

Programme

Starting at 15:00

Opening of the ceremony by Iivi Zajedova, Chairman of the 1944 Mass Flight Committee, followed by **speeches** from its members Kristi Vuht Allpere (Pärnu project leader) and Ülle Ederma.

The memorial **will be blessed** by the Bishop Emeritus of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tiit Salumäe

The EWC presents the memorial to the City of Pärnu

Speech: Mayor of Pärnu Romek Konsenkranius

Performance by the Pärnu Mihkel Lüdig Male Choir and Female Choir Leelo

Welcome speeches:

Martin Mõttus – Director General of the Department of Global Estonianism and Cultural Diplomacy in the Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Marju Rink-Abel – Vice President of the EWC

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves

Performance by Pärnu Mihkel Lüdig Male Choir and Female Choir Leelo

Concluding Remarks: I. Zajedova, K. Allpere

You are also invited to attend the 22 Sept church service and concert at St. Elizabeth's Church, in Pärnu. Minister Tõnu Taremaa

1944 Mass Flight Committee of the Estonian World Council (EWC):

Iivi Zajedova (Chairman), members: Marju Rink-Abel, Maie Barrow, Ülle Ederma, Kristi Vuht Allpere, Aadu Allpere, Tarmo Kruusimäe, Enn Hallik, Sirle Sööt, Aiva Plauča, Ülar Jürgens ja Külli Sulg (until 2021).

The erection of the memorial to the 1944 Mass Flight took place in cooperation between the Pärnu City Government and the 1944 Mass Flight Committee of the Estonian World Council. Project manager Kristi Vuht Allpere, coordinator Reelika Lume. Sculptor Elo Liiv.

Donations were collected under the direction of Kristi Vuht Allpere and by the EWC (USA), EERO (Canada), AESL (Australia), REL (Sweden). Donations in Estonia were collected by Tammepeuu Eesti Klubi MTÜ.



ÜLEMAAILMNE EESTI KESKNÕUKOGU



ESTONIAN WORLD COUNCIL, INC.

Text by Kristi Vuht Allpere and Iivi Zajedova.
Translation by Mark Taht. Design by Evelin Täht.

Do not want to go, but cannot stay



*Opening of the
1944 Mass
Flight Memorial
in Pärnu*

Pärnu,
21 September 2024

The 1944 Mass Flight Memorial in Pärnu is dedicated to the Mass Flight generation – those who had to leave their homeland to survive, those who never reached their destination, and those who stayed and endured fear and uncertainty. The state of Estonia disappeared from the world map, and our nation was split into the native Estonian community and Estonian communities abroad.

Let us acknowledge those who lost their homes, their lives, and their youth, or from whom their future was stolen. Let us honour those who acted, fought, and contributed to the restoration of Estonia's freedom.

In 2018 the Estonian World Council (EWC) – the largest organization uniting Estonian communities abroad – adopted a resolution at a plenary session, to commemorate the Mass Flight as a national holiday and to erect a memorial in the Port of Tallinn to the September '44 refugees.

In 2018 the resolution was presented to the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Riigikogu; but so far, neither request has been fulfilled. Still, the 1944 Mass Flight Committee of the EWC has been fruitful, supported by the cooperation between the Pärnu City Government and Kristi Vuht Allpere (USA), a child of the Mass Flight.

That is why we will be standing on the banks of the Pärnu River on 21 September, where many boats left during that fateful year, to be part of the opening of the Pärnu Memorial.

This was made possible on land belonging to the City of Pärnu thanks to generous donors. Several EWC member organizations, including the EANC, EERO Canada, REL and AESL, helped to collect donations. In Estonia, donations were collected with the help of Tammepuu Eesti Klubi MTÜ. Thus, native Estonians and Estonian communities abroad, their descendants and friends, were able to contribute. The construction of the memorial was overwhelmingly supported by Estonian communities abroad. **Thank you all from the bottom of our hearts!**

The memorial, commissioned from the artist **Elo Liiv**, is deeply symbolic and emotional. Call it the touch – the moment when the fingers of the departing still touch those of the ones left behind.

Refugee families, who were scattered all over the world, were once right here on Estonian soil, from which they did not want to leave. They left behind their hearts, carrying with them a longing to come back and finally rest in the soil of their beloved homeland. In this memorial, their dreams, hearts, and souls have been brought home once again.

The Mass Flight Committee of the EWC has done a considerable amount of volunteer work since its creation in 2019. At the initiative of Committee Chairman Iivi Zajedova, several information seminars have been organized in Estonia with various partners, in particular Tammepuu Estonian Klubi MTÜ. Together with its partners, the Committee has organized memorial worship services, international conferences, exhibitions, concerts, refugee-themed plays, and conversation evenings.

By commemorating the experiences of the fading 1944 Mass Flight generation, the aim has been to promote awareness of this period of history, to strengthen the connection between native Estonians and Estonian communities abroad, and to preserve Estonianness, the memory and identity of our people.

May they never be forgotten!

During the period 2018–2022, the EWC has supported: the acquisition of organ pipes (2018) for St. John's Church, in Tallinn; the Sõrve 75th anniversary memorial event with schoolchildren (2019); the erection of the Eesti Memento Liit's Mass Flight memorial on Puise Beach (2020); the dedication of the 1944 Mass Flight information plaque at Puise Beach (2021); the completion of the information plaque at St Michael's Church, on Harjumäe, in Tallinn (2022); the Boat of Tears installation by the Estonian Institute of Human Rights as a joint donation with the Estonian National Committee in the United States (2022 EANC).