LRE Foundation



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

To remember the past is to create a better future

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Foreword

“In a time when history is increasingly contested, remembrance is not only about the past, it is about responsibility for the future.”



The memory of the Second World War is entering a new phase. As the last witnesses disappear, remembrance can no longer rely primarily on living testimony. The responsibility for transmitting this history now rests fully with institutions, educators, cultural actors, and networks such as ours. This transition raises an essential question: how do we ensure that the memory of the war remains meaningful, credible, and relevant for future generations?

For the LRE Foundation, this question lies at the heart of our work. Remembrance is not static. It must continuously evolve in the ways it is shared, interpreted, and experienced. Our role is therefore not only to preserve historical knowledge, but also to create the conditions for meaningful encounters with the past, across borders, across disciplines, and across generations.

The Liberation Route Europe continues to embody this vision. By connecting places, landscapes, and stories across the continent, the route offers a way to experience history within the environments where it unfolded. These encounters remind us that the war was not an abstract event but a lived reality that shaped communities throughout Europe.

At the same time, remembrance must speak to contemporary society. This is why the Foundation increasingly explores new approaches that combine historical research with cultural, technological, and educational innovation. Whether through artistic interpretation, youth engagement, or reflections on emerging technologies, our ambition is to ensure that the memory of the war remains accessible and relevant in a rapidly changing world.

None of this can be achieved alone. The strength of the LRE Foundation lies in its international network, a community of museums, historians, educators, public authorities, tourism operators, and civil society organisations working together to transmit a shared European history. Their commitment demonstrates that remembrance is not simply an act of looking back, but a collective effort to strengthen democratic values and mutual understanding.

As Europe continues to navigate uncertainty and division, the importance of historical reflection becomes even more evident. The work of remembrance reminds us that peace, freedom, and cooperation are never guaranteed; they must be constantly renewed.

The mission of the LRE Foundation is therefore clear: to ensure that the memory of the Second World War remains a source of knowledge, dialogue, and responsibility for generations to come.

Rémi Praud - Managing Director

Liberation Route Europe



General Update

2025 has been another busy year of highlighting even more sites and stories of the Second World War across the European landscape, thanks to the development of new hiking and cycling itineraries within the LRE trails network. LRE's range of Themed Routes explore diverse experiences and histories of WWII across the continent, and this year has seen many new additions: in Belgium 3 new themed cycling routes were added, along with 45 in the Netherlands, 5 in the UK and Channel Islands, 8 in France, 3 in Germany, and 1 cross-border in Germany and Poland. Alongside these additions, implementation of a new long-distance route in Italy began and a new Themed Route in Finland, our first in the country, was approved. Building on the great progress made in 2025, we will continue to add new routes to the LRE trails network in 2026!

NEW THEMED ROUTES

45
THE NETHERLANDS

8
FRANCE

5
UK & CHANNEL ISLANDS

4
GERMANY

3
BELGIUM

1
POLAND

Themed Routes

Themed Routes are ready-to-walk or ready-to-bike itineraries following a collection of Points of Interest and stories linked together by a common theme, such as a specific battle, resistance movement or civilian's war experience. By working with local partners, we develop Themed Routes, both long and short distance, along the Liberation Route Europe, that explore the WW2 history in different cities and regions.

Interested in creating your own Themed Route? Get in touch!



JANUARY

Launch of three new Wall Vectors in Kienitz (DE) and Słońsk (PL)

FEBRUARY

Active Remembrance Youth Exchange (ARYP) “Battle of the Bulge and the Breakthrough to Germany” in DE, LUX, BE and NL

MARCH

ARYP Youth Exchange “Resistance in Italy and France” in Milan and Lyon

“World War Two in Berlin: City-Centre Route” launched

APRIL

New Vectors unveiled in Seelow (DE)

Launch of the Canadian Route Harlingen

MAY

Launch of cycling routes in North and West Brabant (NL)

New hiking trail in Normandy from Courseulles-sur-Mer to Caen (FR)

JUNE

Launch of the “Retracing the Footsteps: A Transnational Journey of Canadian Liberation in WWII (REFOOT)“ project in FR, BE, NL and DE

AUGUST

LRE UK and University of Portsmouth launch new Themed Routes in Portsmouth and Dartmouth

SEPTEMBER

Three youth exchanges: “Operation Market Garden” (BE, NL), “Liberation of Northern France and Belgium” and “Resistance and diverse war experiences in Italy”

OCTOBER

New Themed Routes launched in Normandy (FR), and in East-Frisia, Overijssel and the Achterhoek region (NL)

NOVEMBER

New Themed Routes: “History of the Oder-Warta Region in 1945” in Słońsk (PL) and Seelow (DE)

”Destruction, Courage and Coventry’s Spirit during the Second World War” (UK)

DECEMBER

Launch of the Atlanticwall project with 100 new sites and stories along the coastal defence line in the Netherlands

In 2025 the Liberation Route Europe has continued to expand across Europe. The addition of many new Themed Routes has created more opportunities for hikers and cyclists alike to discover the WWII heritage of many European countries, with hundreds of new sites and stories added on the website and App as well as more Vectors of Memory installed along the route.



United Kingdom & Channel Islands

At the beginning of the year, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) joined our network, strengthening the Liberation Route's connection to Second World War memorials as places of dignity and reflection for generations to come.

In summer, in cooperation with students at the University of Portsmouth, we created the "Dartmouth at war" Themed Route in Devon, England. This was followed in autumn by another Themed Route, "Destruction, Courage, and Coventry's Spirit", which was launched in Coventry, England, to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the Coventry blitz. This was supported with BBC coverage and free guided walks for members of the public (as shown in the picture on the left).

In Jersey, Channel Islands, we completed and launched the Jersey Stolpersteine Trail, detailing the persecution, imprisonment and deportation of victims and survivors of Nazi oppression during the war. Another trail connecting the island's Forced Worker Camps of Operation Todt is also in progress, with Floor Vectors installed at the sites of many of the camps.

Poland

In 2025, a new Themed Route was launched, including two important Polish points: Kostrzyn nad Odrą and Słońsk, both heavily affected by the Second World War. In addition, several new POIs in Poland were added, and more existing routes across Europe became available in Polish translation, making this shared history easier to explore for Polish-speaking audiences.

Germany

In March, a new Themed Route was published in Berlin titled "World War Two in Berlin: City-Centre Route". The launch of the transnational Themed Route "History of the Oder-Warta Region in 1945" in the Polish German border region took place in October. This project also included the installation of seven new Wall Vectors in both countries.

The development of several different hiking and cycling Themed Routes in the Rhineland in North Rhine-Westphalia is ongoing, with two of them already published in late 2025 on the topics of "The liberation of Würselen during the Battle of Aachen" and "Compassion and selfless help in the Westkreis".

Finland

Finland has a unique World War Two history and in 2025 we have happily been able to incorporate more of this into the Liberation Route. Following an inspirational trip to the country in May to visit existing member Muisti – Centre of War and Peace, and other sites, the LREF network has welcomed three new members this year: Miehikkälä Municipality, City of Kuhmo and Ilomantsi Tourist Association (Ilomantsi Battlegrounds Trail). Sites and stories linked to these places are now part of the Liberation Route Europe, with connecting trails coming soon!





France

In France the trail development continued in Normandy with the launch of new sections, as well as in the Great East and around Paris, where new LRE trails have been defined. Two major projects were the focus this year: one in Normandy and the transnational REFOOT trail. As part of the Normandy Project, 7 new themed routes have been created in the region, and one vector was installed in Arromanches-les Bains. Through the REFOOT project, a transnational itinerary that retraces the steps of the Canadian forces during WWII from Normandy to Germany, over 100 new sites and stories have been added to the Liberation Route Europe in France.

Belgium

In the Belgian Ardennes, with the help of our new members “Coeur de l’Ardenne” and “Forêt de Saint-Hubert Tourisme”, we proudly launched 3 new themed cycling routes, expanding on the territories covered and enriching the stories surrounding the Battle of the Bulge in 1944-45. Elsewhere in Belgium, the REFOOT transnational trail, co-funded by Interreg North-West Europe, saw the addition of more than 25 new sites and stories along the coast of the country, following in the footsteps of Canadian liberators.

Italy

In 2025, LRE Italy continued to advance the development of the Liberation Route in Italy, installing over 15 Floor Vectors, primarily in the Lazio, Tuscany, and Emilia-Romagna regions. As in the previous year, alongside the unveiling ceremonies for the Vectors, smaller events such as walks, conferences, and museum visits were organised in collaboration with LRE Italy members and partners.

Following the official presentation in September 2024 of the feasibility study, financed by the Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna regions, to develop the first official long-distance LRE hiking trail in Italy, LRE Italy began working on its development. The official launch of the “Cammino ‘44: Sant’Anna di Stazzema – Monte Sole” is planned for 2026.

The Cammino ‘44 is a 183 km trail which takes 12 to 13 days to complete, connecting two of the most symbolic sites in Italian history and memory. The route crosses the territories of two regions (Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna), 14 municipalities, and 3 provinces: 5 municipalities in the province of Lucca, 3 in the province of Pistoia, and 6 in the province of Bologna.

Greece

With several new sites and stories added this year in the Municipality of Pilea-Hortiatus, a new LREF member, more of Greece’s World War Two history has been spotlighted along the Liberation Route Europe. We hope to add more sites and some trails to the network soon.



The Netherlands

Scottish Highlanders Routes North Brabant

In the Spring of 2025, we published a cycling themed route collection in the region of North-Brabant highlighting the role of the Scottish Highlanders in liberating the area. The cycling routes range from 20 to 60km and are located in eight different municipalities.

Timberwolves Route West Brabant

In West Brabant, near Breda, a new cycling route was launched in the spring season: the Timberwolves route. This route of 90 km highlights the role of the 104th US Infantry Division, known as the Timberwolves, an American unit taking part in the liberation of the region led by the First Canadian Army. The route highlights their lasting heritage in the region.

Canadian Trail Overijssel

After the summer, we launched the final section of the national Canadian trail of the Netherlands: the Canadian Trail in the Overijssel province. This hiking trail is presented in a collection displaying the historical route taken by the Canadians to liberate the region. In addition, we created Themed Routes in the city centres of Deventer, Zwolle, Nijverdal, Diepenheim and Almelo.

Canadian Trail in Harlingen and East Friesland

We launched a new hiking Themed Route in the town of Harlingen, near the Afsluitdijk in the region of Friesland highlighting the fierce resistance of Harlingen before and during the liberation. The Canadian Trail was completed with a hiking route in the Eastern part of the province. This trail tells the stories of the Canadian liberators on their way to the Wadden sea, crossing local towns that have put up great resistance during the occupation. The towns are highlighted in two Themed Routes along the trail: Kootstertille and Bakkeveen.

Canadian Trail in the Achterhoek Region

In the Achterhoek Region 80 new stories and points of interest as well as 12 new Themed Routes were added. These routes are part of the Canadian Trail and focus on the themes of resistance networks, bombing raids, the liberation by Canadian forces, and the daily lives of civilians living under occupation, especially during the final months of the war.



Themed Route Battle of Delfzijl

On 2 May 2025, a Crossroad Vector was unveiled in Farmsum as part of the “Battle of the Delfzijl Pocket” Themed Route. This Vector highlights the story “The Surrender of Korvettenkapitän Wolter“, which marks the surrender of a German naval commander and the end of the fighting in the Delfzijl Pocket. The story connects this local event to the wider military and historical context of the final days of the Second World War in the north of the Netherlands.

Atlantikwall Netherlands

In December we launched our final long distance national trail of the year. The Atlantikwall Netherlands collection consists of 8 themed cycling and 7 themed cycling routes, extending from the province of Zeeland to Groningen along the Dutch coast. It highlights the towns of Den Helder, Vlissingen and IJmuiden as well as the coastline of the Netherlands used by Nazi Germany to build this defensive line. The routes highlight fortifications, museums and stories that remain from the region’s WWII history.









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

ERA-EWV-FERP

Wandelnet

OLAT
Wandelsportvereniging

RAMBLERS Lincolnshire

GR
www.grsentiers.be

G·T·A

FFRandonnée
www.ffrandonnee.fr

FederTrek
Escursionismo e Ambiente

Vectors Installed

Since the installation of the very first Vectors of Memory along the Liberation Route Europe in 2022, the LRE Foundation and its partners have installed hundreds of these trail markers all over Europe. Throughout 2025, a large number of Vectors have been added in the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Poland, France, Jersey (Channel Islands) and Luxembourg.

The unique trail markers are designed by architect Daniel Libeskind and come in four different sizes. Thanks to these noticeable markers, the Liberation Route Europe and its sites and stories are made more accessible and visible.

155 Floor Vectors

22 Wall Vectors

3 Crossroad Vectors

1 Remembrance Site Vector



Throughout 2025, various partners, regional authorities, and governments have supported the realisation of the Liberation Route Europe 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 cooperation with dozens of regional and municipal partners, continued the development of the Canadian Trail hiking and cycling routes in the Netherlands to tell the often overlooked stories of the Canadian liberators.

FB Oranjewoud

Thanks to the financial support of FB Oranjewoud, the LRE Foundation, in collaboration with regional and municipal partners, continued developing the Canadian Trail hiking and cycling routes across the Netherlands.

Nationaal Programma Groningen

Thanks to the financial support of the Nationaal Programma Groningen, the Canadian Trail hiking and cycling routes were further developed in the Province of Groningen in the Netherlands in 2025.

Région Normandie

Thanks to the funding by the Regional Council of Normandy which spans three years, the LRE Foundation is able to develop new hiking and cycling routes along the Liberation Route Europe related to the D-Day and Battle of Normandy storylines.

Fonds National d'Aménagement et de Développement du Territoire

The French Regional Development Fund co-financed the further development of the Liberation Route Europe in Normandy in 2025. The new hiking and cycling routes in the region are related to the sites and stories of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy.



Website

Liberation Route Europe



The innovative Liberation Route Europe website presents more than three thousand locations and stories in six languages (English, French, Dutch, German, Polish and Italian).

The website welcomed more than 1.230.000 unique users and had more than 3.9 million page views in 2025. More than 8,500 users are now registered on the Liberation Route Europe website and mobile application with 58 new Themed Routes and 11 Themed Route collections in five different countries added to our offer in 2025.

WEBSITE INSIGHTS

- **1.23 M** UNIQUE USERS
  +9,3% in 2025
- **3.9 M** PAGES VIEWED
- **8,500+** REGISTERED USERS
  +42% in 2025

Application

APPLICATION INSIGHTS

- **11 K+** DOWNLOADS
  in 2025
- **16 K+** ACTIVE USERS

Following the launch of the mobile application in April (Android) and June 2022 (iOS), more than 40.000 unique users have downloaded and used the Liberation Route Europe app. In 2025, there were more than 16,000 active users. The app is free to download and available in six languages (English, French, Dutch, German, Polish and Italian).

Social Media

The Liberation Route Europe social media channels are used to promote the route and to inform our followers about our activities on a weekly basis. Communications campaigns are carried out to spotlight new content on the website and inform the public about the launches of new Themed Routes. On our channels we showcase various WWII stories, museums, remembrance sites, and Points of Interest throughout Europe.

SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS 2025

- **8.6 M** VIEWS
- **30 K** CONTENT INTERACTION
- **20 K+** PROFILE VISITS

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

- **37,100+**
- **3,600+**

Newsletter

NEWSLETTER INSIGHTS

- **3,820** RECIPIENTS
  in 2025
- **26 K+** NEWSLETTERS SENT
- **6** NEWSLETTERS PER YEAR





Commemorate the end of WWII – 80 years later

europeremembers.com

Introduction

Between 2023 and 2025, Europe commemorated the 80th anniversary of the approaching end of the Nazi regime's occupation, spanning from the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 to the official German capitulation on May 8, 1945. This process of liberation, which unfolded in many forms across the continent, was the focus of the Europe Remembers awareness campaign.

Initiated by the LRE Foundation in partnership with a network of international organisations, the campaign aimed to increase public knowledge of the Second World War, strengthen reflection on peace, and honour those who contributed to and lived through Europe's liberation. Built around a dedicated website, a wide-reaching awareness campaign, and video documentation of commemorative events, Europe Remembers combined digital tools, on-site event coverage, and cross-border collaboration to make historical events and personal stories accessible to a broad audience, particularly younger generations, and to inspire engagement with remembrance sites and commemorations marking 80 years since the end of the Second World War.

Website

The Europe Remembers website served as the central hub of the campaign, offering an accessible platform for commemorative events, remembrance sites, historical context, editorial articles, and video content. From 2023 to 2025, the platform enabled partners across Europe to promote their activities while providing visitors with curated, multilingual content connected to the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

#IRemember Campaign

A central Europe Remembers awareness activity was the #IRemember campaign, a digital participatory initiative designed to actively engage individuals and organisations in sharing stories, images, and reflections connected to World War II. The campaign invited audiences to contribute personal memories, commemorate historical events, and reflect on the meaning of freedom and democracy today.

COMMEMORATE AND HONOUR

All who lost their lives and pay tribute to the veterans.

INSPIRE THE PUBLIC

Especially the youth, to become acquainted with the international remembrance sites and the events, exhibitions and commemorations surrounding the 80th anniversary of the end of the war.

REFLECT ON THE LESSONS OF THE PAST

The legacies of the war, the value of peace, reconciliation and freedom, and learn about history from different perspectives.

Europe Remembers

Event coverage and Digital Content Creation

A core pillar of Europe Remembers was the production of original editorial and audiovisual content, including interviews, event reportage, and thematic articles. This multifaceted approach ensured meaningful audience engagement and helped the lessons and memories of WWII continue to resonate in a contemporary context.

The campaign featured interviews with key figures and institutions active in remembrance and education. Interviews with veterans formed an essential component of the content strategy, preserving living memory and reinforcing the human dimension of historical reflection. All interviews can be seen or read on the Europe Remembers blog.

In parallel, the LRE Foundation team worked closely with local and regional institutions to follow major commemorative events across Europe. This involved extensive planning and travel to document ceremonies, re-enactments, exhibitions, and memorial services, resulting in a substantial body of video and written content. Key events covered included:

July 2023: Coverage of the 80th anniversary of the Allied landings in Sicily, with events in Siracusa, Catania, and Licata.

June 2024: On-site reportage from Normandy during the D-Day landing commemorations.

September 2024: Extensive coverage of the 80th anniversary of Operation Market Garden (17–25 September 1944) and the opening of the National Programme '80 Jaar Vrijheid' ('Our Freedom') in Mesch.

October 2024: Reporting from Zeeland on the commemorations of the Battle of the Scheldt, with ceremonies in Westkapelle and Vlissingen.

December 2024: Coverage of the Battle of the Bulge commemorations in Bastogne and the Ardennes.

January 2025: Attendance at the reopening of the Memorial Centre Apeldoornsche Bosch and the national commemorations in Amsterdam for International Holocaust Memorial Day.

April and May 2025: Intensified reporting around Nationale Dodenherdenking, Bevrijdingsdag (4–5 May), and '80 Jaar Vrijheid', with coverage from Amsterdam, Drenthe, Holten War Cemetery, Apeldoorn Liberation Festival, the Drenthe Liberty Tour, and Tilburg, including the opening of an art exhibition by Studio Herinner.

August 2025: Publication of an article reflecting on the end of the war in Indonesia, provided by the 4 and 5 Mei Committee, and a video from Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, further broadening the historical and geographical scope of the campaign.

The interviews and event reports were translated into a wide range of outputs, including articles, social media posts, short-form videos, and photo series. This content was published primarily on the Europe Remembers Instagram and Facebook channels in English, Dutch, French, and German, ensuring broad European accessibility. Selected content was further amplified through paid social media campaigns to increase visibility during key commemorative moments and sustain engagement beyond organic reach.





Partnerships

Europe Remembers would not have been possible without the dedication, collaboration, and support of our partners from across Europe. From the outset, the LRE Foundation worked with its network to build a strong list of museums, municipalities, remembrance committees, veterans' organisations, and cultural institutions. iThanks to these successful collaborations, the campaign reached such a wide and diverse audience.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Vfonds, who believed in the Europe Remembers project from the very beginning and provided crucial strategic support that helped bring the campaign to life.

We are very grateful to all the institutions which supported us along the way, helping share historical events, stories, and commemorations with audiences across Europe.

We also want to thank all our European Co-Initiators and Supporters who joined the campaign:

Provincie Zeeland

Provincie Noord-Brabant

BASTOGNE MEMORIAL
WORLD WAR II REFERENCE CENTER

RÉGION NORMANDIE

NORMANDIE TOURISME

provincie Gelderland

Europe Remembers

Campaign results

Over the course of the campaign, Europe Remembers significantly expanded public engagement with Second World War history. The international social media awareness campaign reached more than 7 million people across Europe, reinforcing messages of peace, reconciliation, and freedom while strengthening appreciation for democratic values and the rule of law.

Since the launch of the website, 802 events have been listed by 113 partners. Traffic sources were well balanced, with 34.8% organic search, 33.1% paid social, 20.8% direct traffic, and 11.3% combined paid search, organic social, and referrals.

Social media played a central role in amplifying campaign visibility and partner activities, engaging more than 2.5 million accounts across six platforms. In total, 58 video reports were produced, resulting in 155 multilingual videos published on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. These videos generated over 2.2 million views, significantly enhancing storytelling impact and international reach.

Together, these results demonstrate the effectiveness of the Europe Remembers digital and on-site approach in connecting historical events with contemporary audiences and supporting reflection, understanding, and dialogue.



CAMPAIGN INSIGHTS

2.5 M+ ACCOUNTS REACHED
in total

155 VIDEOS PUBLISHED
across all Social Media channels

2.2 M+ VIEWS

WEBSITE INSIGHTS

233 K+ UNIQUE USERS
in 2025

24 K+ PAGES VIEWED

186 K UNIQUE USERS

Future development and conclusion

With the conclusion of the 80th anniversary period in 2025, Europe Remembers successfully fulfilled its mission to commemorate the end of World War II. Through strategic partnerships, digital tools, and extensive event coverage, the campaign increased knowledge of WWII, honoured the contributions of veterans, and reinforced the importance of peace, reconciliation, and democratic values.



Beyond its immediate impact, the campaign fostered durable cross-border collaboration among museums, municipalities, veterans' associations, and cultural institutions. These networks provide a strong foundation for future cooperation in heritage, education, and remembrance initiatives.

Looking ahead, Europe Remembers remains committed to expanding its reach, deepening engagement with younger audiences, and ensuring that the lessons of history continue to inspire reflection and responsibility in future generations. The project stands as a lasting contribution to a shared European culture of remembrance and dialogue.



Projects & events

Co-funded by the European Union

Preserving the Past, Securing the Future

The “Preserving the Past, Securing the Future: A Sustainable Approach to Cultural and Remembrance Heritage” (PPSF) project supports the development of sustainable practices among stakeholders within the WWII cultural heritage and remembrance tourism sectors. Designed with our members and partners in mind, the project provides reliable information, training and tools to better understand what sustainable practices are possible and how to integrate these into their own organizations.

The PPSF project features a complete capacity-building Training Programme, combining e-learning modules, expert-led workshops and study visits, peer learning and mentoring. These activities provide practical tools to implement environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Beyond operational support, PPSF aims to foster a community of practitioners committed to responsible WWII memory tourism. Another output is the co-creation of a report of Sustainable Tourism Practices, detailing research into sustainability in the sector, policy recommendations and good examples. A closing conference for the project in 2026 will also present this output.

The project seeks to ensure that remembrance sites remain relevant and resilient – honouring the past while embracing today’s social and ecological challenges.



AI Remembers

In 2025, we hosted the first of three public events connected to the “AI Remembers” project during the LRE Forum 2025 in Krakow. The event brought together more than 50 participants to discuss the project’s vision and share earlier experiences with artificial intelligence in the field of memory heritage. This exchange highlighted both the opportunities and challenges of integrating AI into practices of remembrance and historical preservation.

The initial phase of the project also included evaluations and testing of AI tools, carried out in close collaboration with the LRE Foundation network. These first experiments provided valuable insights into how AI can support the safeguarding of collective memory, from analysing archival materials to enhancing accessibility for future generations.

In 2026, additional workshops and public presentations are going to be to be held in Belgium (University of Antwerp) and Normandy (University of Caen). A series of webinars on the topics will also be freely accessible to a wide audience at the end of 2026.

In April, the tailor-made AI tools will be integrated into the Liberation Route Europe digital environment, first to be used by the LRE Foundation’s team before working on an AI updated user experience for the audiences of the app and website.



Art of Remembrance

The "Art of Remembrance" project links contemporary art with Second World War remembrance, offering a platform for creative dialogue about the past. By inviting artists to reflect on the stories of the Second World War through innovative works, the project connects audiences to this chapter of history in meaningful and unexpected ways. It highlights the power of art to spark reflection and foster a deeper understanding of how the past shapes the present and future and aims to ensure that the memory of the Second World War remains relevant and accessible across generations and borders.

At the heart of the project are artist residencies hosted at four key WWII remembrance sites in Europe. Each site offers a unique historical context, from the deportations and resilience of Polish citizens at the Sybir Memorial Museum in Białystok, Poland, to the technological dimensions of war at La Coupole History Centre in France.

In Italy, the Nuto Revelli Foundation focuses on the stories of Italian partisans in the hamlet of Paraloup, while the city of Bastogne and the Bastogne War Museum in Belgium reflect on the decisive events of the Battle of the Bulge. These residencies allow artists to immerse themselves in the rich archives, artifacts, and community narratives of each location, creating site-specific works that reinterpret the history of WWII.

Alongside the travelling exhibition curated by Tempora (Belgium), the project engages with local local communities through workshops, public events, and educational initiatives. These activities aim to inspire dialogue and encourage younger generations to explore history through the lens of contemporary art. By bringing together contemporary art and historical narratives, it encourages audiences to reflect critically on history and its enduring lessons.

Started at the end of 2024, the Art of Remembrance project achieved several major milestones in 2025. The call for artists was closed, and an international jury convened to review submissions, ultimately selecting four artists from a pool of 190 candidates. The selected artists then began their residencies throughout the year, supported by a series of workshops introducing their creative process to local communities.

Active Remembrance Youth Program

Continuing the Active Remembrance Youth Program in 2025 saw the LRE Foundation team and its national branches carry out seven more youth exchanges across Europe throughout the year. This project, co-funded by the EU, aims to encourage and inspire young Europeans to engage in active learning by conducting interviews, curating historical content, and creating podcasts and videos, all of which will contribute to a final online exhibition.

Battle of the Bulge and the Breakthrough to Germany (February 2025)

This exchange brought young people interested in keeping history alive to four countries in five days, making it the most intense out of all the seven ARYP exchanges in 2025. The journey started in the small German Belgian border village Roetgen, where remains of the Siegfried Line serve as reminders of the effort to defend Germany towards the end of the Second World War. The next day was spent at Vogelsang International Place, a former Nazi training site with a dark legacy that has been transformed into a place of remembrance and education.

Crossing into Luxembourg, the group visited the Centre Cinqfontaines, a former convent that was used as an internment centre for the Jewish population of Luxemburg during WWII. The next day, the trail of history led the group deeper into Luxembourg with a visit to the Schumann's Eck Memorial Trail with its newly unveiled Vector of Remembrance. This impressive site vividly reimages the echoes of the Battle of the Bulge. The exchange was rounded off by a visit to the Bastogne War Museum in Belgium and a guided tour in the caves of Maastricht, where artworks were hidden by the German occupiers during the Allied air raids.





Resistance in Italy and France (March/April 2025)

This exchanges' first visits were to the Casa della Memoria (House of Memory) and the Memorial of the Shoah in Milan, Italy. These sites allowed the group to explore the history of the resistance in Milan, guided by the researchers at the Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri and to learn about the point of deportation of the city's Jewish population underneath the Central Station. After a guided Second World War tour of Milan's city centre by historian and LRE Italy scientific committee coordinator Mirco Carrattieri, it was an amazing experience to be surrounded by nature in the peaceful Garden of the Righteous of the World.

The second part of the exchange started in the Croix Rousse neighbourhood in Lyon, France, where the participants were introduced to the history of Lyon during the Second World War and the local resistance movement. The exchange ended in Lyon's History Centre for Resistance and Deportation, where we sat down with Hélène Akierman, who gave a touching testimony of her family's war history and her experience as a hidden child.

Liberation from Normandy to Paris (June 2025)

D-Day and the Battle of Normandy were the main themes of the fourth youth exchange, which took place in France. Beginning in Caen, tour guide Cécile Belland introduced the historical background of the Allied landings on the beaches of Normandy. Later that day, the group visited the Airborne Museum in Sainte-Mère-Église, where they learned about the paratroopers who landed in Northern France 81 years ago.

Other museums explored in the following days included the D-Day Museum Arromanches, the Juno Beach Centre in Courseulles-sur-Mer with its bunkers in the dunes, and the Museum of the Order of Liberation, located in the famous Hôtel National des Invalides in Paris.

Some of the touching stories of soldiers buried at the Normandy American Military Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer and the German Military Cemetery in La Cambe served as inspiration for participants to turn them into creative podcasts, videos and historical texts. These stories are now displayed on the Liberation Route Europe website, where they will not be forgotten and continue to transmit the legacy of WWII to a wider audience.

The organisation of the exchanges in France was supported by the French Liberation Mission (Mission Libération) created to promote projects and organise events for the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in France.







Operation Market Garden (September 2025)

The first youth exchange in September titled “Operation Market Garden” started in Leopoldsburg, Belgium, where a new group of young history enthusiasts had the opportunity to step into the shoes of the liberators and to learn more about the ground part of the operation. The next day was spent at Nationaal Monument Kamp Vught, where people of 36 different nationalities were held prisoner between 1943 and October 1944.

At the Freedom Museum in Groesbeek, the group learned more about the local airborne landings in September 1944. A special highlight was the temporary exhibition “Indigenous Liberators” that showed Native American, First Nation and Métis soldiers’ involvement in the liberation of the Netherlands, as part of U.S. and Canadian troops. There was also time to see the Airborne Museum Hartenstein, where the Battle of Arnhem comes alive in the personal stories of soldiers, as well as the immersive Airborne Experience.





Liberation of Northern France and Belgium (September 2025)

During the “Liberation from Northern France to Belgium” exchange, another group of young people travelled to more key sites of the liberation in Western Europe.
The first visit took place at the La Coupole History Centre near Saint-Omer, France, in an immense bunker complex, from where the Germans planned to launch V2 rockets aimed at London and other Allied cities. The exhibitions also tell the story of German occupation of France during the Second World War and the history of space exploration.

The next day focused on Operation Dynamo, starting with the museum dedicated to the topic in Dunkirk, which brings to life the impressive evacuation of 338,226 Allied soldiers from the local beaches between 26 May and 4 June 1940. A guided walking tour around the city revealed more about the occupation and liberation of Dunkirk, as well as the filming locations of the movie “Dunkirk” (2017).
Later the journey continued to Mons, Belgium, and finished at the House of European History in Brussels.

Co-funded by the European Union

Resistance and Diverse War Experiences in Italy (September/October 2025)

The seventh youth exchange of the Active Remembrance Youth Program (ARYP) took place in Italy. Over five days, young international participants visited several sites in two very different locations: the capital city of Rome and the mountains of Marzabotto, where they learned about Italy’s WWII history.

The exchange started at the EcoMuseum in Rome, where participants received an introduction to the history of Rome in the 1940s. It was the chance to learn more about the Italian resistance and partisans at the Historical Museum of Liberation, while standing in authentically preserved cells of former prisoners. At the Ardeatine Caves Memorial, the site of a German massacre killing 335 civilians, the group listened to a testimony from Irma Prosperi, a woman whose four family members, including her father, had lost their lives in the caves.

On the way to the last destination, there was a stop at the German Cemetery of the Futa Pass, the final resting place of over 30,000 German soldiers. Monte Sole Historical Park bears the tragic memory of one of the largest civilian massacres of the Second World War. As an act of remembrance, the group had the opportunity to be present during the installation of a Vector of Memory.

From Poland to Berlin (October 2025)

The last youth exchange in 2025, co-organized by LRE Germany and LRE Poland, revolved around the Polish border town Kostrzyn nad Odrą, which was known in German as Küstrin before its complete destruction in 1945. Kostrzyn’s turbulent history was introduced during a guided walk through the ruins of the old town, showing exactly why it is known as “Pompeii on the Oder”. There was also the opportunity to visit the Kostrzyn Fortress Museum and the cemetery for the former Stalag III-C prisoner camp nearby.

The German Polish border region on both sides of the river Oder has seen heavy fighting during the final months of the Second World War, most notably during the Battle of Berlin. The Museum of Martyrdom in Słońsk (until 1945: Sonnenburg) documents the atrocities committed in the former heavy security prison and concentration camp that was located in the town. The next day started with a guided walk through the “Theatre of War Castle Klessin” memorial on the German side of the border, followed by a visit of the German War Cemetery Lietzen. The nearby Seelow Heights Memorial commemorates the biggest WWII battle on German soil, the Battle of Seelow Heights, which took place from 16 to 19 April 1945.



LRE United Kingdom

In 2025, LRE UK has continued to grow gaining national and local recognition with the BBC. Spring saw our second year of collaboration with the University of Portsmouth in which students created two new themed routes in Hampshire and Devon.

In the summer, a second Duke of Edinburgh expedition took place in the New Forest, Hampshire, where young adults explored the area and its WWII history over several days. The LRE UK has been instrumental in dialogue that has seen closer collaboration between LRE branches, offering support, guidance and advice between each other making our connections stronger.

LRE Germany

This year, LRE Germany was responsible for the co-organisation of two Active Remembrance Youth Programme exchanges. The first one took place in February in Aachen and the Hürtgen Forest and the second one in October on the other side of the country, where a group of young history enthusiasts visited Seelow, Lietzen and Klessin in Brandenburg as well as Berlin.

The board of the association came together in Torgau in April and in Remagen in October to discuss further steps and network development opportunities. The association has now obtained the status as a German non-profit organization. Discussions are ongoing with museums and memorial sites in the Emsland region to continue the Polish routes of liberation from the German Dutch border via the Emsland to East Frisia.

LRE France

LRE France was involved in numerous projects this year which has been very enriching and enabled the branch to get in touch with new contacts. We pursued the development of our network and went on the road to meet with new partners in Northern and Southern France, resulting in 3 new members joining our network this year.

This brings the total number of members to 20 after three years of operations in France. LRE France coordinated the French part of the new REFOOT itinerary launched in June. Another big part of this year's activities was the organisation of three youth exchanges for the ARYP project, bringing young people from across Europe to France's WWII remembrance sites.

LRE Poland

LRE Poland co-organized the LRE Forum 2025 in Kraków, held under the patronage of the Mayor of Kraków and the Jagiellonian University. The Forum included sessions and site visits across the region, connecting international participants with local history. Beyond the Forum, expertise and support were provided for several local projects, and new cooperation agreements were signed for the first time in the Silesian region.

LRE Poland also co-organized the ARYP youth exchange across the Polish German border in October and started active social media communication, expanding the reach of educational and remembrance activities.

LRE Italy

In 2025, we also continued our recruitment efforts, which have resulted in a total of 29 LRE Italy members to date. Together with our members, we focused on the enhancement and promotion of memorial sites by organizing visits to places of remembrance.

Additionally, LRE Italy is a partner in the "LRE Active Remembrance Youth Programme," a project funded by the European Commission. In 2025, we organized two exchanges as part of the program: one in Milan and Lyon, in collaboration with LRE France, and another in Italy (Lazio, Tuscany, and Emilia-Romagna), involving over 30 young people.

LRE Italy also participated, alongside other members, in the presentation of three books related to the Gothic Line. These included "Linea Gotica. Storia, storie e memorie dell'ultimo fronte di guerra in Italia" (author Massimo Turchi, Publisher Diarkos), during several events organized to present the books.

Furthermore, LRE Italy organized the "Liberation Talks," a series of in-depth meetings to discuss history with prominent historians from the Italian scene. The meetings are moderated by the head of the scientific committee of LRE Italy and are available both on the Zoom platform, where participants can interact with the speakers, and live on our Facebook page.



The LRE Foundation maintains continuous contact with news media from different 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. Here you can find a selection of news articles from all over Europe highlighting our initiatives.

EL INDEPENDIENTE

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INTERNACIONAL

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ITINERARI E LUOGHI

Ottant'anni dalla Liberazione: i luoghi da visitare per il 25 aprile

di Fulvio Bertamini 15 Aprile 2025

Un anniversario importante da trascorrere nei posti che hanno fatto la storia della Resistenza: da Monte Sole a Sant'Anna di Stazzema, dalla Val Borbera a Lipari. In occasione degli ottant'anni dalla Liberazione, ecco quali sono i luoghi della memoria da visitare



1 / 8 - I cammini e i luoghi che hanno fatto la storia della Resistenza italiana

Il prossimo 25 aprile si celebreranno ottant'anni dalla Liberazione dell'Italia. Un anniversario da vivere nei luoghi dove la Resistenza ha combattuto e che nel tempo sono diventati un "culto" per l'antifascismo. La mappa degli itinerari è molto ampia e attraversa per intero lo Stivale: dal Monte Caucaso, passando per Monte Sole, fino a Lipari.

Che siano percorsi da fare a piedi o musei da visitare, vale la pena trascorrere questa giornata nel ricordo di chi diede il proprio sangue per la libertà. Memoria che, nel tempo, si è arricchita di nuove strade con il progetto *Liberation Route Europe*, o di nuovi simboli. Come l'enorme murales in via Plezzo, a Lambrate, che raffigura alcuni dei protagonisti della Resistenza.



Gordon Johnson kwam om op de dag waarop Zutphen werd bevrijd

Leerlingen van de Jacobus Fruytier scholengemeenschap in Rijssen onthulden maandagmiddag samen met gedeputeerde Hoogland bij de Canadese Begraafplaats Holten een Vector of Memory.

REPORTAGE CANADESE OORLOGSBEGRAAFPLAATS HOLTEN

Fruytierleerlingen leggen verhalen bevrijders vast

• L. Vegelaar

Van Normandië tot Noordoost-Groningen is de opmars van de bevrijders in 1944-1945 nu van stap tot stap te volgen. Maandag is het laatste deel van dit traject in de Liberation Route Europe in gebruik genomen. Met een eerbetoon door Fruytierleerlingen.

Overijssel was de laatste ontbrekende schakel in de wandelroutes tussen Juno Beach–het strand in het Franse Normandië waar de Canadezen landden- en de kust van de Waddenzee. Nu is het spoor van de bevrijders ook in deze provincie na te gaan, via de Canadian Trail.

In een bosrooi vaalbje bij het informatiecentrum van de Canadese Begraafplaats Holten oefelt een video over de opmars van de geallieerden door Oost- en Noord Nederland in het voorjaar van 1945 in Kamp Westerbork werden 850 Joden bevrijd. Voor vele andere kwam de bevrijding te laat.

Hardnekkig vertrot van de Duitsers kostte honderden Canadezen het leven. Hier in de bossen bij Holten kregen ze een graf. De Overijsselse gedeputeerde Erwin Hoogland richt zich tot de leerlingen van de Jacobus Fruytier scholengemeenschap in Rijssen die achterin staan: „De soldaten waren maar een paar jaar ouder dan jullie."

Hoogland was 47 jaar militair en weet uitgezonden naar Bosnië, Macedonië, Irak en Afghanistan. „Daar leer je dat vrede een kostbaar goed is. Het is belangrijk dat mensen zich daarvoor willen inzetten." Honderden Canadezen die naar Europa kwamen om er vrede te brengen, gaven er hun leven voor. „Die verhalen moeten we doorgeven." Ook als les voor nu: de gedeputeerde noemt Oekraïne, Gaza en brandhaarden „overal ter wereld".

Profielwerkstuk

Het informatiecentrum wil van alle 1394 militairen die in Holten begraven liggen, een foto en een verhaal. Dat is nog maar voor een deel gelukt. De Rijssense Fruytier-vestiging levert er een bijdrage aan. Al negen jaar kiezen leerlingen van havo 4 een slachtoffer tot onderwerp van hun profielwerkstuk. Ze worden zoveel geleid in het informatiecentrum, dat ban het dossier over die militair overhandigt. Ze gaan vervolgens op zoek naar informatie die het verhaal completeer maakt: wat is zijn levensgeschiedenis, welke route legde hij af en hoe kwam hij om?

De scholieren presenteren de resultaten vervolgens in het bezoekerscentrum. „Ik krijg elk jaar meer aanmeldingen dan dat ik leerlingen kan plaatsen", zegt docente Janina Lensink. Inmiddels zijn al bijna honderd werkstukken toegevoegd aan de database van de oorlogsbegraafplaats.

Bij de grafstenen van Gordon F. Johnson tot oud-leerlinge Joanne Struijk het verhaal samen dat ze schreef over deze Canadees. Hij was 33 jaar toen hij omkwam door vijandelijk vuur: „Tragisch genoeg op de dag waarop Zutphen werd bevrijd." En de aanleiding was ook wat tragisch. Johnson ging een antitankwapen ophalen dat door een andere soldaat was vergeten. Hij kreeg een graf in Holten; zijn vrouw zag hem nooit terug.

Zwijgend kijken de leerlingen naar de steen waarbij ze zojuist bloemen hebben gelegd. Een steen met een naam en een datum. En nu ook met een verhaal.

Samen met gedeputeerde Hoogland ontbulden de leerlingen een monument dat ze hebben gaakkoperd: een Vector of Memory, een metalen plaat vol informatie, met een QR code die nog meer gegevens verschaft. Ontwerper is Daniel Libeskind, de Pools-Joodse architect die ook het Holocaust Namenmonument in Amsterdam, het Joods Museum in Berlijn en de Vrijheidstoren in New York ontwierp.

Schril contrast

Meer dan 10 000 kilometer aan wandelroutchten is er inmiddels langs de trajecten die de geallieerden afleggen tijdens de bevrijding van West-Europa. In Overijssel gaat het om drie routes, in totaal ruim 450 kilometer, met vijf rondwandelingen en honderd verhalen.

„De mooie omgeving staat in schril contrast met wat hier gebeurd is", zegt Jurriaan de Mol. Hij bedacht de Liberation Route achtiem jaar geleden. Inmiddels zijn meer dan tien Europese landen erbij betrokken, naast Canada en Amerika. Meer dan 200 regenstiers werken samen in het doorvertellen van de bevrijdingsverhalen.

Ook De Mol vertwijgt naar de actualiteit. „Wat doen wij om onze vrijheid te beschermen? We gaan daarover graag met de jongere generaties in gesprek."



Docente Lensink legt een bloem bij de grafstaven van Gordon Frederick Johnson.

liberationroute.com

Peter Schat
peter.schat@mediahuis.nl

650 kilometer lopen en fietsen langs Atlantikwall

Huisduinen ■ Met de overhandiging van het eerste bordje van het Atlantikwallpad is woensdag bij het Atlantikwallcentrum in Huisduinen dit nieuwe ruim 650 kilometer lange wandel- en fietspad door Nederland gelanceerd.



Audrey Satoer van het Atlantikwallcentrum in Huisduinen krijgt de eerste 'vector of memory' van Gert-Jan Jacobs (LRE Foundation). FOTO MEDIAHUIS / PETER SCHAT

Hoewel, nieuw... Eigenlijk maakt het pad gebruik van vijf bestaande routes door evenzoveel provincies, in Zuid-Holland over 150 kilometer en in Noord-Holland over 180. „We komen waar het kan en niet waar het niet mag", verduidelijkt Gert-Jan Jacobs van de Liberation Route Europe Foundation.

Zijn organisatie is actief in vijftien Europese landen en heeft in zeven vestigingen. Waaronder Nederland, waar het initiatief ooit begon rond Arnhem en Nijmegen. De plaatsen waar in 1944 zo fel gevochten is om de bevrijding van ons land.

De LRE richt zich op toegankelijk maken van en betekenis geven aan erfgoed uit de Tweede Wereldoorlog. De door de Duitse bezetters gebouwde Atlantikwall, waarvan de betonnen restanten en sporen zijn terug te vinden van het Franse Biarritz tot hoog langs de Noorse kust,

> We komen waar het kan en niet waar het niet mag

Route Europe, erkend door de Raad van Europa en voerend langs uiteenlopend erfgoed dat herinnert aan de Tweede Wereldoorlog.

Monumenten

Wie ze volgt komt langs musea, begraafplaatsen en monumenten. Het Atlantikwallpad voegt daar in ons land Wiederstandsneste, Stützpunktgroppen, Festungen en Ver-

Rocznicowe uroczystości w Kostrzynie

Krzysztof Matusiak — 2025-03-30 18:20

Travel trade

This year the LRE Foundation has continued to promote our members and partners at international travel trade events across Europe, strengthening and forging new relationships with the industry. These events are key in raising the profile of the Liberation Route Europe hiking and cycling trails as a sustainable touristic offer, allowing us to connect with Tour Operators and promote our annual LREXPO and FAM Trips.

LREXPO

LREXPO took place within the LRE Forum 2025, organised by LRE Foundation and LRE Poland. We welcomed over 130 attendees, bringing 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.

Guide network

LREF has established a dedicated guide network to recruit and support battlefield guides who interpret the heritage of the Liberation Route to visitors from across the world. The Guide Network ensures high-quality WWII tours and strengthens the on-the-ground visibility of LREF at key heritage locations. Throughout the year, numerous visits by press representatives and travel trade stakeholders were accompanied by LRE Guides, and international tour operators consulted by LREF were actively connected to the network.

In 2025, five new guides were welcomed to the international LRE Guide Network, further expanding its reach and capacity. In addition, two online meetings were organised to facilitate knowledge exchange and coordination among guides within the international network.



In 2025, the LREF Team attended the following events:

ETOA ADVENTURE EUROPE

In November, LREF participated in an online B2B networking event organised by the European Tourism Association (ETOA), and The Adventure Connection. This marketplace connects European and North American tour operators with suppliers offering authentic, off-the-beaten-track experiences, including outdoor activities, accommodation, and travel services.

CYCLE SUMMIT 2025

In October, we attended the CycleSummit 2025 in Constance, Germany. This annual event brings together more than 200 cycling tour operators from across Europe and beyond. LREF introduced tour operators to the Liberation Route Europe network of hiking and cycling trails, highlighting its potential to enrich cycling itineraries with stories of remembrance at the sites where they happened.

ETOA GLOBAL EUROPEAN MARKETPLACE

LREF also took part in ETOA's Global European Marketplace 2025 (GEM) in London, UK, one of the most influential annual events in the travel industry. With more than 800 travel industry professionals participating, GEM serves as a key platform for networking, business exchange, and collaboration.

LREF participated both at the GEM Workshop in October at the Intercontinental London – The O2, and the GEM Conference on 3 November at The Mermaid Theatre. These discussions and exchanges help foster collaborations and position the Liberation Route Europe trails within a broader network of European tourism partners and industry leaders.

LRE Network



The LRE 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 9th edition and the number of participants has grown every year, with the LRE Forum becoming a central networking event within the World War II heritage sector.

The LRE Forum 2025 in Kraków, Poland, started on 10 March with a Welcome Cocktail at the Galicia Jewish Museum, located in the historic former Jewish district Kazimierz. The following day, two parallel workshops were held on the topics of sustainable practices in WWII heritage tourism and the role of AI technology in WWII history education and memory preservation. In total, over 200 participants gathered in Kraków to participate in this year's Forum activities.

In the afternoon of 11 March, the annual LRE Conference took place at the Jagiellonian University's Collegium Novum. This year's theme "Resistance to Oblivion: Preserving WWII Memories and Lessons for Future Generations" addressed important issues related to memory education and the preservation of WWII heritage. The keynote speech was held by Yuriy Savchuk, the Director of the National Museum of Ukraine in the Second World War.

The day was rounded off with a Gala Dinner for all network members at the Home Army Museum in Kraków.

The tourism trade fair LRExpo took place on 12 March, providing members of the LRE Foundation with extensive networking opportunities. This event allows our members and partners to share ideas and best practices, as well as to explore new collaborations with tourism institutions aiming to expand their offer into new destinations. In the afternoon, participants had the opportunity to take part in a guided tour through the former Kraków ghetto and a visit to Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory Museum.

The LRE Forum 2025 ended on 13 March with a site visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and State Museum in Oświęcim, Poland, one of the most important places preserving the memory of Nazi crimes committed during the Second World War. A record number of around 100 participants took advantage of the opportunity to visit this important Holocaust memorial site. The visit was a fitting end to a week full of insightful experiences and new relationships formed in the context of WWII heritage and remembrance.

New Members 2025

ITALY

Istituto Alcide Cervi

Fondazione Campus Studi del Mediterrano

Comune di Guardistallo (PI)

FINLAND

Miehikkälä Municipality

City of Kuhmo

Ilomantsi Tourism Association

ALBANIA

Tirana Regional Council

CROATIA

V Commandos

UNITED KINGDOM

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

GERMANY

Landschaftsbibliothek Aurich
Ostfriesische Landschaft

POLAND

University of Wrocław

BELGIUM

Les Territoires de la Mémoire

FRANCE

Trait d'union Patrimoine

Museum of Resistance in Bondues

Urban Community Terre des 2 Caps

GREECE

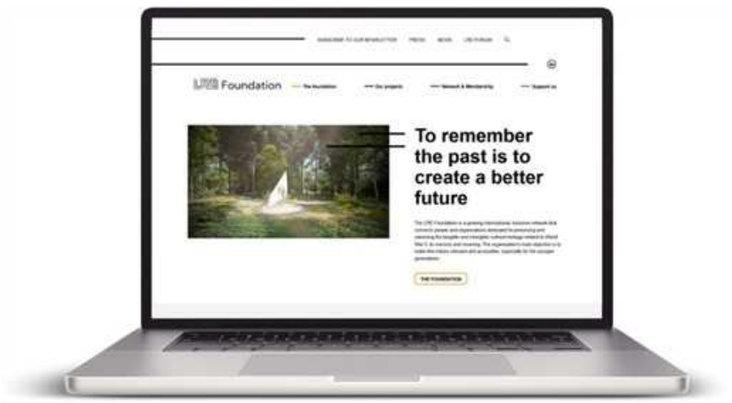
Municipality of Pilea-Hortiatis

Municipality of Ioannina



Website

LRE Foundation



The LRE Foundation website offers an in-depth overview of the Foundation's activities and projects. In 2025, we have added many 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

WEBSITE INSIGHTS

24K+ UNIQUE VISITORS IN 2025

Newsletter



The LRE Foundation newsletter provides an overview of the Foundation's activities and updates. Shared on a monthly basis, it is a convenient way for LRE Foundation Members and Partners to keep track of all our activities and updates.

NEWSLETTER INSIGHTS

20 K+ EMAIILS SENT IN 2022

3265+ SUBSCRIBERS

7 NEWSLETTERS PER YEAR

Sign up for the LRE Foundation newsletter via the website or the QR code on the left.

Social Media

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

Join us on LinkedIn
@lrefoundation

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

Join us on BlueSky
@lrefoundation.bsky.social

2026 Preview

In the coming year, we will work with members and regional governments to continue developing the Liberation Route Europe hiking trails and the LRE Network into new regions.

Forum 2026

The LRE Forum 2026 will be held in Arnhem and Nijmegen in the Netherlands from 9 to 12 March. LRE Foundation members, partners and tourism representatives can expect to gain insight into a wide range of WWII topics during the conference and workshops. The annual LRExpo will provide the opportunity for WWII-related organisations, tourism and cultural heritage institutions and travel trade operators to foster new relationships. The site visits will give participants meaningful insights into the Gelderland' WWII history and liberation.

A new aspect of next year's edition will be the Youth Forum which will take place in Nijmegen from 2 to 3 March 2026. Young participants will take part in interactive workshops focusing on how today's youth perceive the legacy of the Second World War and the relevance of today's remembrance practices and commemorations. These new ideas and perspectives will be shared at the LRE Conference the following week.



AI Remembers

Looking ahead to 2026, we are preparing two more events in the context of this project that will deepen the exploration of how artificial intelligence can enrich our understanding of WWII history and support us with memory transmission for future generations. We will develop tools that respect the legacy of the past, and therefore align with strong ethical principles, ensuring that we provide trustworthy information to the public.

The first event "Ctrl-Alt-History: (Digital) Humanities meets AI" in Antwerp, Belgium, on 29 April 2026 will focus on the application of AI in medium-scale projects. The second event "Ethics and Trust in AI Usage", to be held in Caen, Normandy, in fall 2026 will address the crucial theme of Trustworthy AI. Together, these milestones mark an evolving journey where technology and memory intersect, shaping new ways to preserve, interpret, and share our collective past.

Last ARYP exchange PL–CZ and online exhibition

The last exchange of the Active Remembrance Youth Program will take place in Poland and the Czech Republic. At the end of February 2026, young history enthusiasts will have the chance to visit important sites of Polish and Czech WWII history with us, such as the Plaszow Concentration Camp Memorial, the Zámeček Memorial, and the city centres of Krakow and Prague.

Participants will work on videos, podcasts and historical research inspired by the stories they hear about at the different locations. The results will be showcased in an online exhibition together with all the content created during the eight previous youth exchanges. A documentary about all nine ARYP youth exchanges will be published on the dedicated youth website.

Preserving the Past, Securing the Future

In 2026, the PPSF Training Programme will take place. This includes three in-person workshops and study visits across Europe (France, Poland and Italy), focusing on the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability and including study visits to Juno Beach Centre (France) and the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk (Poland). This will be accompanied by peer-learning and mentoring. At the end of the year, a closing conference in Brussels will present the project outputs and future recommendations for boosting sustainability within the WWII remembrance tourism sector.

Art of Remembrance Travelling Exhibition

In early 2026 the four artists selected for the Art of Remembrance project will complete the creation of their artworks. They will then be presented to the LRE Network on the occasion of the LRE Forum 2026 Opening Event in Nijmegen on 9 March 2026. Hosted at the House of Nijmegen History, this will be the opportunity for a public audience to see the outcome of the project and join creative workshops on the topic of WWII remembrance.

Afterwards, the artworks will be part of a travelling exhibition that will be displayed in all four original host sites in Poland, Italy, France and Belgium. Starting in November 2026, the exhibition is available for the members of our network. If you are interested in hosting the exhibition at your institution, please get in touch with us.

Erasmus Youth Ambassadors

The EU-funded LRE Youth Ambassadors Network project was launched in November 2025, with the next phase in 2026 focusing on recruiting young people aged 15 to 30 from diverse backgrounds across Europe to deepen their historical knowledge and actively contribute to WWII remembrance. The year will also consist of the preparation of in-person events, online training sessions, and coordinated communication strategies to strengthen partnerships and broaden the reach of educational and civic activities.

Organisation

“During my time as a member of the German Bundestag, I have always been committed to the politics of remembrance. Only those who know the past can shape the future. I was happy to take on the chairmanship of the LRE Foundation’s Supervisory Board in order to play an even more intensive role in strengthening the impact of the LRE Foundation in European remembrance policy.”

–Dietmar Nietan
Chairman of the LRE Foundation

New Chairman of the Supervisory Board

Dietmar Nietan

The LRE Foundation is proud to announce the appointment of Dietmar Nietan as the new Chairman of its International Supervisory Board. A former member of the German Parliament, Mr. Nietan has served as Coordinator for German-Polish Intersocietal and Cross-Border Cooperation on behalf of the German Foreign Office and as Chair of the Federal Association of the German-Polish Society.

Today, Mr. Nietan continues this work as a trustee of the Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future – EVZ” in Germany and of the Foundation for the International Youth Meeting Centre in Oświęcim/Auschwitz in Poland. A dedicated member of the LRE Foundation’s Supervisory Board for several years, he brings deep expertise and an enduring passion for preserving the memory and lessons of the Second World War.



As we welcome our new chairman, we also reaffirm our commitment to the Foundation’s mission. His leadership reflects the spirit of remembrance and cooperation that defines the LRE Foundation. We offer our deepest gratitude to Ed Kronenburg for his dedication and vision, and we look ahead to a new chapter focused on keeping memory alive for future generations, fostering transnational dialogue and peace.

New Historical Advisory Board Members

Dr. Jana Wohlmuth Markupová



Dr. Jana Wohlmuth Markupová is an Assistant Professor of Oral History and Contemporary History at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague, where she has played a key role in academic activities for almost a decade. She currently serves as Chairperson of the Czech Oral History Association, Member of the Editorial Board of Biography Studies, and Member of the Academic Senate of the Faculty of Humanities.

Dr. Wohlmuth Markupová is the author and co-author of numerous academic publications. Her scholarship often bridges personal memory and collective experience, highlighting the value of individual stories in understanding broader historical processes.

For Dr. Wohlmuth Markupová, studying contemporary history – defined as the history since 1945 – does not mean moving away from the Second World War, but rather recognising how deeply it continues to shape the world we live in. As she explains, “it only emphasises the importance of reminding us of its impact on the world we live in, which we may tend to forget, as the last witnesses of these events leave, or rather have already left. I am happy that the LRE Foundation attempts to do just that, and I am excited to participate in these efforts as a member of the Historical Advisory Board.”

Dr. Sarah Gensburger



Dr. Sarah Gensburger is a Full Professor of Political Science, Sociology and History at the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) and Sciences Po Paris. Between 2021 and 2024, she served as President of the Memory Studies Association, the largest international scholarly network dedicated to memory research.

Bringing together political science and history, Dr. Gensburger’s research critically examines public policies of remembrance and their effects on society. As a historian, she is widely recognized for her work on the micro-history of the Holocaust in Paris, using space and geography to study social dynamics during times of crisis.

She is the author of fifteen books, including her latest publication, ”Appartements témoins. La spoliation des locataires juifs à Paris, 1940–1946 (La Découverte, 2025)”, co-written with Isabelle Backouche and Eric Le Bourhis. The book, which investigates the dispossession of Jewish tenants in wartime Paris, has been awarded the Albertine Translation Grant 2025.

Speaking about her involvement with the LRE Foundation, Dr. Gensburger notes: “We need to take stock of the European memory policies and their impact. In this regard, the LRE Foundation seems a perfect place to do so in the best possible way.”

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