

# LRE Foundation



To remember the past is to create a better future

Foreword

PAGE.....04-05

Projects & Events

PAGE.....26-29

LRE Network

PAGE.....34-39

Liberation Route Europe

PAGE.....06-19

Press & PR

PAGE.....30-31

Preview 2025

PAGE.....40-43

Europe Remembers

PAGE.....20-25

Travel Trade

PAGE.....32-33

Organisation & Team

PAGE.....44-47

# Foreword

“As we look ahead, we remain committed to preserving the memory of WWII, fostering international collaboration, and ensuring that remembrance continues to inspire future generations.”



As we reflect on 2024, this year stands out as a defining chapter in the story of the LRE Foundation. Across Europe, we have seen a growing engagement with history, remembrance, and education, and our work continues to strengthen the bridge between past and present.

This year was particularly significant as we commemorated the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. Through our Europe Remembers campaign, we have helped unite institutions, partners, and the public in marking this crucial milestone. By bringing together a vast network of remembrance events, digital storytelling, and public engagement, we have reaffirmed our mission: to ensure that the lessons of WWII remain visible, accessible, and relevant for future generations.

At the same time, we proudly celebrated 10 years of Liberation Route Europe—a decade of connecting people and places through history. What began as an ambitious transnational remembrance initiative has evolved into a major cultural route, with an ever-growing network of trails, new historical content, and an expanded digital presence. This anniversary was not just a reflection on what has been achieved, but a commitment to the future of Liberation Route Europe.

A key part of that future is the next generation. In 2024, we launched our Active Remembrance Youth Program, designed to engage young people in the exploration of WWII history through immersive exchanges and hands-on experiences. By fostering direct connections with the past, this program empowers participants to reflect on the impact of war, peace, and memory in today's world.

This year also marked the start of three new European projects, supported by the EU, that will shape our work in the years ahead. These initiatives integrate innovation, sustainability, and digital transformation into remembrance practices, demonstrating how history and technology can intersect to reach new audiences.

Finally, we were delighted to announce the establishment of LRE Poland as a national branch. Given Poland's profound role in WWII history, this expansion is an important step in deepening our impact across Central and Eastern Europe. We look forward to working with local partners to develop new projects, expand the network, and strengthen Poland's role in the transnational story of WWII remembrance.

All these achievements are the result of the dedication and passion of our members, partners, and supporters. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to making 2024 a year of remarkable progress for the LRE Foundation. As we look ahead, we remain committed to preserving the memory of WWII, fostering international collaboration, and ensuring that remembrance continues to inspire future generations.

**Rémi Praud** - Managing Director



# Liberation Route Europe



## Liberation Route Europe



Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



### General Update

2024 saw the continued expansion of the LRE trails network, offering yet more hiking and also cycling opportunities across Europe. Many new 'Themed Routes' were created, following the successful introduction of this concept in 2022, offering varied ready-made itineraries that explore the diverse experience and histories of WWII across the continent. In Belgium, 3 new Themed Routes were added, along with 15 in the Netherlands, 3 in the UK & Channel Islands, 2 in Luxembourg (including a national route), 1 in France and 1 in Germany. Alongside these additions, exploration of a new long distance route in Italy began and possibilities to add new routes elsewhere along the LRE trails network took place, to ensure we can offer even more walking and hiking opportunities in 2025!

### NEW THEMED ROUTES



A Themed Route is a ready-to-walk or ready-to-bike itinerary following a collection of POIs and stories linked together by a common theme. Themed Routes can be short local hikes around a specific area but can also be long distance ones by bike following the movement of the troops during an important battle of the liberation of Europe. Themed Routes are often created in cooperation with local partners and governments. Interested in creating a Themed Route? Get in touch!

**+15**  
THE NETHERLANDS

**+2**  
LUXEMBOURG

**+3**  
UK & CHANNEL ISLANDS

**+1**  
FRANCE

**+3**  
BELGIUM

**+1**  
GERMANY





**JANUARY**

Launch of 100th Bombardment Group Themed Route in East Anglia (UK)

**FEBRUARY**

New Themed Route explores the 'Liberation of Aachen' (Germany)

**APRIL**

International Canadian Trail project (REFOOT) begins

**MAY**

Launch of the Canadian Trail in the Netherlands from Zeeland to Groningen

Launch of new trails in Rivierenland (Netherlands)

**JUNE**

LRE celebrates its 10th Anniversary in Normandy

New Themed Route 'Arromanches-les-Bains & Mulberry Harbour'

Crossroad Vector of Memory unveiled in Groningen

**JULY**

Liberation Route Europe website receives a new look

**SEPTEMBER**

LRE Luxembourg trails launched alongside a Crossroad Vector of Memory

Polish Trails Network of cycling routes launched in Breda (Netherlands)

**OCTOBER**

New plans for a hiking trail in Italy unveiled to create a route connecting Sant'Anna di Stazzema to Monte Sole

**OCTOBER**

First Youth Exchanges along the LRE

New walking route explores 'Liberation of St. Helier' (Jersey)

**NOVEMBER**

New Cycling Routes in the Belgian Ardennes: 'The Battle of the Bulge at Libramont-Chevigny' and 'Marks of the war in the Saint-Hubert region'



**2024 has been another busy year of developing new LRE trails and expanding the transnational network. The addition of many new Themed Routes has created more opportunities for walkers and cyclists alike to discover the WWII heritage of many European countries, with hundreds of new sites and stories to discover on the website and App as well as more Vectors of Memory installed along the route. Several new projects have been planned and have already begun, which will see the trails network continue to grow in 2025 and add new interactive ways to experience history!**

### Italy

In 2024, LRE Italy continued to develop the LRE trails in Italy with the installation of more than 50 Floor Vectors, mainly in the Lazio, Tuscany and Emilia Romagna regions. Alongside the Vector's unveiling ceremonies, small events such as walks, conferences and museum visits were also organised in cooperation with our members and partners. Additionally, in April with Emilia-Romagna Region in Bologna we organised an official ceremony with more than 20 representatives of municipalities and places of remembrance to present Floor Vectors that will be installed in Emilia-Romagna in the following months. Finally, we produced a feasibility study financed by the Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna regions to develop the first official "Cammino" of LRE Italy. The "Cammino Sant'Anna di Stazzema – Monte Sole" will connect these two symbolic places in Italy along the Gothic Line.

### Germany

This year saw the continuation of a North-Rhine Westphalia project launched in 2023 to develop 10 new audio spots between Emmerich and Aachen. This includes redesigning some older audio spots, and a podcast on the liberation of the Rhineland organised by the city of Wesel and LRE NRW. In Berlin, new Themed Routes are being created for both hiking and cycling with our member Allierten Museum, whilst to the east a cross-border project to create a trail on the German-Polish border is taking place. Finally, as the fourth country of the transnational REFOOT project, the last section of the trail in Germany is in development, with its end point in Wilhelmshaven.

### Belgium

Building on the additions of LRE sites and stories in the Wallonia Region in 2023, in cooperation with the US Embassy in Brussels, in 2024 another Themed Route was added in the city of Mons. Elsewhere, new cycling Themed Routes were created alongside our new member, the 'Maison du Tourisme de la Forêt de Saint-Hubert', a tourism organisation in the south of Belgium. These allow visitors to explore the WWII history of this beautiful rural area by bike. In Flanders, the transnational route of the Interreg North-West Europe EU funded REFOOT project passes along the coast, and plenty of new sites and stories are under development with our partner For Freedom Museum in Knokke-Heist, Flanders.

### Luxembourg

Following the work done last year in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism in Luxembourg, this year saw the official launch of the liberation Route Luxembourg trails network. This new network of national and local hiking trails runs the length of the country, linking more than 70 sites and stories. The project was launched in September at an official event in the city of Ettelbruck, combined with the unveiling of a Vector of Memory at the same location. A second Vector of Memory was installed in Schumann'sEck in December, marking another iconic site along the LRE.





## France

In 2024 LRE France has been focused on the development of the Liberation Route Europe and on the 80th anniversary activities in France. Trail development continued in Normandy with the creation of new sections, as well as in the Great East where LRE trails have been defined. This step forward has allowed LRE France to launch a project to develop the LRE trails in Normandy over the next 3 years. This large-scale project will involve the development of Themed Routes, trails and hundreds of historical content up to 2026. At the same time, LRE France is a partner in the European REFOOT project, a transnational itinerary that retraces the steps of the Canadian forces during the liberation of Europe. LRE France is coordinating the French part and the trail begins in Normandy.



## The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, several new cycling and hiking routes have been created. A regional cycling trail has been launched in the Rivierenland, as well as a local hiking trail in the municipality of Tiel. A national cycling trail focused on the role of the Polish liberators has also been established and runs from the south in Zeeland all the way to Groningen in the north of the country. Different local Themed Routes spread across the country have been created in order to make the trails and content more accessible to a wider audience, with a variety of distance and difficulty available.

Additionally, the Veluwe Canadian Trail project includes 55 Points of Interest spread across 3 Themed Routes: from Gorssel to Apeldoorn, Apeldoorn to Ede, and Ede to Wageningen. These routes feature 4 Wall Vectors and 36 Floor Vectors. On 12 March 2024, a Crossroad Vector was unveiled at the Grote Markt in Groningen. The long-distance walking route in the province of Groningen spans 133km and highlights over 85 stories, along with 8 audio spots.

The route delves into military history from various perspectives and themes, including the involvement of the resistance, collaboration, hiding, and the experiences of ordinary citizens during the liberation. Two themed routes are linked to the main route, offering enjoyable day or half-day stages: the Groningen Loop (approximately 6km) and the Delfzijl Loop (approximately 6km).

In the city of Arnhem, 24 Floor Vectors have been placed along the themed route 'Airborne City Walk Arnhem', and 5 additional Points of Interest have been added in the Airborne Region. The national Canadian Trail in the Netherlands is also part of the transnational route being developed in the European REFOOT project, with new historical sites and stories currently being added to the existing route.

## United Kingdom

During this year the LRE UK has seen growth and expansion into the East Anglia region. This included a walking Themed Route at Thorpe Abbots, a former United States Army Air Forces airfield, a location featured in the new TV series, 'Masters of the Air'. The route has received very positive feedback leading to several new partnerships being formed in the region. We are also proud of our new partnership with the University of Portsmouth, with LREF and LRE UK as a recognised organisation that students can work with as part of their history degrees. This cooperation resulted in a new Themed Route in Portsmouth, 'Community in War-Scarred Portsmouth', created by two students. In the Channel Islands, a new Themed Route 'Liberation of St. Helier' was developed with our members in Jersey, and another route connecting recently installed Stumbling Stones is in development both in Jersey and Guernsey.





Vectors Installed



Since the installation of the very first Vectors of Memory along the Liberation Route Europe in 2022, LREF has been adding to this with the help of members and partners throughout Europe. The unique family of trail markers are designed by architect Daniel Libeskind and come in four different sizes. Thanks to these noticeable markers, the LRE and its sites and stories are made easily recognisable.

Throughout this year an impressive number of Vectors have been distributed across Europe, marking the Liberation Route Europe and its many sites and stories.

- 110** Floor Vectors
- 4** Wall Vectors
- 1** Crossroad Vectors
- 2** Remembrance Site Vectors

The development of Liberation Route Europe was made possible with the cooperation and support of the following organisations across Europe:





# Throughout 2024, various partners, regional authorities, and governments have supported the realisation of the Liberation Route hiking and cycling trails.



## Vfonds

Thanks to the financial support of the Vfonds (Dutch Foundation for Peace, Freedom and Veteran Support), the LRE Foundation, in corporation with dozens of partners, launched the first parts of the 'Canadian Route' that crosses the Netherlands from the south to the north and tells the often untold story of the Canadian liberators. Development of the new cycling route planner was also supported by Vfonds. Further development of the 'Canadian Trail' and other routes will take place in 2025.



## The Ministry of Tourism Luxembourg

In 2023 and 2024, LREF worked with The Ministry of Economy and its directorate general for tourism to develop the trails concept in the Grand Duchy. A national route was created along with some themed routes, to combine stories about the liberation of the country in September 1944 and the Battle of the Bulge of the winter 1944 to 1945, the second occupation and liberation.



## FB Oranjewoud

Thanks to the financial support of FB Oranjewoud and the LRE Foundation, and in collaboration with other partners, the Canadian Trail has been launched across the three northern provinces of Drenthe, Groningen, and Friesland.



## Nationaal Programma Groningen

Thanks to the financial support of the Nationaal Programma Groningen, the Canadian Trail has been launched in the province of Groningen. Further development of the Canadian Trail in Groningen will be financially funded by the NPG.



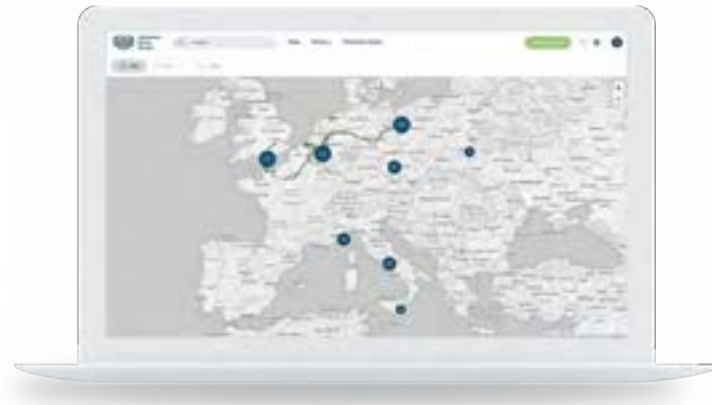
## The Region of Normandy

Thanks to the support of the Regional Council of Normandy which will span three years, LREF has started to develop new routes related to the D-Day and Battle of Normandy storylines.





Website



Updated in the summer of 2024, this innovative website presents more than three thousand locations and stories in six languages (English, French, Dutch, German, Polish, and Italian).

The Liberation Route Europe Website welcomed more than 1.120.000 unique users and had more than 5.5 million pages viewed in 2024. More than 6000 users are now registered on the Liberation Route Europe website and mobile app while 30 new themed routes were added to our offer in 2024.

WEBSITE INSIGHTS

**1.1 M** USERS  
+53% in 2024

**5.5 M +** PAGES VIEWED

**1.2 K +** NEW CONTENT

Application

APPLICATION INSIGHTS

**30 K +** DOWNLOADS

**3 K +** UNIQUE USERS PER MONTH

Following the launch of the mobile app in April (Android) and June 2022 (iOS), more than 30.000 people have downloaded and used the app. In 2024, there were +36.000 active users per year. The app is free to download and available in six languages.



Download the 'Liberation Route Europe' app via [the link](#) or the QR code.

Social Media

The Liberation Route Europe social media are used to promote the route and to inform our followers on a weekly basis. Communications campaigns are carried out to spotlight new content on the website and inform the public about launches of themed routes. On our channels we showcase various WWII stories, museums, remembrance sites, and points of interest throughout Europe, by sharing videos, pictures and information about our members and partners.

SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS 2024

**3.5 M**  
REACH

**80 K +**  
ENGAGEMENT

**1.3 M +**  
VIDEO VIEWS

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

**f** **37 K (+0,5%)**

**i** **3.3 K (+16%)**

NEWSLETTER INSIGHTS

**7**  
NEWSLETTERS PER YEAR

**3.5 K +**  
CONTACTS

**24.5 K +**  
EMAILS SENT







# EUROPE REMEMBERS

80 YEARS  
AFTER WWII

## Introduction

In the years 2023, 2024 and 2025, Europe commemorates the 80th anniversary of the progressive end of the Nazi regime occupation. From the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 to the signature of the official capitulation on 8 May 1945, the liberation process took many forms but spread over most of the European continent. The Europe Remembers campaign is an initiative created by the LRE Foundation, in partnership with many international organisations, to contribute to this effort of commemoration and remembrance.

## Project Progress

### Website

Europeremembers.com is a key part of our initiative, providing a central place for people to find information about events and remembrance sites across Europe. The platform gathers all relevant information on memorial events in one place, in English, French, Italian, Dutch, German and Polish, making it easier to discover commemorative activities. The site includes a full calendar of events and exhibitions, as well as stories, remembrance sites, and blog articles focused on WWII memory and cultural heritage. Organizations can list their events directly, and special pages are dedicated to project partners to highlight their work. In 2024, 643 events have been listed, with 87 partners using the platform to share their activities.



Commemorate  
the end of WWII  
– 80 years later

[europeremembers.com](https://europeremembers.com)





### Partnerships

As a collaborative, international campaign, Europe Remembers relies on partnerships with organisations across Europe for its success. In the past years, significant efforts were made to introduce the campaign and its mission to stakeholders and remembrance-focused organisations throughout Europe. The campaign's collaborations with European regions and cities have already shown impressive results, boosting international visibility for these partner destinations.

**The Europe Remembers initiative is led by the LRE Foundation, which invites all institutions involved in organising events or projects related to the 80th anniversary to participate. There are different possible roles and levels of involvement which can be discussed with the LRE Foundation team. Would you like to join the campaign and hear more about its mission? Reach out to us!**

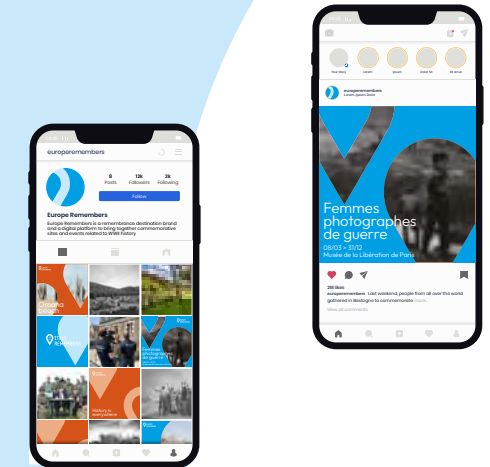


### Content Creation & Awareness campaign

Another key pillar of this project is the Europe Remembers digital campaign – a collaborative initiative focused on raising awareness of the final years of the war and preserving the stories of those who witnessed it. As part of this effort, WWII stories, biographies, events, and commemorations are highlighted and shared with a wider audience, aiming to inspire interest and encourage engagement in this important milestone for both Europe and the world. 2024 has been eventful for the Europe Remembers campaign as we commemorated the 80th anniversary of significant World War II events. This included, among others, the D-Day landings, Operation Market Garden, the Battle of the Scheldt and the Battle of the Bulge. Our team travelled to Normandy, the Netherlands and Belgium to attend the commemorative events and cover them for a wider audience.

#### Normandy (France)

In June, we travelled to Normandy to cover the commemorations of D-Day. From 5th to 7th June, we participated in several events, visited historical sites, and interviewed veterans and participants. Key moments included the ceremony at Pegasus Bridge and visits to the British Memorial in Ver-sur-Mer and Pointe du Hoc. We also interviewed WWII veterans such as Mervyn Kersh, who shared their valuable stories with the Europe Remembers audience. This was made possible by the Foundation's long lasting partnership with Normandy Region and Tourism Board.



#### Limburg, Noord-Brabant, Gelderland and Zeeland (Netherlands)

With the support of the Vfonds (National Fund for Peace, Freedom and Veteran Care in the Netherlands) and in collaboration with the National Committee for 4 and 5 May, as well as regional partners such as the provinces of Zeeland and Gelderland and Brabant Remembers, Europe Remembers has been able to maintain a strong presence at commemorative events across the Netherlands.

In September, we covered the events marking the 80th anniversary of Operation Market Garden (17–25 September 1944). Our visit included stops at key historical sites and participation in a range of commemorative events. Highlights included the opening of the National Programme '80 Years of Freedom' in Mesch, the ceremony at John Frost Bridge in Arnhem, a parachute landing re-enactment at Ginkel Heath, the Waal Crossing re-enactment, and the Sunset March XXL in Nijmegen.

In October, we visited Zeeland to attend events commemorating the lesser-known Battle of the Scheldt, with ceremonies in Westkapelle and Vlissingen that paid tribute to this critical chapter in the liberation of the Netherlands.





### Battle of the Bulge (Belgium)

In December, thanks to the collaboration with the Bastogne Memorial WWII Reference Center, our Europe Remembers team traveled to the Ardennes to follow the commemorative events for the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. During the visit, we had the opportunity to explore significant sites, including the Manhay History 44 Museum, Jack's Wood, and Peace Wood, as well as the German War Cemetery. We also visited the Bastogne War Museum and Bastogne Barracks, gaining deeper insight into the history of the region. The highlight of the trip was participating in the Nuts Weekend events, which included conferences, meetings with veterans, music and ceremonies.

### Content Creation

The content we created, including video reels and live updates, was shared across social media platforms allowing a wider audience to learn about these historical events and commemorations. You can view all the materials we created to this date on our website and social media pages (YouTube, Facebook & Instagram). The content created during such visits across Europe is part of a wide communication campaign remembering WWII events, including acts of resistance, massacres, deportations to name a few, and remembrance sites across Europe.



### CAMPAIGN INSIGHTS

**6.1 M +** REACH

**2.5 M +** ENGAGEMENTS WITH EUROPE REMEMBERS PUBLICATIONS

**900 K +** VIDEO TRUEPLAY



### WEBSITE INSIGHTS

**124 K** UNIQUE USERS

**150 K +** SESSIONS





## First Active Remembrance Youth Program

A motivated group of young participants joined the four-day program of the first exchange "Battle of the Scheldt". This WWII event/battle occurred 80 years ago from 2 October until 8 November 1944 in the provinces of Zeeland and North Brabant, the Netherlands, and Flanders, Belgium.

The first day happened to be the 80-year anniversary of the liberation of Breda in the Netherlands, where the group was introduced to the Maczek Memorial and the Polish field of honor. It was the occasion to discover the story of General Maczek and the Polish liberators who freed the city. The granddaughter of General Maczek, Carolina Maczek, was present and gladly shared her grandfather's memory. Participants dived into different stories and created videos, podcast episodes, and carried out historical research.

Later, the participants headed south to the province of Flanders in Belgium for a visit to the impressive German War Cemetery in Lommel.

On the third day, the group went to the city of Antwerp to visit the Museum Aan de Stroom (MAS) and its temporary exhibition "City at War" which provided more information on the Battle of the Scheldt. The group then followed a guided tour through the city centre, discovering the traces of the German occupation from May 1940 until the liberation of Antwerp by the Canadian troops in September 1944.

The last day consisted of a visit to the Kazerne Dossin in Mechelen, a former military barrack which was transformed into a transit camp for Jews, Roma and Sinti. The group followed two guides telling the story of this location and the escalation of the discrimination against the Jewish people. After this emotional tour, the participants took part in the "Every name counts" project, each one of them recording a name of a deported person.

## Celebrating 10 Years of Liberation Route Europe

In 2024, Liberation Route Europe celebrated its 10th anniversary. Launched in 2014, it has become one of Europe's leading Cultural Routes. On 7 June 2024, the LRE Foundation team travelled to Arramanches-les-Bains to mark this milestone with network partners in the same place where the project was internationally launched 10 years earlier.

The event began with a 'Liberation Walk', a guided walk where participants explored the historic sites of Arramanches. This was followed by a ceremony at the D-Day Museum's Remembrance Garden, with speeches from LRE Managing Director Rémi Praud, Nathalie Porte (Vice-President of Normandy Region), and Marcel Bastide (Mayor of Arramanches).

Rémi Praud highlighted key achievements over the past decade, while Madeleine Lebranchu, Vice President of FFRandonnée, announced a new partnership with the LRE Foundation. Three Vectors of Memory were presented to the speakers, and D-Day Veteran Mervyn Kersh, interviewed by LRE UK Director Ben Mayne, received a Vector of Memory in recognition of his ongoing support of the organisation.

Reflecting on the milestone, the LRE Foundation would like to express pride in the project's achievements and gratitude for the contributions of members, partners, and funders. Looking ahead, the LRE Foundation is committed to expanding the reach of Liberation Route Europe, offering new ways to connect remembrance sites and personal stories across Europe.

## Resistance through their Eyes events in Amsterdam, Milan, Munich

In 2024, as part of the Resistance Through Their Eyes project, three youth events were held across Europe. Aimed at educating younger generations about preserving WWII heritage and ensuring the memory of these events endures, the educational workshops were organised by the Dutch Resistance Museum in Amsterdam, the city of Milan and the Ferruccio Parri National Institute, and the White Rose Foundation in Munich.

By immersing themselves in local history through various media, such as the project exhibition and the online urban game, over 320 participants had the opportunity to explore unique, multi-perspective narratives of individuals who lived through WWII.





## Activities from Foundation's national branches

### LRE Italy

In 2024 we continued our recruitment for new members, which has led to a current total of 26 LRE Italy members. Together with our members, we worked on the valorisation and promotion of memorial sites by organising visits to places of remembrance. For example, a calendar of events entitled "Stories along the paths of the Gothic Line" was organised by our member Associazione Linea Gotica Officina della Memoria to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Gothic Line. We worked with our historians on the production of content for the exhibition "On the Routes of Liberation: The Sicilian Campaign of 1943", financed by Normandy Region and in collaboration with LRE Foundation. The exhibition was displayed at Abbaye aux Dames in Caen (France) for 4 months. LRE Italy is also partner of the newly approved project "LRE Active Remembrance Youth Program" financed by the European Commission, and is working on the recruitment of students and the organization of the two youth exchanges that are foreseen in Italy. LRE Italy has given the patronage to two books related to the Gothic Line. "Linea Gotica. Storia, storie e memorie dell'ultimo fronte di guerra in Italia" (author Massimo Turchi, Publisher Diarkos) contains many wartime events that took place during the last war front in Italy: the battles, clashes, massacres of civilians, aerial bombardments, hand-to-hand combats, and infiltrations behind the lines. The other book is a photo book "La Linea Gotica a Pistoia e Prato" (author Gabriele Caproni, Publisher Maria Pacini Fazzi Editore), which is the second volume on the Fortification of the Gothic Line. The project involves the production of eight volumes covering the entire Gothic Line.

### LRE France

One of the highlights of the year was the celebration of the 10th anniversary of Liberation Route Europe in Arromanches-les-Bains on 7 June 2024, at the heart of the commemorations of the 80th anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy. A themed route for Arromanches was launched on this occasion. LRE France has also been focused on developing the French network and finding new partnerships, with 3 new members joining our network. In September, a new Board was elected made up of French members, which will enable LRE France to have a greater presence in the various French territories.



### LRE United Kingdom

This year the LRE UK expanded into East Anglia, with new cooperations on LRE trails in an area of rich WWII aviation history. In Hampshire we welcomed an official partnership with the University of Portsmouth, meaning students can now work with the LRE UK as part of their history degrees. As we continue to develop new content and trails on the UK section of the Liberation Route Europe, we are also working with outdoor activity providers to facilitate groups of young people on the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. This award encourages young people to complete challenges outdoors and learn new skills alongside their formal education.

### LRE Germany

The three main activities in Germany in 2024 included support for the LRE Forum in Aachen, the development of 10 new 'listening stones' with a small vector in North Rhine-Westphalia, and the display of the 'History through their Eyes' exhibition which was shown in four locations. We supported the LRE Forum with financial assistance, help with the planning of events and implementation of the excursion programme to the Hürtgen Forest and Vogelsang. Between Emmerich and Aachen, 10 new 'listening stones' with touching biographies are being built. To this end, the old 'listening stones' are being redesigned. A podcast on the liberation of the Rhineland rounds off the project organised by the city of Wesel and LRE-NRW e.V.

### LRE Poland

As the LRE Foundation continues to expand its network into Central-Eastern Europe, 2024 marked the establishment of the highly awaited LRE Poland. Given this country's significant role in the complex events of WWII, along with its rich cultural offerings and tourism potential, numerous projects are planned for the upcoming year. Among the existing network of partners, LRE Poland has welcomed the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk as a new member and is looking forward to further developing its network of institutions dedicated to WWII and postwar history. A key highlight of the organisation's activities will be hosting the annual LRE Forum 2025, which will take place in Kraków.



The LRE Foundation maintains continuous contact with news media from several countries to promote its projects and expand the reach of the Liberation Route Europe hiking and cycling trails. Through these collaborations, we bring WWII history to a wider audience, fostering awareness and engagement. Below is a selection of news articles highlighting our initiatives.



**Nieuwe Liberation Route Rivierenland: 'Ankerpunt voor regio'**

**Liberation Route: wát een oorlog heeft er in Rivierenland gewoed**

**MET VIDEO** Rivierenland was in 1944 een ultieme en snoeiharde warzone. Een fonkelnieuwe Liberation Route ontsluit en onthult sinds gisteren verhalen.

**Canadian Trail dwars door Nederland**

Limburg haakt aan op 10.000 km hike Liberation Route

Limburg is volop bezig met de voorbereidingen voor de Liberation Route Europe Hiking Trail, melden de DMO's in Limburg. Nog groter voor het wandelen in Nederland wordt de Canadian Trail dwars door het land in 2022. Het wandelen was vóór de coronacrisis al groot maar kreeg tijdens de pandemie nog meer fans.

Mede dankzij een bijdrage van het Vfonds, Provincie Limburg en alle Limburgse gemeenten wordt Limburg onderdeel van deze Liberation Route van maar liefst 10.000 kilometer.



**Vrijheidspad: de weg naar onze vrijheid**

Van 10 tot en met 20 september vindt de 5. editie plaats van het Vrijheidspad lopen. De route markteert het begin van de strijd van 50 jaar vrijheid en volgt de Market Garden Liberation Route. Onze Wandeltoer des vaderlands, Lokaal en wandeltoeristiek Dag Hoopdalen brengen elkaar een knipje mee in de zoektocht naar onze voorouders.



**RIVIERENLAND NU OOK AANGESLOTEN BIJ DE LIBERATION ROUTE**

Vrijdag 3 mei 2024 | Nico Middag



Alle gedenkwaardige plaatsen langs de route zijn herkenbaar aan de 'Vectorpoints'. © SRC | Cor Vermeulen

**Knuget på D-Day Story museet og opløftet på Queens Hotel i Portsmouth**

by Karin Møller-Olsen • 3365 Views • England • 4 min read



Bij Landgoed Schooneveld zijn plaatsen vrijgelegd voor wandelaars van het Vrijheidspad. Van links naar rechts: Wim Flincken (jurker), René de Poot en Eijm Roux. © Gerard Burgers

**Elst en Heteren etappeplaatsen Vrijheidspad Market Garden: 'Tijdens het wandelen deel je oorlogsverhalen die je raken'**

Vele honderden wandelaars die in september vanuit België het Vrijheidspad lopen naar eindbestemming de John Frostbrug in Arnhem maken in Gelderland tussenstops in Elst, Heteren, Ede en Oosterbeek. „Onderweg delen ze verhalen met elkaar die met de Tweede Wereldoorlog te maken hebben en die hen persoonlijk raken.”



# Travel trade

**In 2024 the LRE Foundation attended several online and in-person travel trade events to both continue and forge new relationships with the travel trade industry. These events raise awareness of our work among the industry and build on our strong network of existing contacts. They are also key in promoting the Liberation Route Europe hiking and cycling trails as a sustainable touristic offer, and connecting with Tour Operators to attend our annual LREXPO and FAM Trips.**

## LREXPO

On 28 February 2024 in Aachen, Germany, the LREXPO took place within the LRE Forum, organised by LRE Foundation, LRE Germany and LRE NRW. With over 100 attendees, it brought together LRE Foundation members and partners alongside tour operators and travel trade stakeholders from Europe and North America. Through productive one-to-one networking appointments, participants were able to form new connections, showcase their organisations and destinations, and discuss new future cooperations. Following this, a FAM Trip for international tour operators took place in the Eifel Region (Germany), the Ardennes Region (Belgium), and the Limburg and Airborne Region (the Netherlands).

## Guide network

The LREF has established a project to recruit and train battlefield guides to interpret and share the heritage of the Liberation Route with visitors worldwide. This network of guides ensures high-quality tours and strengthens LREF's on-site presence. The guides have already enhanced visits for press and travel industry representatives, deepening their appreciation of key historical locations. This year, LREF organized a training workshop in Mauthausen in collaboration with the Mauthausen and Gusen Memorials and the Austrian Documentation Center. This event focused on storytelling about WWII resistance at Nazi memorials, with workshops, practical exercises, and discussions to improve guides' methods for engaging with younger audiences.



**In 2024, the LREF Team attended the following events:**



### ETOA ADVENTURE EUROPE

In September, LREF participated in a new online B2B networking event organised by the European Tourism Association (ETOA), designed as 'The Marketplace for Tourism Experiences Off The Beaten Track'. This was an opportunity to connect with European and international Tour Operators looking to work with suppliers offering adventures, activities and authentic local experiences. LREF met with 12 Tour Operators to highlight the unique hiking and cycling experiences of the LRE trails, and received plenty of positive feedback!



### CYCLE SUMMIT 2024

In October, the CycleSummit took place in Bern, Switzerland, the largest European trade show for bicycle touring with over 100 organisations present. LREF attended and through networking meetings and activities spoke with over 20 Tour Operators, increasing awareness of the LRE trails and encouraging inclusion of its many sites, stories and routes into hiking and cycling tourism itineraries across Europe.



### ETOA Global European Marketplace

In November, LREF attended the ETOA GEM in London, UK, ETOA's premier annual travel trade event gathering over 800 industry professionals from across the globe. The event was a prime opportunity to showcase LRE's hiking and cycling trails to tour operators from Europe and North America. Through these discussions, we opened new doors for collaboration, aiming to inspire visitors worldwide to explore impactful sites and stories along the LRE.



## LRE FORUM



The Forum serves as a platform for the Foundation’s members and partners, as well as remembrance stakeholders from across the globe, to engage in various activities aimed at sharing innovative ideas and best practices. It provides a unique opportunity for participants to learn, network, and foster new collaborations. This year marks the 8th edition of the LRE Forum, initiated in Brussels back in 2017. Since then, it has grown in terms of participation and is increasingly becoming a central networking event within the World War II heritage sector.

The event began on February 26 with a Welcome Reception, followed by the Member Seminar on February 27. The seminar included presentations from the Foundation team on their work and projects, as well as best practices from members. A thematic session on “The 80th Anniversary of the End of the Second World War: A Remembrance and Commemorative Crossroad” offered valuable insights.

On the afternoon of February 27, the LRE Conference 2024 welcomed around 160 participants to discuss how societies and individuals have addressed the harm caused during WWII, particularly efforts to make amends for persecution. This year’s theme, “Justice in Transition: Dealing with the Legacy of WWII”, examined the complexities of transitional justice, historical accountability, and reconciliation. The conference featured keynote speeches, expert panel discussions, and a powerful talk by Holocaust survivor Mala Tribich.

“We must be vigilant and never be bystanders. If we see harm being done, we must always stand up to it and respond,” said Mala Tribich MBE.

The Forum continued with a Gala Dinner at the beautiful Aachen City Hall and the annual LREXPO trade show, where over 100 attendees networked and exchanged ideas. The event also included insightful site visits to historical locations, including Vogelsang and the Hürtgen Forest, further deepening the understanding of WWII history.

With a strong focus on history, remembrance, and education, the LRE Forum 2024 once again provided an essential platform for collaboration, ensuring that the memory of World War II remains relevant for future generations.



# New Members 2024

## UNITED KINGDOM



**Bawdsey Radar Trust**



**Parham Airfield**



**Battle of Britain Bunker**

## FRANCE



**D-Day Commemoration Comitee**



**Memorial Alsace Moselle**



**Limoges Tourist Office**

## ITALY



**Comune Di Barga**



**Comine Di Sogliano Al Rubicone**



**ASSOCIAZIONE SER.A.F. (Servizi Associati dei Comuni del Frusinate)**

## POLAND

**Sybir Memorial Museum**



**WWII Museum in Gdańsk**



## NETHERLANDS

**Back to Westerbork**



**Palace het Loo**



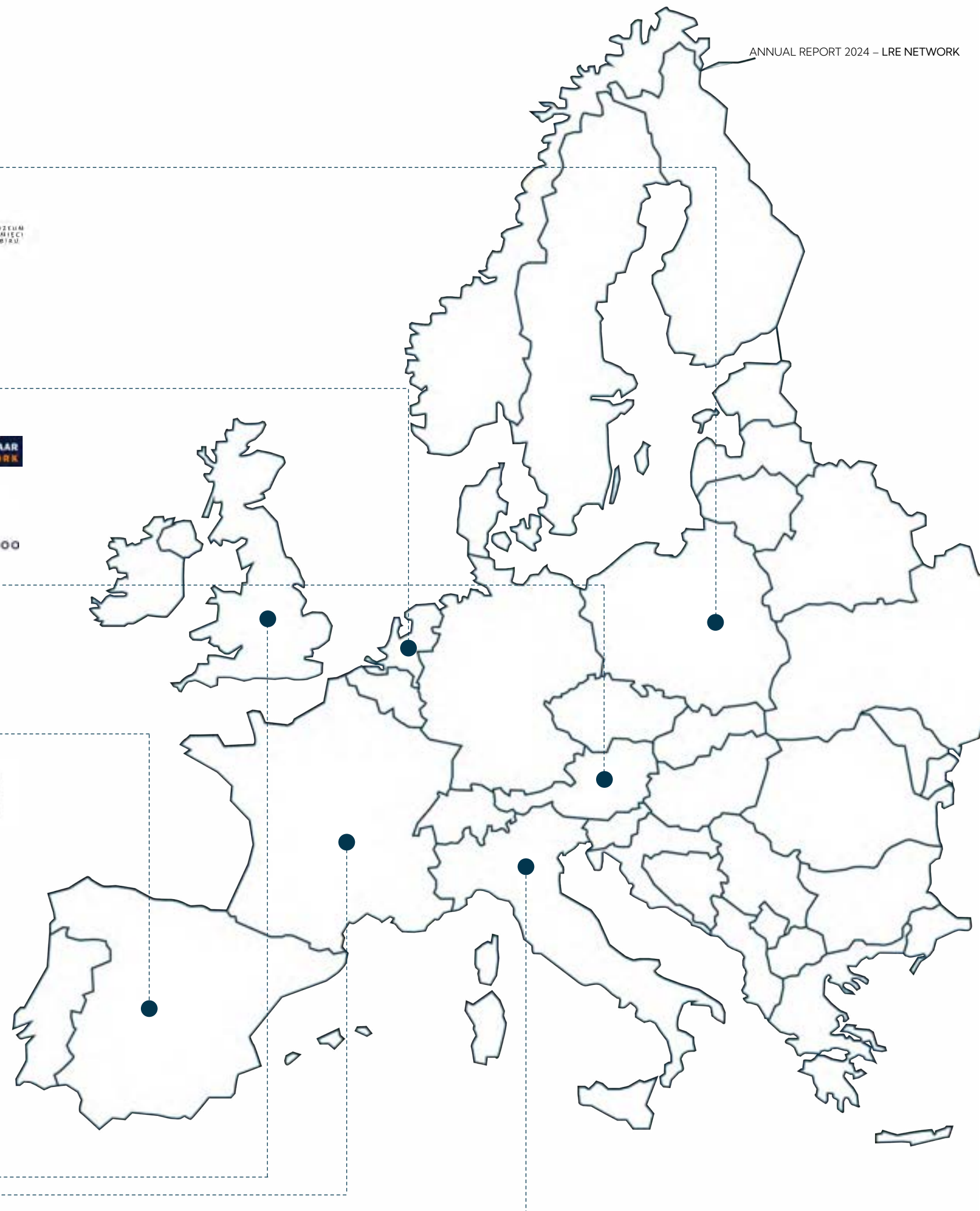
## AUSTRIA

**VHS Roma**



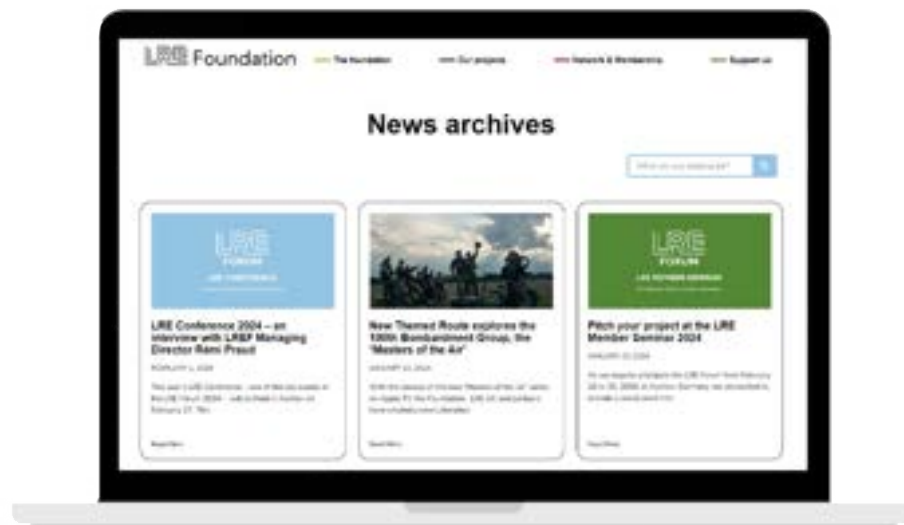
## SPAIN

**European Observatory on Memories**





Website



The LRE Foundation website offers an in-depth overview of the Foundation's activities and projects. In 2024, we have added over forty new articles to the newsroom and implemented project pages to share the latest information about the Foundation's network, branches, and projects.

[www.lre-foundation.org](http://www.lre-foundation.org)

WEBSITE INSIGHTS



**19K +** UNIQUE VISITORS IN 2024

Newsletters



The LRE Foundation newsletter provides an overview of the Foundation's activities and updates. It is a must-read for LREF Members and Partners, as well as anybody interested in our work and projects.

NEWSLETTER INSIGHTS



**19K +** EMAILS SENT IN 2024

**3.3K +** CONTACTS

**6** NEWSLETTERS PER YEAR



Sign up for the '[LRE Foundation](#)' newsletter via the link or QR code.

Social Media

The Foundation maintains a strong presence on LinkedIn which serves as an effective tools for keeping our network consistently informed about the progress of our activities, projects and collaborations.

In 2024, we decided to leave the platform "X" for ethical reasons, and decided to move to a BlueSky account. We invite you to join us there to get the latest information and insights into our work.

Join us at Blue Sky  
[@lrefoundation.bsky.social](https://lrefoundation.bsky.social)







**In the coming year, we will continue to build a stronger international network of WWII heritage stakeholders, as well as further develop our current programs and initiate new ones.**

### Forum 2025

On 10-13 March 2025, the LRE Forum will be hosted in Krakow, organised by the LRE Foundation and LRE Poland in official partnership with the City of Krakow. This annual event will gather LRE Foundation members, partners and tourism representatives in Krakow's historic center to foster connections and collaborations within the context of this history-rich city. Over four days, attendees will engage in a range of activities, including conferences, networking events and a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, enhancing their understanding of WWII remembrance and education.

### ARYP exchanges 2025

A total of six Active Remembrance Youth Program exchanges will be organised in 2025. Eight countries will be visited, spread across Europe. Each exchange will focus on a different theme, related to historical events such as D-Day, Battle of the Bulge, and Operation Market Garden, and to historical themes such as the resistance in Italy and France and the eastern front from Poland to Berlin. For every exchange, European residents aged between 18 and 25 are invited to join the program and to share their perspectives on the Second World War to learn from each other. In 2026, the content that has been created during these exchanges, will be part of an online exhibition.

### Resistance Through Their Eyes 2025

As the Resistance Through Their Eyes project comes to a close, a conference focused on the legacy of the resistance will be held in Kraków in March 2025 as part of the annual LRE Forum activities. To incorporate diverse perspectives and narratives, the event will bring together guests and speakers from a range of institutions coming from different countries, with insights from the project serving as a comprehensive summary of all activities and outcomes.

### Europe Remembers 2025

As we reflect on our journey so far (read more on page 20-25), we now look ahead to the 80th anniversary of significant milestones, including the International Holocaust Memorial Day in January, and the many Liberation Days celebrated across Europe from March to May 2025. Our project will culminate in the commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe in May 2025, and globally in September 2025.



## New EU Projects

In Autumn 2024 LREF launched 3 new projects funded by the European Commission's Creative Europe programme, which supports diverse initiatives to strengthen the EU's cultural sector. The projects have been developed jointly with partners throughout Europe and explore Second World War remembrance in the contexts of sustainable travel, art, and technology.

### Preserving the Past, Securing the Future: A Sustainable Approach to Cultural and Remembrance Heritage (PPSF)

This project aims to provide Second World War remembrance professionals with the tools and knowledge needed to adopt sustainable practices. Within this, LREF will organise capacity-building workshops to explore topics such as responsible tourism, sustainable development goals, and sustainable policies, practices and marketing strategies. Together with our project partners we will coordinate study visits, networking events and e-learning opportunities to encourage knowledge sharing and skills development. Key partners include Mascontour (Germany), Campus Foundation (Italy), and the Juno Beach Centre (France).

### AI Remembers

Through this project and together with project partners KERN IT (Belgium) and the University of Caen Normandy (France), we will aim to integrate artificial intelligence into the preservation and interpretation of Second World War heritage, exploring how modern tools and technologies can enhance the presentation of historical content. We will use the Liberation Route Europe (LRE), a Cultural Route certified by the Council of Europe, as a test case to implement and evaluate these technologies. We will engage WWII stakeholders in a collective reflection on the proper use of AI, identifying the opportunities but also the risks. The aim is to provide the WWII Heritage sector with ethical guidelines for a trustworthy AI use.

### Art of Remembrance

This project, developed in collaboration with Tempora (Belgium), the City of Bastogne (Belgium), La Coupole Museum (France), the Nuto Revelli Foundation (Italy), and the Sybir Memorial Museum (Poland), aims to bridge the gap between history and contemporary art. The initiative seeks to establish artist residencies at Second World War remembrance sites across Europe, offering a unique space for artists to engage with history through their creative process. Alongside the residencies, workshops and seminars will be organised, actively involving local communities in the artistic journey, aiming to bridge the gap between history and contemporary art. The resulting artwork will be showcased in a travelling exhibition, ensuring that the project's outcomes reach a wide audience. These efforts will be further supported by an ambitious communication strategy, including publications and online platforms designed to make the artworks accessible.





At the end of 2024, the LRE Foundation's Supervisory Board welcomed a new Member: Blandine Smilansky. With an extensive background in promoting European history and cultural heritage, she brings a wealth of experience that aligns closely with the mission of the LRE Foundation.

### **Blandine Smilanski**

Since 2015, Blandine Smilansky has been working at the House of European History, where she serves as the Head of Communications and Partnerships. Before stepping into this role, she was part of the Learning Department, where she developed and led various cultural programs. Her experience is further enriched by her years at EUROCLIO, the European Association of History Educators, where she managed pan-European projects focused on innovative approaches to history, heritage, and citizenship education. With a strong academic background in history and cultural management from France, she brings valuable insights to the Foundation's mission of connecting people and places through Europe's shared heritage.

Upon joining the board, the Blandine Smilansky shared her thoughts: "Reflecting on Europe's past from a variety of perspectives is what both the House of European History and the LRE Foundation are encouraging through their work. I am therefore very happy to represent the museum in the LRE Supervisory Board and contribute to making history and heritage something that connects people across borders."

Ed Kronenburg, Chairman of the Supervisory Board, warmly welcomed Blandine Smilansky: "We are delighted to welcome Blandine Smilansky to our Supervisory Board. Her extensive experience in promoting European history, as well as her leadership at the House of European History, will bring fresh and dynamic perspectives to the LRE Foundation. Blandine's commitment to cross-border cooperation and fostering a multi-perspective approach aligns perfectly with our mission. We are confident her contributions will enrich our efforts to connect people and places through the shared heritage of Europe's past."

### **New Supervisory Board Member**





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