



# European Order of Merit

FACT SHEET

## THE EUROPEAN ORDER OF MERIT

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration in 2025, the European Parliament decided to establish the first official European Order of Merit to honour individuals who have made significant contributions to the **European unity, democracy or to the promotion and defence of European values.**

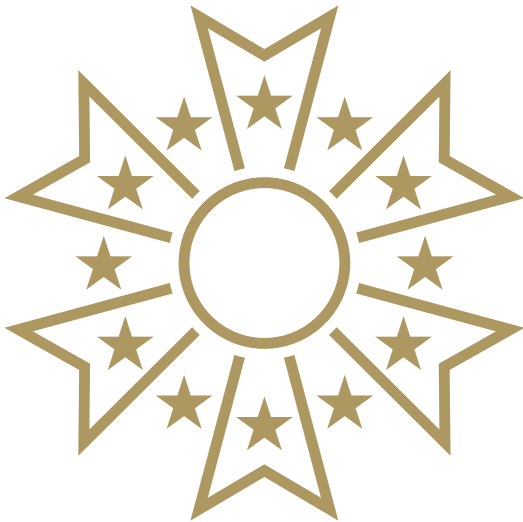
THE EUROPEAN  
ORDER OF MERIT



## WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN ORDER OF MERIT?

- It is the first official European distinction of its kind recognising individuals (not organisations) who have made exceptional contributions to European unity, democracy, and fundamental values set out in the EU Treaties.
- Laureates will receive a badge, a ribbon bar, and a certificate signed by the President of the European Parliament.
- The European Order of Merit consists of three levels of increasing distinction: Member, Honourable Member and Distinguished Member.

## WHY A EUROPEAN ORDER OF MERIT?



- ✓ **To celebrate people's extraordinary contributions to advancing the European integration:** It complements national distinctions and decorations by recognising efforts that strengthen Europe as a whole.
- ✓ **To reaffirm shared values:** At a time of global uncertainty, it honours those who defend peace, democracy, and human dignity.
- ✓ **To inspire future generations:** It highlights civic courage and commitment to European ideals.
- ✓ **To mark a historic moment:** Launched on the 75th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration — the starting point of European unity.

## WHO CAN BE NOMINATED?

Individuals, both EU and non-EU citizens, who have significantly contributed to European integration or promoted values enshrined in the European Union Treaties (e.g., human rights, democracy, rule of law). Not eligible: Members and staff of EU institutions, bodies, offices, and agencies during their mandate or service.

## WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

Proposals for appointment may be made by the President of the European Parliament, the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, the EU Heads of State or Government, Speakers of the national parliaments of the EU Member States. The decision is taken by a Selection committee established by the Bureau of the European Parliament for 4 years. The current Selection committee is composed of the President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, EP Vice-Presidents Sophie Wilmès and Ewa Kopacz, and Michel Barnier, José Manuel Barroso, Josep Borrell and Enrico Letta. Up to 20 laureates are to be appointed each year to the Order.

## NEXT STEPS:

- The first conferral ceremony will take place in May 2026 in Strasbourg.
- The decision to award the Order will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

