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Prize of Peace of Westphalia 2014

Welcome by Dr. Reinhard Zinkann

Chairman of the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our guests in Münster's Historic Town Hall and to the spectators who are following the presentation of the Peace of Westphalia Prize live in front of the Town Hall or at home.

It is well known that the significance of the Treaties of Westphalia for the political order in Europe is beyond any historical dispute. They gave Europe comprehensible and resilient borders for the first time, gave states such as the Netherlands and Switzerland their independence and laid the foundations for freedom of religion and confession as well as a viable coexistence of state and church. The Treaties of Westphalia established the principle of equal rights and sovereignty for all states - regardless of their military or economic power. A groundbreaking success which, given the concessions that had to be made by all parties to the negotiations, is considered the birth of modern diplomacy.

The dream of peace is as old as humanity itself. It is well known that the envoys of 1648 were not able to achieve a final peace - the pax perpetua - but they did send out pioneering signals on the way to achieving it, the memory of which is worth keeping alive.

Following on from this, the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe established the prize of the same name on the 350th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia, which has since been awarded every two years in two equal categories.

One prize is awarded for the life's work of personalities or the achievements of an organization that has rendered outstanding services to peace and international understanding in Europe and the world. Another prize honors the voluntary commitment of young people who have made an outstanding contribution to these goals. With a total of 100,000 euros, the Peace of Westphalia Prize is the most highly endowed award of its kind in Germany. This sum is donated every two years by committed entrepreneurs from our region. In doing so, they support the goal of the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe to campaign for a free and social market economy in a federal Europe on a non-partisan basis.

Ladies and gentlemen:

- Respect for the territorial integrity of other states!
- Tolerance towards the faith of others instead of religious fanaticism!
- Priority for diplomacy over attempts to resolve conflicts by military means!

Who among us would have thought, when former Czech President Vaclav Havel was the first person ever to be honored with the Peace of Westphalia Prize in this room in 1998, that in 2014 these very values would appear more threatened than at any time since the fall of the Iron Curtain, almost exactly 25 years ago today?

Who among us would have thought it possible

- that Russia would annex parts of a sovereign neighboring country just as it wanted to move closer to the EU as a community of values of the European peoples?
- that the expulsion of long-standing dictators and autocrats would not bring peace and democracy to the Arab world, but chaos and civil war - including the indiscriminate slaughter of thousands of people by fanatical holy warriors? And all this with the active support of young people who have grown up in Western freedom and democracy!
- Who would have thought that the debt crisis in southern Europe would trigger fundamental conflicts over the sustainability and future path of the European Union of a depth not seen since the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957? The same applies to the resurgence of nationalism in the heart of Europe, as can be seen from the current composition of the European Parliament and the rise of separatism. In Scotland, the people only narrowly voted to remain in the United Kingdom; the Catalans called off a referendum on their secession from Spain practically at the last minute.

And who would have thought it possible that renowned historians would even feel reminded of the situation before the outbreak of the First World War 75 years ago?

The French Nobel Prize winner for literature Anatole France once said: "Senseless Europeans who think of strangling each other, when the same civilization envelops and unites them!" And Hans-Dietrich Genscher once said: "Europe is our future, otherwise we have none".

In view of the threatening escalation in Ukraine, but also in view of the growing economic and political importance of populous countries such as China or India, one is inclined to add: "Europe is our voice, otherwise we have none."

Not only the states of war in the immediate vicinity of the EU and NATO, but also the growing doubts among people in many EU countries about the beneficial effects of European unification may encourage us to realize that lasting peace is not a

foregone conclusion. We all remain called upon to play our part to make our contribution to peace and international understanding.

This is all the more true as 2014 is a triple commemoration year: 100 years ago, the powder keg of entrenched nationalism and imperialism across Europe exploded in the outbreak of the First World War. 75 years ago, Adolf Hitler triggered the Second World War with his invasion of Poland. And 25 years ago, the people of East Germany tore down the Iron Curtain.

And it encouraged the jury to award this year's Peace of Westphalia Prize to the crews of the International Space Station (ISS). Men and women who fought bitterly against each other in two world wars and lived in hostile blocs during the Cold War now live, work and research together in a confined space as a matter of course, for the benefit of mankind as a whole. And the success of this 'outpost of humanity' in space proves that peaceful international cooperation between partners from different cultures is possible.

As a prizewinner, you are in the same league as personalities such as Helmut Schmidt, who is still the 2012 prizewinner, Kofi Anan, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Carla der Ponte and Helmut Kohl.

Today we are also honoring the youth work of the German War Graves Commission, young people who, in their very own way, uphold the memory of the fallen of the wars; and those who bow over war graves will hardly want to wage war themselves. The most recent recipients of this award were the organizations "Children for a Better World", the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra and the Lebanon project of the "Community of Young Maltese".

Last but not least, it is an honor for me to announce two laudators who have also contributed, each in their own way, to understanding between peoples: Once again, I would like to welcome Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Tom Buhrow, Director General of Westdeutscher Rundfunk and former Washington correspondent for ARD.

I don't want to get ahead of you now. I will hand over to our moderator Sabine Scholt - and thank you for your attention.