugia)
Poland	Gniezno (woj. Wielkopolskie) Rakoniewice (woj. Wielkopolskie)
Portugal	Vila Real
Romania	Orastie (Hunedoara dep.)

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The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 315 members from the national parliaments of the 46 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: SOC (Socialist Group); EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); EDG (European Democratic Group); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).

The **Flag of Honour** was awarded to 25 municipalities this year:

Austria	Bad Schallerbach (Upper Austria)
France	Aÿ-Champagne (Marne), <i>together with Besigheim (D)</i> Besançon (Doubs) Châteaubernard (Charente) Raon l'Étape (Vosges), <i>together with Kuppenheim (D)</i> Villebon-sur-Yvette (Essonne)
Germany	Besigheim (Baden-Württemberg), <i>together with Ay-Champagne (F)</i> Demmin (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) Durach (Bavaria) Fürth (Bavaria) Hamm (North-Rhine-Westphalia) Kuppenheim (Baden-Württemberg), <i>together with Raon l'Étape (F)</i> Lohmen (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) Obrigheim (Baden-Württemberg) Rheine (North-Rhine-Westphalia) Windberg (Bavaria)
Hungary	Kőszeg (Vas County)
Italy	Bagnacavallo (Province of Ravenna)
Latvia	Saldus
Poland	Będzin (woj. Śląskie) Kołobrzeg (woj. Zachodniopomorskie) Łódź (woj. Łódzkie)
Romania	Oradea (Bihor County)
Switzerland	Neuchâtel (Canton of Neuchâtel)
UK	Bracknell (Berkshire)

27 municipalities were granted the **European Diploma**:

Czech Rep.	Zubří (Ysetín district)
France	Clichy-la-Garenne (Hauts-de-Seine) Granville (Manche) La Celle Saint-Cloud (Yvelines) Rouen (Seine-Maritime) Savigny (Rhône)
Germany	Beilngries (Bavaria) Bellheim (Rhineland-Palatinate) Ellwangen (Baden-Württemberg) Friedland (Lower Saxony) Gerbrunn (Bavaria) Hammelburg (Bavaria) Staufenberg (Lower Saxony) Wissen (Rhineland-Palatinate)
Lithuania	Alytus Druskininkai Neringa Panevezys Silute Trakai
Netherlands	Haaksbergen (Overijssel)
Poland	Lębork (woj. Pomorskie) Mrągowo (woj. Warmińsko-Mazurskie) Rudniki (woj. Opolskie) Święciechowa (woj. Wielkopolskie)
Romania	Satu Mare
UK	Hatfield (Hertfordshire)