

// Call for participation to all bell owners

“May its first peals utter ‘peace’ ” – Ringing bells across Europe for the International Day of Peace

on 21 September in the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018

In Europe, for more than a thousand years the ringing of bells has marked the time for work, for rest and for prayer. Ringing bells gave an audible structure to religious and secular life.

Even today, millions of bells can be heard daily all across Europe. Bells in the towers of churches and city halls, in the belfries of cemeteries and memorial sites uniquely represent core European values in a way which can be both seen and heard.

Many Europeans love the sound of bells, music without words brought forth from a centuries-old craft tradition. This sound has existed for five millennia, going back well before the founding of Christianity. It is intercultural: Whether cathedral bells, Buddhist temple bells, Shinto shrine bells – all convey a sense of ceremony, the passage of time and transcendence beyond the bounds of language. This is culture in the broadest sense, bringing together daily life (a clock chiming the hours), a call for peace (peace bells in Hiroshima and Berlin), politics (bell of state in Notre Dame de Paris), custom (tolling of bells on All Souls’ Day), art (carillon music), collective cultural memory (bells tolling for the 50th anniversary of the building of the Berlin Wall), and religion (invitation to church services and marking of important moments in the liturgy).

The sound of bells, wherever it is heard, aptly expresses what we want to call to mind during the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 and pass on to our children: the values of solidarity and peace, and our cultural heritage in Europe and for the world.

In 2018, we remember the end of World War I a century ago, the start of the Thirty Years’ War in 1618 and its end in 1648, in order not to forget how precious peace is for us all. We therefore invite all owners of bells in Europe:

Let us all ring our bells together everywhere in Europe for the

International Day of Peace on 21 September 2018,
from 18:00 to 18:15 Strasbourg time,

and join in a wonderful experience of SHARING HERITAGE!

