

PRESS RELEASE

International Prize of Peace of Westphalia awarded to the Baltic States and the Scouts

"Only united Europe has a future"

Münster/Westphalia, July 14, 2018. 20 years of the International Peace of Westphalia Prize: for the first time, entire countries - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - were honored in Münster on Saturday. The three Baltic states share the 100,000 euro prize with the Scouts, who received this year's youth prize. The Peace Prize is awarded every two years by the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe (WWL) in the historic town hall of the city of Münster - in reference to the end of the 30-year war in 1648, which went down in history as the "Peace of Westphalia".

Since the German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier presented the bronze sculptures of the Westphalian horse to Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid, Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė and Latvian President Raimonds Vējonis at midday, the people of all three states can also feel like peace prize winners. In his laudatory speech, Steinmeier praised "the achievement of the people in the Baltic states in looking the past in the face without allowing themselves to be banished".

The Federal President addressed the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians directly: "That you and your countries are not alone in remembering injustice, but are prepared to reconcile with us Germans, that fills us with gratitude."

In their acceptance speeches, the three heads of state were unanimous in their commitment to Europe, peace and reconciliation. Dalia Grybauskaitė, Lithuanian President, praised the role of the Germans: "Germany is investing a lot in the future of Europe," she explained. "We stand side by side in this." Latvian President Raimonds Vējonis warned that "whenever Europe has been divided and torn apart, it has caused suffering". "Only united Europe has a future", he emphasized. "Times of peace are times to build peace – instead of resting on it," said Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid.

The representatives of the rings of German Scouts and Guides, aged between 14 and 23, were visibly delighted to accept the youth award. Lina Graumann from the Bund der Pfadfinderinnen und Pfadfinder (BdP), Rebekka Jaumann from the Pfadfinderinnenschaft St. Georg, Lena Simosek for the Verband Christlicher Pfadfinderinnen und Pfadfinder (VCP) and Jakob Westarp, representing the Deutsche Pfadfinderschaft Sankt Georg (DPSG), were presented with the award by North Rhine-Westphalia's Minister President Armin Laschet.

In his laudatory speech, Laschet praised the scouts as "role models who embody the ideals of a peaceful, tolerant world".

The Minister President of NRW emphasized that it is more important than ever today to stand up for each other and support one another. take care of each other. "Once a scout, always a scout: that's a good motto" that should apply to us all, said Armin Laschet.

In his speech at the beginning of the ceremony, the 2nd Chairman of the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe, Dr. Benedikt Hüffer, expressed the wish that "everyone should stand up for a common value system in mutual tolerance". Hüffer: "As recent political debates have shown, this starts right on our doorstep."

In his welcoming address, the Lord Mayor of Münster, Markus Lewe, recalled the "power of the peace order of the Peace of Westphalia". This has never waned. "Today, with the award ceremony in Münster, it strengthens the idea of a peaceful community more than ever - not only in people's minds, but also in their hearts," said Lewe.

The International Peace of Westphalia Prize, which has been awarded since 1998, has already gone to Václav Havel, Helmut Kohl, Carla del Ponte, Kurt Masur, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Kofi Annan, Daniel Barenboim, Helmut Schmidt, the crews of the ISS space station and Jordanian King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein. Together with personalities or representatives of states who have become role models for peace work in Europe and the world, young people are also always honored whose actions have set an example for political, social and ecological reconciliation and thus for peace in the world. Most recently, the campaign Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste and the youth work of the Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e. V. (German War Graves Commission).

Notes for editors:

Printable images and lots of background information can be found at www.friedenspreis-presse.de