

Moscow-Minsk Marathon Honors Victory Day 70th Anniversary

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Moscow, Russia—A group of young Russians has completed an International Peace Marathon between the capitals of Russia and Belarus.

The marathon, titled “Memory and Glory—70!,” was organized to honor the 70th anniversary of Victory Day (May 9, 1945), the day when Nazi Germany surrendered to the Soviet Union to end the Great Patriotic War, or World War II in Europe.

Starting from the Kremlin in Moscow on May 31, 2015, the marathon covered 1,200 kilometers (more than 745 miles) in 16 days before it was completed on Victory Square in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, on June 15.

The marathon runners included 30 young representatives from Russia's Moscow, Bryansk, Ivanovo, Nizhny Novgorod, Ryazan, Saratov, Sverdlovsk and Smolensk regions. Eight young Muscovites aged 6 to 17 also participated in the marathon. Experienced marathoners and teachers also were there to support and encourage the young athletes.

The route of the marathon brought the young runners to the sites where Soviet troops fought Nazi Germany during the 1940s and also where the Russians repelled French invaders in 1812: Moscow - Krasnogorsk - Snegiri - Mozhaisk - Borodino - Gagarin - Vyazma - Dorogobuzh - Smolensk - Orsha - Mogilev - Bobruisk - Slutsk - Nesvizh - Ivatsevichy - Kobryn - Brest - Minsk.

The runners carried with them from Moscow to Brest and Minsk a copy of the famous Victory Banner. Ten years ago, Shota Melitonovich Kantaria, the son of Meliton Kantaria, a Hero of the Soviet Union, presented this banner to the marathoners. Participants also brought a portion of soil from the Rajewski Battery at the Borodino Battlefield to the Brest Fortress.

Along the marathon route, the runners met with veterans of the Great Patriotic War, representatives of regional and local authorities, and of youth public organizations. They also took part in events held to commemorate Victory Day.

The main objectives of the marathon were encouraging patriotism; the spiritual and physical education of children and youth; strengthening the historical fraternal friendship of the peoples of Russia and Belarus; and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

On the evening before the marathon started, the young participants visited the Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War on Moscow's Poklonnaya Hill.

The marathon was organized by the Moscow regional public organization Super-Marathoners for a Healthy Lifestyle, together with UPF-Russia. It was held within the framework of the traditional children's and youth marathon "Children against Drugs—I Choose Sports!" under the patronage of the Federal Service for Drug Control and the Russian Athletics Federation. The event was supported by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Presidential Administration and the Ministry of Sports of the Republic of Belarus. The Moscow stage of the marathon was supported by the Government of Moscow and the Moscow Sports Committee.