

Markus Lewe
Lord Mayor of the City of Münster

Welcome to the award ceremony of the Westphalian Peace Prize 2018

Saturday, July 14, 2018, 11:00 a.m.
Town Hall Festival Hall

The spoken word prevails.

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a special pleasure and honor for me to welcome you all to Münster on 14 July 2018. July 2018 in the historic town hall of the city of Münster on the occasion of the 2018 Peace Prize award ceremony.

It is an outstanding event for the city of Münster. In the jubilee anniversary year of European cultural heritage, today marks the 11th time that the Westphalian Peace Prize will be awarded today.

It is also a very special honor for the city of Münster that Excellencies, Mrs. Grybauskaite from Lithuania, Mr. Grybauskaite from Germany and Lithuania, Mr. Vejonis from Latvia, Mrs. Kaljulaid from Estonia. Kaljulaid from Estonia, have come to us in Münster to receive the Westphalian Peace Prize in person. I would like to extend a warm welcome to you on behalf of all the people of Münster!

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the dedicated young people and representatives of the rings of the German Scouts and Guides as the other winners of this year's Westphalian Peace Prize: namely Rebekka Jaumann, Lena Simonek, Lina Graumann and Jakob Graumann.

Furthermore, it is a special honor:

- Mr. Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier as laudator,
- Minister President of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia Armin Laschet also as a laudatory speaker,
- the Executive Board of the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe, Dr. Zinkann,
- my colleague from Osnabrück, Dr. Griesert,
- and many high-ranking representatives from politics, business, culture and society

here today in the Rathausfestsaal.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The city of Münster is inextricably linked with a historic peace treaty.

370 years ago, after 30 years of war and destruction, a new form of peace was achieved: with the end of the military conflict through the conclusion of international treaties and not through the victory or surrender of warring parties. That is the Peace of Westphalia of 1648.

These peace negotiations gave rise to the "Westphalian system", based on the principles of sovereignty, territoriality and the equality of states. It is still one of the pillars of our coexistence under international law.

In the Peace Hall of our town hall you will find the motto: "Pax Optima rerum", which translates as "Peace is the highest good".

It stands for the tradition of keeping Münster alive as the city of the Peace of Westphalia and to keep the historical legacy alive in the present and future.

There is no doubt that peace gives rise to togetherness and promotes peace our community and cohesion. But the claim to peace also challenges us anew every day.

Because even though each of us knows and strives for peace. Peace is fragile and unfortunately not a given matter of course.

Especially when we consider the conflicts we are currently facing in Germany, in Europe and the world at the moment in terms of tensions and divisions, it is no exaggeration to say that the world is upside down. The number of trouble spots worldwide has increased significantly.

It seems difficult for us humans to create peace and to live in peace with one another.

But in view of the situation we find ourselves in, it is clear that elementary values such as peace, mutual respect, tolerance and justice are more important than ever. They are a prerequisite for the successful coexistence of people, nations and cultures.

The power of the peace order of the Peace of Westphalia has never diminished. Today, with the award ceremony in Münster, it strengthens the idea of a peaceful community, in Münster, in Germany, in Europe and in the world - not only in people's minds, but also in their hearts.

This year's winners of the Westphalian Peace Prize have rendered outstanding services to peace in a very special way.

They are great role models for active advocacy of peace, for our greatest good, "Pax Optima rerum".

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure that with your presence you have honored the recipients of the 2018 Westphalian Peace Prize with your presence. You honor the commitment to

peace and freedom in Europe and in the world, and this is more important today than ever.

Welcome to the City of Peace Münster!