

The XXVI International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia is bestowed to the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer

Santiago de Compostela, 27 June 2022 – The jury of the XXVI International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia recognises the role as President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) of Peter Maurer, through which they consider that he has fostered “the strengthening of humanitarian diplomacy to ensure respect for international law”. In their resolution, the members of the jury extended this distinction to ICRC, “an independent neutral institution that protects and assists victims of armed conflict and other violent situations”. A work that they believe is “particularly relevant given the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine, in the heart of Europe”, which they stress “has led to a humanitarian crisis”.

Concerning this recognition, the rector of the University of Santiago de Compostela, Antonio López, emphasised that “the awarding of the prize puts the spotlight on an institution that has a long history of humanitarian assistance and care for fundamental rights”. He also pointed out that “the action of the Red Cross is key in providing protection to innocent civilians who are involved in armed conflict and other situations of violence”.

For his part, the rector of the University of Oviedo, Ignacio Villaverde, stated that “in these times we are living in, recognising the work of an institution such as the Red Cross in the person of its President, who so successfully leads it. It is an act of justice”.

On the figure of the award winner, the rector of the CETYS University system, Fernando León, underlined that “through his professional career he has practised the European values of cooperation, integration, diversity, tolerance and unity that surround the Camino de Santiago”. Moreover, he said that “this award recognises his activities, as well as his work and social and international commitment”.

Upon learning of the resolution, Peter Maurer said he was honoured to accept the award and said that “it has been a privilege to serve as ICRC President for the last ten years, working to strengthen humanitarian diplomacy and alleviate suffering in places such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, the Sahel and Ukraine, among other places. “This award acknowledges the dedication of ICRC’s staff who, often at personal cost, provide assistance and protection services to communities affected by conflict and crisis globally,” he added.

The award ceremony for the XXVI International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia will take place on 8 September 2022 in the framework of the XXVIII General Assembly of

the university network, organised by the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). At this event, the winner will be presented with a golden shell, the emblem of the network.

Profile of the awardee

Peter Maurer, who was born in 1956 in the Swiss town of Thun, is notable for his long diplomatic career in his home country and the international arena. Prior to that, he studied history and international law in Berne, after which he obtained a doctorate.

He began his diplomatic career in the Swiss Confederation in 1987, before being appointed deputy permanent observer at the Swiss mission to the United Nations in 1996. As an ambassador and permanent representative of Switzerland to the United Nations (2004), he worked for the integration of his country into multilateral networks. He then chaired the UN's Fifth Committee (2009), in charge of the organisation's administrative and budgetary affairs.

In 2010, he returned to his home country and became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Since 2012, he has served as President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and under his leadership, the organisation carries out humanitarian work in over 80 countries.

Composition of the Jury for the 2022 edition

The meeting of the jury of the XXVI International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia was chaired by the Director General for Culture of Xunta de Galicia, José Anxo M. Lorenzo Suárez, on behalf of the Regional Culture, Education, Vocational Training and Universities of the Xunta de Galicia, Román Rodríguez González.

This body is also composed of the following authorities:

- The General Secretary for Universities of the Xunta de Galicia, José Alberto Díez de Castro.
- The President of the Compostela Group of Universities, Marek Kręglewski.
- The Rector of the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain), Antonio López Díaz.
- The Rector of the University of Oviedo (Spain), Ignacio Villaverde Menéndez.
- The Rector of the CETYS University (Mexico), Fernando León García.

The Executive Secretary of the Compostela Group of Universities, María Teresa Carballeira Rivera, served as secretary to the jury.

International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia

The International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia was established in 1996 further to the signature of an agreement between the Compostela Group of Universities and the Regional Ministry for Culture, Social Communication and Tourism.

Since its first edition in 1997, this prize has been granted to personalities such as Jacques Santer (1997), Vaclav Havel (1998), Carla del Ponte (2001), Mohamed AlBaradei (2010), Marcelino Oreja Aguirre (2017), María Pilar Alonso Abad (2018) or Francisco Javier Solana de Madariaga (2021). Besides, it has distinguished the work carried out by institutions such as the Helsinki Group of Women and Science initiative (2006), the academic institution College of Europe (2012) or the Erasmus programme (2015).

The Compostela Group of Universities

The Compostela Group of Universities (CGU) is a non-profit international organisation, recognized as an association of public benefit, which works for fostering cooperation and promoting dialogue in all areas of higher education. The CGU took its first steps in 1994 and since its creation, it has grown to unite more than 60 universities from all over the world. All the pilgrims of the network share the values of cooperation and integration developed around the Camino de Santiago.