

The **Charlemagne Prize** (German: *Karlspreis*; full name originally *Internationaler Karlspreis der Stadt Aachen*, **International Charlemagne Prize of the City of Aachen**, since 1988 *Internationaler Karlspreis zu Aachen*, **International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen**) is a prize awarded for work done in the service of **European unification**. It has been awarded annually since 1950 by the **German** city of **Aachen**. It commemorates **Charlemagne**, ruler of the **Frankish Empire** and founder of what became the **Holy Roman Empire**, who resided and is buried at Aachen. Traditionally the award is given to the recipient on **Ascension Day** in a ceremony in the **town hall of Aachen**. In April 2008, the organisers of the Charlemagne Prize and the **European Parliament** jointly created a new **European Charlemagne Youth Prize**, which recognises contributions by young people towards the process of European integration. **Patrons** of the foundation are **King Philippe of Belgium**, **King Felipe VI of Spain**, and **Henri, the Grand Duke of Luxembourg**.<sup>[1]</sup>



Paul-Henri Spaak in the 1957 ceremony

On 19 December 1949, **Kurt Pfeiffer** presented to the reading group "Corona Legentium Aquensis", which he had founded, his proposals for the prize: "We have the honour of proposing annual presentation of an international prize for the most valuable contribution in the services of Western European understanding and work for the community, and in the services of humanity and world peace. This contribution may be in the field of literary, scientific, economic or political endeavour".

The sponsors of the prize, the City of Aachen, refer to Charlemagne as the "Founder of **Western Culture**", and assert that under his reign, the City of Aachen was once the spiritual and political centre of the whole of what is now **western Europe**.

The first Charlemagne Prize was awarded to **Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi**, the founder of the **Pan-European Movement**.

Following the presentation of the award to the Italian Prime Minister **Alcide de Gasperi** in 1952, the International Charlemagne Prize of the City of Aachen has repeatedly sent messages going far beyond Germany and promoting the "unity of Europe".

The award sponsors assert that the list of Charlemagne Prize winners reflects the history of the **European process of unification**. They continue that it has been awarded to the founding fathers of the **United Europe** such as **de Gasperi**, **Schuman**, **Monnet** and **Adenauer**, and to those who have embodied hope for integration such as **Edward Heath**, **Konstantinos Karamanlis**, and His Majesty **Juan Carlos I**.

The sponsors promote that the Charlemagne Prize is not only an expression of gratitude for lasting services for the unity of Europe, but also an encouragement and an expression of hopes and expectations directed towards the future. They quote **Kurt Pfeiffer**: "the Charlemagne Prize reaches into the future, and at the same time it embodies an obligation – an obligation of the highest ethical value. It is directed at a voluntary union of the European peoples without constraint, so that in their newfound strength they may defend the highest earthly goods – freedom, humanity and peace – and safeguard the future of their children and children's children".

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## Recipients

- 1950   **Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi**
- 1951   **Hendrik Brugmans**
- 1952   **Alcide de Gasperi**
- 1953   **Jean Monnet**
- 1954   **Konrad Adenauer**
- 1956   **Winston Churchill**
- 1957   **Paul Henri Spaak**
- 1958   **Robert Schuman**
- 1959   **George C. Marshall**
- 1960   **Joseph Bech**
- 1961   **Walter Hallstein**
- 1963   **Edward Heath**
- 1964   **Antonio Segni**
- 1966   **Jens Otto Krag**
- 1967   **Joseph Luns**
- 1969   **European Commission**
- 1970   **François Seydoux de Clausonne**
- 1972   **Roy Jenkins**
- 1973   **Salvador de Madariaga**
- 1976   **Leo Tindemans**
- 1977   **Walter Scheel**
- 1978   **Konstantinos Karamanlis**
- 1979   **Emilio Colombo**
- 1981   **Simone Veil**
- 1982   **Juan Carlos of Spain**
- 1984   **Karl Carstens**
- 1986   **The People of Luxembourg**
- 1987   **Henry Kissinger**
- 1988   **Helmut Kohl** and   **François Mitterrand**
- 1989   **Frère Roger**
- 1990   **Gyula Horn**
- 1991   **Václav Havel**
- 1992   **Jacques Delors**
- 1993   **Felipe González**
- 1994   **Gro Harlem Brundtland**
- 1995   **Franz Vranitzky**
- 1996   **Beatrix of the Netherlands**
- 1997   **Roman Herzog**
- 1998   **Bronisław Geremek**
- 1999   **Tony Blair**
- 2000   **Bill Clinton**
- 2001   **György Konrád**
- 2002   **The Euro**
- 2003   **Valéry Giscard d'Estaing**
- 2004   **Pat Cox**
- 2004   **Pope John Paul II** (extraordinary prize)
- 2005   **Carlo Azeglio Ciampi**
- 2006   **Jean-Claude Juncker**
- 2007   **Javier Solana**
- 2008   **Angela Merkel**
- 2009   **Andrea Riccardi**
- 2010   **Donald Tusk**
- 2011   **Jean-Claude Trichet**
- 2012   **Wolfgang Schäuble**
- 2013   **Dalia Grybauskaitė**
- 2014   **Herman Van Rompuy**
- 2015   **Martin Schulz**<sup>[2]</sup>
- 2016   **Pope Francis**
- 2017   **Timothy Garton Ash**
- 2018   **Emmanuel Macron**
- 2019   **António Guterres**