

LRE FOUNDATION LAUNCHES THE LIBERATION ROUTE EUROPE HIKING TRAILS IN THE PRESENCE OF US WWII VETERANS

2 August 2021 – The LRE Foundation presented the new European system of hiking trails along the Liberation Route Europe with a [hybrid event](#) streamed from the Allied Museum in Berlin on 22 July 2021. From now on, the Liberation Route network becomes a physical part of the European landscape by linking numerous historical locations and telling stories about the last period of World War II from a multitude of perspectives. At its first stage, this system of hiking trails stretches from London to Berlin by crossing the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. All the trails, sites and stories along the Liberation Route Europe are available online on the new [website and travel planner](#). This initiative is made possible thanks to the support of the German Embassy in The Hague and the vfonds (Dutch Foundation for Peace, Freedom and Veteran Support).

The launch of the hiking trails network was the opportunity for the LRE Foundation, in partnership with the [Best Defense Foundation](#), to welcome as special guests six American World War II veterans returning to Berlin after serving in Germany in 1945. By creating these trails, Liberation Route Europe aims to keep the memory and the stories of these veterans alive and tangible by transmitting them in a new and sustainable way appealing to the public, especially to the younger generations.



The six American WWII veterans, and guests of honour at the launch of the Liberation Route Europe hiking trails, saluting in the Capitulation Hall in the German-Russian Museum Berlin-Karlshorst

A new approach to WWII memory transmission

With hundreds of sites and stories in nine European countries featured on the Liberation Route website, the trails ambition to link the central regions along the advance of the Allied Forces in 1943-1945, stretching up to nearly 10.000 km. Touching on different narratives of the last phase of World War II, the trails will highlight international cooperation, European unification and the importance of freedom and democracy. *"This is not the end of the journey - says Rémi Praud, LRE Foundation's Managing Director, - Many other stories need to be told, in other parts of Europe, especially in the East and South. Our next horizon is the 80th anniversary of the end of the war when many more trails and Vectors of Memory will be ready and accessible. But even then, it will for sure not be the end of the story and journey. I am calling on all regions, museums and institutions who would like to take part in this project to reach out and join us".*

Travel planner

The hiking experience is accompanied by the new Liberation Route Europe [website](#) and [travel planner](#) that allows the public to read and listen to many stories about WWII and plan their journey along the hiking trails. The website features sites and stories to read and listen to related to the end of World War II and invites to discover the stories either by physically visiting the locations on the hiking trails or experiencing them from the comfort of one's home. Moreover, it allows visitors to bookmark selections of trails they can explore either by walking or cycling on the Liberation Route.

Released earlier during the year, the website will be updated as new routes keep on being developed in new countries and regions in which the LRE Foundation collaborates with local partners and hiking associations. Later in the year, a mobile app will be released to complement the online experience.

Vectors of Memory

Polish-American architect Daniel Libeskind designed the 'Vectors of Memory' to complete the ambition to physically display the events that happened at a specific location on the Liberation Route Europe hiking trails. The iconic marking of significant sites on the route is meant to honour people, places, and stories of the European landscape.



Concept picture -
'Vector of Memory'

To follow in the footsteps of history, visit: www.liberationroute.com
Find out more about the LRE Foundation and its work at www.lre-foundation.org.

Note to editors, not for publication:

For more information about the Liberation Route Europe and its network of hiking trails, please contact: Gert-Jan Jacobs, Press & Communications LRE Foundation (+31 6 22 86 73 42 – gj.jacobs@liberationroute.com).

- The **LRE Foundation** is the international network connecting people and organisations that preserve and value the memory, meaning and heritage of WWII. It organises and manages projects and events, has national branches, members and partners around the world.
- The **Liberation Route Europe** is the transnational itinerary that links the main regions along the advance of the Allied Forces in 1943-1945. Since 2019, it is a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. From this year on, people will be able to experience the Route as a network of trails. With hundreds of sites and stories across Europe, the route links the main regions along the advance of the Allied Forces in 1943-1945. Follow in the footsteps of history via the hiking trails along the Liberation Route Europe.



*The LRE Foundation is supported by its strategic partner the vfonds
(National Fund for Peace, Freedom, and Veteran Care) since 2012.*