

Press Release

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Ankara wins the 2009 Europe Prize

Strasbourg, 29.04.2009 – The 2009 Europe Prize has been awarded to the Turkish town of Ankara. 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 Strasbourg.

Through its forty twinnings in the world, Ankara has developed a very dense network of international contacts and attaches great importance to the development of cultural relations by organising every year Cultural Days. And thanks to its international conferences (such as the *5th Glocal Forum*) it has contributed to strengthening friendship and understanding among people.

Ankara, which was already awarded the Flag of Honour in 2001 and the Plaque of Honour in 2003, is the third Turkish town to receive this award, after Istanbul and Bursa.

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 within Europe for young people from the winning town.

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

Austria	Judenburg (Styria)
France	Auzances (Creuse)
	Tossiat (Ain)
Germany	Bühl (Baden-Wurtemberg)
	Euskirchen (North-Rhine Westphalia)
	Neuburg an der Donau (Bavaria)
	Seeheim-Jugenheim (Hessen)
Hungary	Szentes (Csongrad County)
Poland	Leszno (woj. Wielkopolskie)
	Płock (woj. Mazowieckie)
Spain	Donostia – San Sebastian (Basque Country)
Ukraine	Odessa

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The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: Lluís Maria de Puig (Spain, SOC) – Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

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

The **Flag of Honour** was awarded to 18 municipalities this year:

Bulgaria	Kavarna
France	Montfort-sur-Meu (Ille-et-Vilaine)
Germany	Aschaffenburg (Bavaria)
	Coburg (Bavaria)
	Ellwangen (Baden-Wurtemberg)
	Hackenheim (Rhineland-Palatinate)
	Harpstedt (Lower-Saxony)
	Herborn (Hessen)
	Leinzell (Baden-Wurtemberg)
Italy	Follonica (Prov. Grosseto)
Lithuania	Kedainiai (Kaunas County)
	Šilutė (Klaipėda County)
Poland	Bolesławiec (woj. Dolnośląskie)
	Lębork (woj. Pomorskie)
	Malbork (woj. Pomorskie)
	Nysa (woj. Opolskie)
Romania	Caracal
Spain	Sant Cugat del Vallès (Catalonia)

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

Belgium	Gooik (Flemish Brabant)
France	Arnage (Sarthe)
	Plerguer (Ille-et-Vilaine)
Germany	Bacharach am Rhein (Rhineland-Palatinate)
	Erlangen (Bavaria)
	Flotwedel (Lower-Saxony)
	Leverkusen (North-Rhine-Westphalia)
	Obersulm (Baden-Wurtemberg)
Hungary	Ajka
Italy	Salsomaggiore Terme (Prov. Parma)
Poland	Serock (woj. Mazowieckie)
	Trzcieńsko Zdrój (woj. Zachodniopomorskie)
Russia	Petrozavodsk (Carelia)
Spain	Sant Joan Les Abadesses (Catalonia)
	Terrassa (Catalonia)
United Kingdom	Chalfont St. Giles (Buckinghamshire)
	Wigan (Lancashire)