

Berlin, 27 April 2020

## **A Digital Journey Through Time to Spring 1945 – Kulturprojekte Berlin commemorates the liberation of Europe from Nazi tyranny with the digital project "75th Anniversary of the End of World War II"**

The date of 8 May 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Europe from Nazi tyranny and the end of World War II in Europe. Kulturprojekte Berlin is taking this opportunity to invite the public to embark on a digital journey through time to Spring 1945, a journey that will remember the **tyranny of the Nazi regime** and its lasting consequences and acknowledge the **achievements of the Allies** in liberating Europe from Nazi rule. Visiting locations across Berlin – including the **Brandenburg Gate** and **Pariser Platz** – the project **"75th Anniversary of the End of World War II"** highlights the contemporary relevance of this historical event through a virtual exhibition, a series of podcasts and an augmented reality app.

In view of the current crisis, Kulturprojekte Berlin is taking its content not to the streets, but to where people now spend most of their time: their homes. Using innovative formats, the project aims to **foster dialogue and public debate around the end of World War II, making history accessible to all** even in these difficult times of social distancing and self-isolation.

In **the anniversary week of 2 – 8 May 2020** the project will explore the period from the day of Berlin's capitulation on 2 May through to the Allied victory over Nazi Germany on 8 May 1945. The centrepiece of the project's three digital components is the **virtual exhibition "To Berlin and Beyond"** – an invitation to learn about and experience the final days of the war and the liberation of Europe from National Socialism in May 1945. The exhibition also sheds lights on the ruptures and continuities of the post-war period, explores the ambivalence of the concept of "liberation" and engages with contemporary issues. Visitors to the project website [www.75jahrekriegsende.berlin](http://www.75jahrekriegsende.berlin) are greeted with a **360-degree panorama view of the square in front of the Reichstag**, immersing users in the devastated landscape of Berlin through pictures, animated elements and sound clips. Visiting four key locations in and near Berlin – the **Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag, Alexanderplatz and the former concentration camp in Sachsenhausen** – the exhibition touches on a variety of issues, including the path from democracy to dictatorship, the European dimension of the Second World War, everyday life between war and peace, and the Nazi crimes against humanity.

Interviews with **12 eyewitnesses from Berlin and Leningrad** are also presented on the website. Six of these historical witnesses are from Berlin, some of whom speak about their personal experiences during World War II for the first time. The stories of these **"war children" from Berlin** are complemented by interviews with **six people from the former city of Leningrad** about their experiences between 1941 to 1944, when the city endured a long and merciless siege by the German army.

The **podcast series "To Berlin and Beyond"** takes listeners to six historical locations in Berlin, exploring a different topic and location in each episode and grappling with historical events and their significance today – from anti-fascism to moral courage. Listeners can accompany the protagonists and reporters to both familiar and lesser-known sites across present-day Berlin and delve deep into their histories. The locations include: the **Reichstag, Alexanderplatz, Kurfürstendamm** and the **Victory Column (Siegessäule)** as well as the **Olympic Stadium, the flak tower in Humboldthain** and the **memorial centre at the former concentration camp for Sinti and Roma in Berlin-Marzahn**. The podcast is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and at [www.75jahrekriegsende.de](http://www.75jahrekriegsende.de). A new episode will be released daily between 2 – 8 May.

**Augmented reality technologies** can be used to create a virtual experience of a real-world environment on a smartphone or tablet. This technology underpins the **"Augmented Berlin" app** and its new content on **life in the underground**. Beginning on **8 May 1945** amidst the ruins of Berlin's **Pariser Platz**, the app takes users on a journey through time to **the year 1933**, before covering the events of the intervening years to end again in 1945. Users will witness the gradual exclusion of Berlin's Jewish citizens from public life, through to their deportation from 1941 onwards. The stories of two survivors take centre-stage here: **Karin Friedrich**, a member of the "Uncle Emil" resistance group, and **Jizchak Schwersenz**, a Jewish teacher who escaped deportation and went underground together with some of his pupils. The app also features **five stories** on the theme of **"30th Anniversary of the Peaceful Revolution – Fall of the Berlin Wall"**. These stories were developed by Kulturprojekte Berlin together with BetaRoom as part of the festivities in November 2019 and first featured on the **MauAR AR app**. More content, covering a variety of topics related to Berlin, will be added to the app in the future.

The **anniversary week** will also be marked by a Berlin-wide **awareness campaign**. The campaign will contrast images of the devastation of Berlin in 1945 with the headlines: **"It began with an election"**, **"Do you want what you're voting for?"** and **"One election and its consequences"**.

These headlines highlight the fact that it was democratic elections that paved the way to the Nazi dictatorship and that we all bear the responsibility to ensure that history does not repeat itself. Sadly, the Corona Crisis makes it impossible to provide a forum for personal dialogue with the remaining living witnesses to these events – instead, their memories will be taken to homes across Berlin in a special leaflet. This will be accompanied by a range of **social media activities** showcasing the three digital projects. The virtual exhibition and its supporting content will be available online from 2 May through 2 September, the day marking the official conclusion of World War II.

*This project is a collaboration of Kulturprojekte Berlin with the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the German-Russian Museum Berlin-Karlshorst and is supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe. The project was developed in cooperation with other partners, including the Topography of Terror Foundation, the Allied Museum and the German Resistance Memorial Center. Funding for this project is provided by LOTTO-Stiftung Berlin and Berliner Sparkasse.*

**For additional information, please visit**

[www.75jahrekriegsende.berlin](http://www.75jahrekriegsende.berlin) (launches 2 May)  
[www.kulturprojekte.berlin/projekt/75-jahre-kriegsende](http://www.kulturprojekte.berlin/projekt/75-jahre-kriegsende)  
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**75 Years End of War**

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