



« EpiK »

Educational project developed as part of MILLENIUM – 2027, European Year of the Normans

I) Context

In 2027, the Normandy Region will host the European Year of the Normans, on the occasion of the millennium of the birth of William the Conqueror. While this date marks the starting point of the "Millennium" project, the event has a broader aim: to promote the historic and current links between Normandy and several European territories, proffering an open, intercultural and forward-looking approach.

Seven territories and fifteen regions spread across the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey), Belgium (Flanders), Norway, Denmark and Southern Italy (Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Sicily) are joining forces with Normandy, as the leader, in this project. Millennium highlights the movements, influences and exchanges that have taken place over the centuries, traces of which are still visible today. The European Year of the Normans aims to be a framework for open cooperation, with a programme in the Normandy region but also key events offered by partner territories, involving a wide variety of actors from the arts, cultural, education, academic and tourism community.

It is in this context that the Normandy Region is proposing to **develop an educational project, entitled “EpiK”**, involving all of the territories involved in this European Year of the Normans 2027. Indeed, the project’s name, “EpiK”, alludes to the Normans’ epic exploits of the past and those of the future, a shared history yet also a cultural melting pot that highlights the historical and cultural ties that unite several European countries. Territories where the Normans contributed to the history and cultures of Europe in their epic exploits in medieval times, leaving behind traces of their passage and their roots that remain to this day.

The project is structured around:

- The implementation of **two educational mediation initiatives**:
 - o The **Freedom Prize**, an initiative promoting education in citizenship and human rights
 - o **Ink**, a creative writing initiative.
- **A trip to Normandy bringing together all participating groups during the first week of June 2027.**

The entire project will be rolled out **by a single school appointed in each territory** involved in this celebration of Normandy's millennium.

This document aims to present the main features of the project with a view to this appointment

II) Presentation of the two initiatives

1) The Freedom Prize

Freedom Prize website : <https://prixliberte.normandie.fr/>

Initiated and supported by the Normandy Region, in partnership with the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace and the Academic Authorities, the Freedom Prize is an educational project aimed at raising awareness of freedom and human rights, rooted in the values upheld by the Normandy landings of 6 June 1944. With this in

mind, every year it invites young people aged 15 to 25 from around the world to nominate a person or organisation engaged in an exemplary fight for freedom. English and French are the two official languages of the Freedom Prize, which is unique in that young people are involved throughout the 3-stage selection process:

- **Call for nominations for our Freedom Prize (1 September – mid-January):** young people are invited to use the relevant form to nominate the person or organisation whose fight they wish to champion. Drawing on documentary, argumentation and summarising skills, this phase is mainly carried out in a school setting.
- **The international jury:**
 - o Recruitment (1 July to 15 October 2026): 24 young people aged 15 to 25 from all over the world are recruited via an individual call for applications available on the Freedom Prize website.
 - o Deliberation (8–12 February 2027): led by the team from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace and overseen by a chairperson, the international jury will meet for 6 days in Normandy to select 3 individuals or organisations from among the nominations submitted during phase 1.
- **The vote (20 March – 30 April):** young people aged 15 to 25 are invited to vote for the winner of the Freedom Prize from among the 3 individuals or organisations nominated by the international jury. In an educational setting, voting can be carried out in the form of a "Voting Event". Lasting two and a half hours, a Voting Event brings together 5 to 20 classes from the same school or territory and is broken down into two parts: a discussion with a champion of freedom on a subject related to human rights, and an educational session led by a two-person team from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace taking the young people through to the vote. An educational pack is sent to the lead teachers of the participating classes so that they can prepare their students in advance.

The Freedom Prize will be awarded during a ceremony scheduled for early June at the Zénith in Caen, attended by 4,000 young people who participated in the educational process, as well as various dignitaries ([video link to the 2025 ceremony](#)).

2) Ink

Supported by the association Le Labo des histoires as part of the Normandie Ecriture partnership agreement signed with the Normandy Region, and in partnership with the Academic Authorities, the Ink initiative takes the form of a creative writing project with the following structure:

- A topic common to all the groups
- An information/training video conference for teachers and the distribution of an educational pack in September
- Five writing workshop sessions, each lasting 2 hours and led by an author recruited by Le Labo des histoires, held between November and February, with text submissions expected no later than the end of February
- The publication of a book compiling texts from all participating classes
- The book will be presented at the presentation of the results, bringing together all the participating classes on the morning of the Freedom Prize ceremony in Caen (3 June 2027)

III) The "Epik" project

The special "Epik" project, proposed as part of the Millenium of Normandy, will be structured as follows.

1) Process and implementation

The implementation will be carried out in the following stages:

- Preparation and follow-up of the project as a whole

- Participation in the Freedom Prize initiative
- Participation in the Ink initiative
- The final trip to Normandy

A) Preparation and follow-up of the project as a whole

- **No later than the end of March:** recruitment of the 8 schools
- **18 May 2026** (3 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. french time):
 - o video presentation of the project to head teachers
- **8 June 2026** (3 p.m. – 5 p.m. french time): informative meeting on the project as a whole for head teachers and lead teachers
- Three follow-up meetings in the same format will be scheduled in
 - o **September 2026** for the project launch
 - o **December 2026** to review progress made in the initiative
 - o **April 2027** to prepare for the class's visit to Normandy in early June (see below).

B) Participation in the Freedom Prize

- International jury
 - o **1 July to 15 October 2026:** Recruitment of a juror from within each participating group. With this in mind, teachers encourage their students to apply to the international jury with the aim of submitting at least 5 applications via the individual online application form, one of which will be selected by the Selection Committee at its meeting at the end of October.
 - o **8–12 February 2027:** Participation of the young person selected in the deliberations of the international jury in Caen (Normandy)
- Nominations phase
 - o **1 September 2026 – 11 January 2027:** Group participation in the nominations phase via the 4 online dossier "Our Freedom Prize", which requires documentary, argumentation and summarising skills.
In order to enable the teacher leading the "Freedom Prize" to initiate and supervise the group's work during this nominations phase, the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace will host a video conference presentation and then send them a number of educational resources.
- Voting event
 - o **Between 20 March and 30 April 2027:** Holding of a Voting Event at the school (or in a nearby facility if the school does not have a suitable venue) attended by at least 200 students from the school or even from other nearby secondary schools.
In order to prepare students to participate in this event, an educational pack is sent in advance to the teachers involved.
The presentation sheet for a Freedom Prize Voting Event is attached as an appendix to this document.

C) Implantation of the Ink initiative

- Author recruitment: an author from the country will be recruited and made available by the initiative's organisers. If the lead teacher, or even the school, has any contact with authors, they will of course be able to nominate them.

- **Language:** the texts will be written by the students and then published in their native language. A QR code will provide access to translations of all texts in French, English and Italian.
- **Choice of topic:** insofar as is possible, the topic will be chosen collectively by the organisers, the lead teachers and the authors.
- **Training and follow-up:**
 - o **Third week of September:** information/training video conference for lead teachers involved in the initiative, led by Le Labo des histoires
 - o **December:** progress video conference with lead teachers to discuss the implementation of the workshops
 - o **Early February:** progress video conference with lead teachers to finalise and submit texts for the book to be published
- **Sequence of events:**
 - o **September 2026:** Choice of a common topic
 - o **December 2026 – February 2027:** scheduling of five **2-hour writing workshop sessions** led by the guest author
 - o **End of February 2027:** finalisation of texts and their submission to Le Labo des histoires
 - o **March–May 2027:** production of the book by Le Labo des histoires
 - o **3 June 2027:** publication of the book, a copy of which will be given to all of the young participants at a special event in Normandy.

D) Final trip to Normandy

All the groups (Europeans and Normans) and their supervising teacher pairs will be gathered **from 31 May (arrival in the late afternoon) to 4 June (departure after breakfast) in Normandy.**

Accommodation will be provided for the groups at the **Normandy Sports Centre** (Centre Sportif de Normandie – CSN) in Houlgate, located about twenty kilometres from Caen.

While the programme for this trip is yet to be finalised, it will indeed include:

- **1 June 2027:** team-building and intercultural activities through various exchanges and practices at the Normandy Sport Center (CSN)
- **2 June 2027:** visits to one or two emblematic sites in Normandy.
- **3 June 2027:**
 - o **Morning:** a presentation of the results of Ink initiative
 - o **Afternoon:** attendance at the Freedom Prize Award Ceremony at the Zénith in Caen.

2) Terms of participation

One secondary school will be recruited **in each of the partner territories** along with two secondary schools in Normandy (one state school and one agricultural school) to take part in the various stages of the Epik project on the basis of the following commitments:

- a) Form a group of **at least 14 and no more than 16 motivated young volunteers**. This group must be able to meet in workshop format, according to the arrangements and time slots most suitable for the institution.
- **Freedom Prize:**

- **October 2027** : one 2-hour working session to prepare young people for submitting their individual applications to the international Freedom Prize jury (objective: to submit at least five applications per group)
 - **October – November** : two to three 2-hour working sessions dedicated to the proposal phase of the Freedom Prize, using the 'Our Freedom Prize' file, with the aim of identifying personalities or organisations that have recently led an exemplary fight for freedom
 - **Between 20 March and 30 April**: ensure that the entire group takes part in the voting event organised within the institution or nearby
- **Ink initiative:**
- **Between December 2026 and February 2027**: five 2-hour writing sessions
 - **May 2027** : one 2-hour preparatory working session for the presentation event
- **Final trip in Normandy for all the groups** (from 31 May in the late afternoon to 4 June after breakfast):
- The secondary school undertakes to ensure the participation of the young people and the supervising teacher pair, with the option for the headteacher to join if they so wish.
 - The 8 international groups must organise their transport to Houlgate and their return to the secondary school. Coaches must remain available throughout the stay for the various visits and events included in the programme.
- b) Meet the following requirements for the organisation, in coordination with the Freedom Prize team (Normandy Region – International Institute for Human Rights and Peace), of a **2.5-hour Freedom Prize voting event to be held between 20 March and 30 April**:
- Provide suitable facilities, either within the upper secondary school itself if such equipment is available (an amphitheatre with at least 150 seats) or nearby (performance venue, cinema, etc.), for the organisation of the event.
 - Recruit a minimum of 5 classes of students (or the equivalent of 150 students) to take part in the event.
- c) **Two lead teachers will be recruited from each secondary school:**
- One lead teacher responsible for the overall project;
 - A second supporting teacher who can supervise one of the two components of the programme

IV) Mutual commitments

1) Financing

The **Normandy Region**, organiser of the project, undertakes to cover all organisational expenses for:

- **The implementation of the Freedom Prize**; namely:
 - the involvement of the International Institute of Human Rights and Peace in educational support
 - travel expenses (transport, accommodation, catering) for the young person selected for the international jury
 - the services and travel expenses of the voting event's "champion of freedom".
- **The implementation of the Ink initiative**; namely:
 - the involvement of Le Labo des histoires in educational support
 - the authors' services and travel expenses for the writing workshops
 - the authors' travel expenses during their stay in Normandy

- the production and printing of the book.
- **The stay in Normandy:**
 - accommodation for the 8 groups from the partner territories
 - catering for groups and those accompanying them
 - the coverage of transport costs related to the programme of the stay
 - entrance fees to the sites visited.

Each secondary school undertakes to pay:

- The hire of a coach for transporting the groups and accompanying staff to Normandy and back, as well as for all travel required by the programme of the stay.
- The catering for the young participants and accompanying staff during their journey to Normandy and on their return.

2) Organisation

The **Normandy Region** undertakes to ensure the project is organised as securely as possible by:

- Mobilising its staff at pivotal points in the implementation of activities, both to monitor them and in the event of unforeseen circumstances requiring an appropriate response;
- Coordinating the management process, involving all partners, in particular, by scheduling regular meetings of the monitoring bodies;
- Rigorous and responsive financial and administrative monitoring.

Each secondary school undertakes to:

- Allow the two lead teachers to track the different stages of the programme of activities, either to prepare them, implement them or follow them up;
- Secure the timetable of the mobilised group so as to allow students to participate with peace of mind in the various activities they are involved in in this programme;
- Grant, subject to confirmation by their parents or legal guardian, leave to the young person selected for the international jury during the week of deliberation in Caen (8-12 February 2027);
- Find a suitable venue with a minimum capacity of 150 seats for the holding of the Freedom Prize Voting Event;
- Rally other teachers to get classes to participate in the Freedom Prize Voting Event with at least 150 young people

General organisation contacts

- Nathalie CHAUVIN (Logistics and Administration) : nathalie.chauvin@normandie.fr
- David OSMONT (General Organisation and Educational Matters) : david.osmont@normandie.fr
- Lucie LÉCUREUX (Project officer – Millenium – 2027, European Year of the Normans) : lucie.lecureux@normandie.fr



Appendix 1

Application form

To be returned before 20 March 2026 to nathalie.chauvin@normandie.fr :

PRESENTATION OF THE SCHOOL/OF THE LEAD TEAM

Name of the school:

Address:

Country:

General email address:

School telephone no.:

School head:

First Name LAST NAME	Position	Email address	Mobile phone no.

Lead teacher:

First Name LAST NAME	Position/Subject taught	Email address and mobile phone no.	Educational project overseen
			Freedom Prize <input type="checkbox"/> Ink Initiative <input type="checkbox"/>

Associate teacher:

First Name LAST NAME	Position/Subject taught	Email address and mobile phone no.	Educational project overseen
			Freedom Prize <input type="checkbox"/> Ink Initiative <input type="checkbox"/>

PRESENTATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

2-hour time slot considered for workshop sessions (please specify the intended times):

- Wednesday afternoon
- Midday break
- Boarding house time
- Late afternoon after classes
- Other

Planned educational project: How would you envisage creating a link between the Ink initiative and the civic education project surrounding the Freedom Prize?

Specify the venue planned for the Freedom Prize Voting Event, with a minimum capacity of at least 150 seats (either within the institution or in a nearby partner structure):

Regarding the practical arrangements for organising the initiative at the school, would you like to report any dates to be avoided?

Drawn up in:

On:

Signature of the school head:

School stamp:



Appendix 2

Freedom Prize voting events

Presentation sheet

During the voting phase, which is open every year from 20 March to 30 April, the organisers of the Freedom Prize invite young people to participate in "voting events", which take place in Normandy, in other regions of France and internationally. Around twenty are organised every year.

With several classes attending (equivalent to at least 250 young people), these discussion sessions can take place in a theatre, cinema, amphitheatre or auditorium, and last approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- **To encourage democratic participation:** to allow young people to actively participate in a democratic process by voting for the winner of the Freedom Prize.
- **To raise awareness of citizenship and democracy:** to encourage young people to reflect on their relationship with citizenship, democracy and commitment through interactive educational activities; to highlight current actions for freedom by presenting the initiatives of the individuals or organisations nominated, as well as their impact on human rights and freedoms; to encourage concrete commitment: to offer young people the opportunity to get directly involved in defending freedom by meeting with champions of freedom.

VOTING EVENT PROCEDURE

The events take place in two parts: an uplifting meeting with a champion of freedom, preceded by an educational session led by the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace.

1. An educational presentation about voting (45 minutes)

A 45-minute educational session led by teams from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace is offered to students. This session presents the commitments of the three individuals or organisations still in the running for the Freedom Prize; then the young people are invited to participate in the vote for the Freedom Prize.

2. The meeting with the champion of freedom (1 hour 30 minutes)

The meeting with the champion of freedom is a great chance to talk with a leading figure who is committed to freedom. In responding to the young people's questions, the speaker shares their journey, their commitment, their experience, etc.

This interactive exchange allows for genuine dialogue and offers a concrete and embodied vision of the concept of commitment.

The champions of freedom are committed icons, such as journalists, whistleblowers, writers, lawyers, press cartoonists, and many other inspirational figures.



Furthermore, numerous partners, leaders in their respective fields, are involved in the Freedom Prize voting events, allowing for a wide range of approaches to the topic:

- The Franco-German channel Arte;
- The Foundation for the Remembrance of Slavery (FME);
- Together Against the Death Penalty (ECPM);
- The French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH);
- Cartooning for Peace (CFP);
- The Bayeux Calvados-Normandy Award for War Correspondents.

An educational pack including biographical items and contextual information on the topic addressed is sent to teachers in advance in order to prepare students for the meeting.

LOGISTICAL ORGANISATION OF AN EVENT

The Freedom Prize team ensures the logistical coordination of all events, in close collaboration with the representatives of each school in the participating countries. Such organisation guarantees that meetings are successful in every aspect.

Furthermore, in order for a champion of freedom, supported by the Region, to appear, at least 200 students must be gathered in a suitable venue (amphitheatre, theatre, etc.) in order to guarantee the event's quality and impact.

CONTACT

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