



"Europe on the Ground" wins 2012 European Charlemagne Youth Prize

Ireland

"Europe on the Ground", a Greek youth media project, was awarded first prize at the 2012 Charlemagne Youth Prize ceremony on 15 May in Aachen. Second prize went to "Europe Meets School", an exchange programme for Erasmus students (Czech Republic) and the winner of the third prize was the "Cycle Me Home" project, a documentary road-movie (Hungary). The Charlemagne Youth Prize is awarded annually to projects that foster a shared sense of European identity and integration among young people.

The first prize was awarded by EP President Martin Schulz, the second by former EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering and the third by the Mayor of Aachen, Marcel Philip.

Greece - Europe on the Ground

EP President Martin Schulz said: "Personally, what I like about the 'Europe on the ground' project is that it makes cultural diversity in Europe tangible, promotes multilingualism and encourages the emergence of a European public. We need more European debates on European issues, if we want to strengthen European democracy. ... There is an increasing awareness of how much we depend on each other, how we are intertwined with each other. The Greek winner of the Charlemagne Youth Prize is helping to create a more European public. "

Europe on the Ground is an innovative youth media project that sends multicultural teams of over 50 young citizen journalists and amateur photographers to 10 European capitals each year. The young participants are given four days to write articles and produce photo galleries on subjects related to European culture and society. All contributions are then edited by professional journalists and published in six languages on the European online magazine www.cafebabel.com. The project aims to improve understanding between the people of Europe by making Europe more concrete for young citizens, and to use innovative forms of European journalism.

Czech Republic - Europe Meets School

In his speech on the runner-up, Europe Meets School, Prague, German MEP and former EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering said: "As a former President of the European Parliament, which represents over 500 million people from Belfast to Nicosia, from Tallin to Lisbon, nothing thrills me more than the commitment of today's young generation to a diverse and culturally rich Europe that fosters respect for others, driving forward and consolidating the process of European integration."

The programme Europe Meets School, Prague has existed since 2008/9 and has been enabling Erasmus students to meet children in Czech schools and learn more about the Czech school system while preparing a short voluntary teaching project in which they present their home country.

Hungary - Cycle Me Home

The Cycle me Home project (Hungary) won third prize This project started in 2011 with a documentary road movie made by film students and bike lovers travelling by bike from Madrid to Budapest. Its organisers want to create an interactive homepage, where all interested people can get involved with the project. They hope that the Cycle Me Home project can grow from a simple film project into a youth movement.

Press release

Awarding the third prize, the Mayor of Aachen, Marcel Philipp, said that the project was driven by the "notion of international understanding", adding: "The most important message of this beautiful and unconventional project is to bring people closer to each other".

Prize

The three winning projects will receive funding of €5,000, €3,000 and €2,000 respectively. Their representatives will also be invited to visit the European Parliament in the coming months.

Representatives of the 26 projects were invited to the award ceremony on 15 May in Aachen and were awarded a diploma and a medal.

The award ceremony was organised jointly by the European Parliament and the International Charlemagne Prize Foundation and was hosted by Aachen University.

Welcome speeches were given by EP President Martin Schulz, International Charlemagne Prize Foundation Chairman Michael Jansen and the Rector of Aachen University, Ernst Schmachtenberg.

Audiovisual material from the ceremony is available on request.

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