



## European Bunker Day Handbook

A practical guide for the organisation of a Bunker Day  
in your country with Atlantikwall Europe

This is a summary of the extensive manual for the organisation of a national Bunker Day as part of European Bunker Day. The extensive manual is based on the Bunker Day organised in the Netherlands, which was established six years ago, with a professional organisation and an operating budget of € 140,000 to € 160,000. Countries that want to organise a fully-fledged Bunker Day under the European Bunker Day umbrella should have different ambitions. This is why we have drawn up this brief and amended version to provide partners with a step-by-step guide for organising a Bunker Day within a period of 4 to 5 months.

Co-funded by the  
Creative Europe Programme  
of the European Union



## Table of contents

Project plan .....	3
Date .....	4
Website .....	5
Social media.....	5
Side programme .....	7
Walks .....	7
Guided tours.....	8
Re-enactment.....	8
Lectures .....	8
Historical footage .....	8
Theatre and storytelling .....	8
Side programme for children .....	9
Scavenger hunts .....	9
Small theatre .....	10
Ticket sales .....	11
Contact with the press .....	12
Permit application .....	13
Safety plan .....	14
The last three months .....	15
Social media advertisements .....	15
Advertisement in offline and online history magazines .....	15
Street campaigns.....	15
Social media.....	15
Programme booklet .....	16
Visibility .....	16
Volunteers .....	17
Distributing information to participants .....	17
The actual Bunker Day.....	18
Press coordinator .....	18
Press release.....	18
After European Bunker Day.....	19
Visitor survey.....	19
Bunker sites after-care .....	19

Storing materials .....	19
-------------------------	----

## Project plan

Draw up a project plan with the main aspects which includes a budget to give your plans and ideas some direction. Pay particular attention to education, marketing, and communication.

Bunker Day is, essentially, an educational event, which is why it is important to clearly describe the information you want to impart to your visitors. Write down the educational goals, and indicate how you want to achieve these. For example, by giving tours, lectures, film showings, exhibits, and theatre performances. Each educational goal has its own educational method.

Marketing and communication are used to draw attention to Bunker Day and attract visitors. This is why you need to describe your marketing goals. What result do you want to achieve with your marketing efforts? Examples of results are the number of visitors or media reach. Describe the target audience of your communication efforts. This may be a different audience than that of Bunker Day itself. Imagine that your target audience consists of families and that your communication audience is women in the 30-45 age bracket. This is because women often decide on family outings. Describe clearly which communication methods you manage yourself (website, social media channels, possibly a newsletter) and the reach of these channels. Also describe how you want to reach your target audience.

Make sure to also contact potential participants while you are drawing up the project plan. Share your vision and plans, be open about what you expect from a participant. Preferably organise a kick-off meeting with potential participants. Participants are not just managers and owners, but also museums, re-enactors, organisations with historical vehicles, theatre groups, or catering companies.

A powerful element of Bunker Day is the accessibility of Atlantic Wall heritage sites which are usually not open to the public. Example are bunkers that are still buried, located in a backyard, or bunkers that are being used by companies. Part of the success of the day depends on this unique accessibility. It is wise to start talking with municipalities, bunker owners, or companies who are in the possession of a bunker at an early stage to study the possibility of opening their bunker to the public. Also identify what would be necessary to open them to the public in a safe manner (excavation work, for example).

!! Also make sufficient marketing budget is available. All your efforts will be for naught without an audience.

## Entrance fees

Decide whether you want to ask an entrance fee from visitors and what you will do with the money at an early stage. Will it accrue to the Bunker Day organisation, or can participating bunker locations keep it?



Wrist bands are used as tickets in the Netherlands.

## Date

Determine the day and date as early as possible. You can choose for a date with a historic significance for the Atlantic Wall or the Second World War. This historic event can be part of the reason for the Bunker Day.

Always check whether there are no other important and/or major events on your planned date. If the other event has a clear connection with the subject of the Atlantic Wall or the Second World War, the events may enhance each other. In other cases, attention may be divided and there will be fewer visitors.

## Communication

Visitors must be able to find information about Bunker Day. A professional appearance makes the event look trustworthy.

Make the following basic details clear:

- The name of the event – be consistent with this
- The date and times of Bunker Day
- A description of Bunker Day
- Location(s) which/that can be visited during Bunker Day

## Resources

### Website

Preferably create a dedicated website for the event (e.g. Bunkerdag.nl) rather than housing the event on different existing websites, for example those of bunker museums. The distribution of information will be fragmented when using the last approach, especially if not all websites provide the same information. The website needs a number of basic pages:

- Homepage with a brief introduction of Bunker Day, European Bunker Day, and Atlantic Wall Europe. It must also include all logos.
- A page with an overview of the participants and the programme.
- A page with a geographic overview of the locations.
- A page with information about tickets and ticket sale. People also want to know if no tickets will be sold. You can also share other practical information on this page.
- Contact details of the organisation (possibly in the footer).
- Page with general terms and conditions. You describe the rules of Bunker Day here. An example of the general terms and conditions of Bunker Day Netherlands can be found in the annex. If you want to take pictures and/or recordings during the event, we recommend including this here.

Create the website in the Bunker Day brand style (refer to the style manual). If a dedicated website is not possible (yet), you can make web pages.

### Social media

Select which social media channels match your target audience, and check which channels you can actively update yourself. It is useless to create a social media account on which you cannot post suitable content, or which cannot be updated due to a lack of capacity.

LinkedIn is a professional platform and is, for this reason, considered unsuitable for reaching a large audience. Twitter can only be used to place very short messages, which means that the context and the underlying story can be insufficiently highlighted. Instagram is mainly focussed on images. Because we also have something to offer in terms of substance, we consider this medium unsuitable as well. Snapchat is primarily aimed at a young audience and too light-hearted for a subject like the

Atlantic Wall. The above considerations were made by the Dutch organisation. Of course, multiple channels can be used, as long as the content is suitable.

### Promotional materials and campaigns

Once the ticket sale starts, you want to inform potential visitors. The chance that your event will attract a lot of visitors is small without marketing campaigns.

The following always applies to the design of promotional materials:

- Less is more: use as little text as possible.
- Always include: Bunker Day, the relationship with European Bunker Day, date, website, logos
- A powerful image: try to avoid a specific target audience on the poster, unless this is really your primary audience. For example: if you make a poster with children in a bunker, you will attract significantly fewer adolescents.

### **!! Please note**

All design must be in line with the European Bunker Day brand style. The European logos and the logo of Atlantic Wall Europe must always be included. Printing materials must contain the logos of any sponsors and parties subsidising the event.



## Side programme

The physical remains of the Atlantic Wall are the junction of different stories linked to the Atlantic Wall at a specific location. These stories can be about the consequences of the construction and presence of the Atlantic Wall for the coastal residents, the military aspects (operation of the Atlantic Wall, Allied landing, air and sea war), repression and oppression (forced labour, forced evacuation, and demolition), the life of soldiers, or the contact between the Germans and the civilian population. The activities organised on Bunker Day focus on highlighting these stories against the background of the Atlantic Wall heritage and letting the audience reflect on them.

Different methods can be used for this:



## Information signs

These signs serve to address the first need for information of visitors. A lot of visitors lack any basic knowledge about the Atlantic Wall.

Location-specific information is also important. The type of bunker and the function of the building can be described in simple terms. If possible, the information sign can refer to a number of visible characteristics of the function of the bunker. The visitor will get an even greater understanding if historical pictures are added.

## Walks

The function of the individual bunkers in the context of the Atlantic Wall (and the surroundings) can be explained by organising guided walks. The story-telling skills of the guide can also greatly

contribute to the understanding of the scope of the defensive line and its impact on society or the surroundings.

If no sufficient guides are available, you can also offer the walks on paper. The route will be described, as well as any interesting sites the visitor will encounter. If possible, the walk can also be offered in electronic format.

### Guided tours

Tours are a perfect way to relay information. The story of the guide supplemented with the visual aspects of the environment leave a lasting impression in the visitor. This also gives visitors the opportunity to ask questions about the bunker and its function.

### Historical vehicles and vessels

Historical vehicles can be used to transport visitors between different bunker sites. If this is not possible, visitors also like to go for a short drive or to take pictures with the vehicle.

### Re-enactment

Re-enacting historic events using original clothing, equipment, and materials are a unique experience for the audience, provided that this takes place with integrity. Be aware of re-enactment overly focussed on the German side or acts of war, and always clearly communicate the message you want to express by organising Bunker Day.

### Film showings

There are educative projects about the Second World War or the Atlantic Wall everywhere. Use these projects and the material they have developed. Showing historical footage, possibly with an explanation, is also interesting and popular.

### Lectures

Lectures are a perfect way for exploring a subject in depth. Experts in various fields can provide short thematic lectures related to a visit to a site.

### Historical footage

There is a lot of footage that shows what villages and cities that were part of the Atlantic Wall looked like during the Second World War. By showing this footage at the site where the pictures were originally taken, visitors can see the mark left by the Atlantic Wall before their eyes. Large posters with pictures also draw the attention of random passers-by and direct them to the Bunker Day sites.

### Theatre and storytelling

Theatre in and near the locations can make the events of the Second World War tangible at a large scale.



### Side programme for children

The Dutch Bunker Day showed that the event is very popular among parents with children in the 7-12 age bracket. A lot of the above activities are also very suitable for this target audience, such as the film showing, theatre shows, historical vehicles, and tours. It can also be very worthwhile to develop a number of activities for children.

### Scavenger hunts

Organising a scavenger hunt at the Bunker Day sites is way to make children more aware of the history of the bunker. It will not only be an exciting object, but it will have its own story.

### Assignments

A special booklet with assignments has been developed for children aged 8 to 12 in the Netherlands. The booklet contains general questions that can be answered at all locations. The booklet helps children look closer and increase their understanding of the heritage sites.



### Small theatre

Bringing historical figures to life speaks strongly to the imagination of children. History is brought to life by using actors to tell a story, especially in combination with the historical bunker sites. While re-enactment shows what it looked like on the side of the army, theatre can be used to highlight the side of the population.

## Ticket sales

When you choose to sell tickets for Bunker Day, we recommend a combination of online and offline sales. Decide what you want the entrance ticket to look like and what shape it will be. A wristband is used as a valid entrance ticket in the Netherlands.

An e-ticket is a perfect method if there is only 1 location. An e-ticket can only be scanned once to ensure it cannot be copied. If you have multiple locations, the same ticket cannot be scanned at more than one location.

In the Netherlands, ticket sales start approximately two months before Bunker Day. No ticket sale? Make sure to track the number of visitors in a different manner.

### Contact with the press

Monthly and weekly magazines are part of the long-lead media. They have a submission period of approximately 4-6 months. This means they must be contacted at an early stage. A lot of media require images for their articles or publications. Make sure that you have beautiful and suitable pictures of sufficient quality available. Printed media usually require a picture of at least 300 dpi (dots per inch).

Create (a) newsworthy press release(s). Merely organising an event or starting with the ticket sales is usually not enough. However, special access usually draws a lot of attention.

Broadcasters, especially local and regional parties, are sometimes eager for content. It may be useful to enter into a partnership with radio and TV for free visibility and attention for Bunker Day and European Bunker Day.

## Opening a bunker to the public



### Permit application

If you want to open up a bunker which is usually not accessible to the public, you will most likely need to apply for a permit. In this context, it is very relevant to study which parties have a say over the bunker and the area where the bunker is located. There may be more than one party!

Make sure you involve all parties and ask for advice well in advance. The permit application process differs for each location, but observe a period of at least 3 months in advance.

If you want to apply for a permit, you must have determined at least the following:

- What object you want to open up
- The route to the bunker
- How many people you are expecting
- When you want to start with the work (e.g. excavation work)
- How you will secure the bunker (for example, if you open the bunker a day in advance)
- When the bunker will be closed again
- How the bunker will be closed again
- The condition in which you will leave the area
- A safety plan for the access to the bunker



## Safety plan

It is wise to draw up a safety plan that identifies the risks for each event. This safety plan is also part of your permit application.

The safety plan must at least cover the following aspects:

Analysis of the risks of the open bunker. Such as:

- Fire, for example caused by temporary lighting in a bunker which also houses flammable materials.
- Trampling, suffocation, or other accidents in an overly full bunker.
- Head injuries caused by low entrances.
- Minor abrasions and bruises caused by poorly accessible bunkers.
- Injuries due to lighting failure (generator)

Safety measures that can be implemented to mitigate the risks can be:

- Placing fire extinguishers near the bunker.
- Crowd control by only letting a small number of people in at a time.
- Mandatory use of a helmet in case of low entrances.
- Hiring first aid services for help with minor injuries.
- Giving torches to visitors if the lighting can fail.

The safety plan does not need to be an extensive document. It is particularly important to think about the risks and solutions, and that other responsible parties at the bunkers are familiar with them.

## The last three months

During this phase, all focus will be on making the public increasingly aware of Bunker Day and promoting possible ticket sales or registrations. The activities set out in the marketing and communication plan will be carried out during this phase. Their effectiveness is based on familiarity and repetition, and a sound mix of methods. Some suggestions:

### Social media advertisements

Apart from involving people in Bunker Day using a range of messages, you can also target your audience using social media. You can reach a large audience with relatively small budgets, specified based on things like geography, age, or interests.

### Advertisement in offline and online history magazines

People who subscribe to history-related magazines or websites are likely to have an interest in the topic of the Second World War. It would be a waste not to approach these 'easy-pickings'. You can do this by purchasing an advertisement. But it is also worth the effort to first attempt to get an editorial article.

### Street campaigns

It is useful to create visibility for Bunker Day in the streets or regions where bunkers are made accessible to the public. For example, by reserving an A0 street campaign at these locations.

### Social media

Facebook is used for Dutch Bunker Day. One message a week is posted in the 3 to 2-month period before Bunker Day. This number is increased to 2 or 3 messages per week in the period starting 2 months before the event. It is important that the content of the messages vary. Some suggestions:

- Messages that actively encourage the visit and/or ticket sale. You directly invite people to purchase a ticket (or to register) for Bunker Day in these messages. A possible message can be: "Discover the story behind these enormous concrete structures hidden below the sand. Register for Bunker Day 2019 now!"
- Messages about participating sites. Share beautiful pictures of sites participating in Bunker Day. Let the pictures speak for themselves and do not include a lot of information in these posts.
- Substantive vlogs. Use short videos to tell people more about the history of the Atlantic Wall, but also share knowledge about things like the anatomy of a bunker. Make sure that the videos are brief (no more than 2 minutes), always include subtitles (people like watching videos without sound), and are easily accessible (everyone must be able to understand them). These vlogs do not have to be made by a professional company. The nature of Bunker Day is perfectly suitable for self-made videos.

Examples of Dutch Bunker Day vlogs can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUp2Jy633fyEuuOpFIRJpig>

- Messages focussing on taking a closer look at bunkers. A lot of people who visit a bunker are not entirely sure what they should be looking at. A bunker can simply look like a chunk of

concrete. However, if you know what to look for, traces of its former use can be seen. This is why it is fun and useful to take pictures of signs of the past and explain what you are looking at in a brief post.

- Messages with practical information. It is useful to share some practical information shortly before Bunker Day. You can call on people to wear sturdy shoes and clothes that may get dirty or to bring a torch. These posts are called 'Bunker Day Survival Tips' in the Netherlands.

### Programme booklet

The programme booklet provides a good overview of the sites that can be visited and the side programme. Your programme will be complete at this stage and the booklet can be created. A number of important aspects:

- Provide an introduction with a brief history of the Atlantic Wall
- Share practical information about the event, such as the day, hours, prices (if applicable), and general conditions (if necessary).
- Do not forget to thank any sponsors or providers of subsidies in the booklet.
- Design the booklet in line with the brand style guidelines of European Bunker Day.
- Add an overview map of the entire country/region with all cities/location participating in Bunker Day.
- Describe the programme with brief information about each accessible bunker. Also indicate the side programme at this site (if applicable).

Make sure to start with the design, printing, and distribution well in advance. An ideal schedule would look as follows:

- 2 months before Bunker Day: start with designing
- 5 weeks before Bunker Day: booklet sent to printer. The delivery period is 1.5 weeks.
- 3.5 weeks before Bunker Day: start with distribution to all participating sites.

### Visibility

- Provide each bunker with a beach flag in the Bunker Day style. This makes it easier to recognise and find.
- An alternative to this beach flag is a pavement sign with a Bunker Day poster.
- Provide each bunker with directional signs in the Bunker Day style.
- Provide each bunker with an information sign in the Bunker Day style.
- Additionally: provide all volunteers and employees working for Bunker Day with a special Bunker Day crew shirt.

You can also provide each site with the following:

- Programme booklets
- Bunker Day tickets
- Workbooks for children

Make sure that all bunker sites have these items well in advance (no later than 2 weeks before Bunker Day)

Send an email to all participants with the most important details such as the name and telephone number of the contact in the last week before Bunker Day. Do not send this email before this time, as it may get lost.

### Volunteers

Start recruiting volunteers 1.5 or 1 month(s) before Bunker Day, for example through the newsletter or on social media. Make clear what you are looking for and what you expect.

Keep in touch with volunteers who sign up. If they have not heard from you in a while, they may assume they are no longer needed.

Organising a special information evening for the volunteers may be worthwhile.

Always arrange a few more volunteers than you think you will need. Because they are not providing a paid service, volunteers often cancel at the last moment.

### Distributing information to participants

Keeping in touch with all Bunker Day participants is essential for a positive Bunker Day experience.

Send an email to all participants in the week in which Bunker Day will take place (but not sooner, as there is a significant risk of the email getting lost), which includes the following:

- Wishing them a fun and successful Bunker Day
- A brief description of your expectations of the location, for example:  
Do not forget to place the beach flag/pavement sign  
Do not forget to register your visitors using ...
- Include information about how the locations should handle press
- Include the contact details of the day coordinator (refer to phase 4)
- Include what you expect from the site after Bunker Day, for example:  
The shirts must be washed and returned to the organisation  
Inform us about the total number of visitors by email  
Share any pictures you have taken

## The actual Bunker Day

Make sure there is a contact who is available for any questions participants may have. Inform the participants of this phone number well in advance. If you have recruited volunteers to help out during Bunker Day yourself, it is important to welcome these persons and explain your expectations and their duties. Make sure volunteers always have a personal contact they can address.

It would be very considerate to thank the volunteer with a small gift after his or her shift.

## Press coordinator

You have included the contact details of the press coordinator in the sent press release. This person will be available by phone for interviews and background information throughout the day. This coordinator can also arrange on-site interviews. He or she serves as the single point of contact and the spider in the web. The press coordinator can be the same person as the day coordinator. This person must be very familiar with the programme, however.

## Press release

It would be wise to send out a press release to the short-lead media immediately after Bunker Day (on the same day) to increase the Bunker Day branding. This press release will describe the success of Bunker Day and refer to European Bunker Day.

Topics of the press release may be:

- Number of visitors
- Most popular site
- Quote from a visitor about the value of Bunker Day
- Access to the most special or unique location

Always include at least 2 print-quality pictures (at least 300 dpi).



## After European Bunker Day

### Visitor survey

A visitor survey can provide valuable information about your event.

Setting up a survey is easy and simple using Google Forms, part of Google Drive.

### Bunker sites after-care

Bunker Day could not exist without the efforts of all participating bunker sites. This is why it is wise to maintain a good relationship with the representatives of these institutions. Call all sites in the week after Bunker Day and ask things like:

- How did Bunker Day go?
- How many visitors did you receive?
- Ask what potential improvements they have noticed (for themselves and the organisations).
- Ask if they are satisfied.

Besides this personal approach, you can also send an email to thank them. This email can also list some practical matters you expect from the sites.

### Storing materials

For the purposes of sustainability, it is wise to develop supporting materials without a date wherever possible. This ensure they can also be used for future editions. Examples are the beach flag, the crew shirts, or an information sign. Determine whether you want to store these materials yourself (and distribute them again next year), or if you will ask the bunker sites to store them.