

PRESS RELEASE

Ceremony on July 14 at Münster City Hall

International Prize of Peace of Westphalia 2018: Federal President Steinmeier delivers laudatory speech for the Baltic states

Münster/Westphalia, April 30, 2018 : German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and North Rhine-Westphalian Prime Minister Armin Laschet will be the laudatory speakers at the 2018 International Prize of Peace of Westphalia Award ceremony. The German head of state will deliver the laudatory speech for the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, whose heads of state will receive the awards. The head of government of North Rhine-Westphalia will pay tribute to the youth work of the Scouts. The names of both speakers were announced today by the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe (WWL). The award will be presented at a ceremony in Münster Town Hall on July 14.

"We are delighted that the Federal President has agreed to attend our award ceremony," explained Dr. Reinhard Zinkann, Chairman of the WWL. "In his political work, Frank-Walter Steinmeier has cited the principles of the Münster and Osnabrück peace agreement as exemplary - especially in the ongoing peace efforts in the Middle East. It was always important to him to uphold the memory of what the envoys achieved in Münster and Osnabrück in 1648," Zinkann emphasized.

The current Federal President Steinmeier has also attended several previous award ceremonies in Münster. According to Zinkann, the fact that he has agreed to be this year's laudator impressively illustrates the importance he attaches to the Peace Prize.

The Economic Society announced the current winners at the beginning of the year. According to the jury's statement, the Baltic states are being honored "in recognition of and to strengthen their special efforts towards integration in Europe". The President of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid, the President of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė, and Raimonds Vējonis, the President of Latvia, will attend the award ceremony on July 14. They promised the WWL their personal participation in the ceremony some time ago.

As the world's largest youth organization, the Scouts and Guides are being honoured for "contributing to the peace-oriented development of young people so that they can become involved in society as responsible citizens". Prime Minister Armin Laschet will present the Peace Prize on behalf of four young people who are involved as scouts in four associations. The ceremony will once again be broadcast live on WDR television and by local television stations in the Baltic states.

Immediately after the ceremony, the new recipients of the Peace Prize will once again greet the people on Prinzipalmarkt. At around 1 p.m., the honorees and guests of honour will make their traditional appearance on the Sentenzbogen of the Stadtweinhaus. Following previous award ceremonies, thousands of Münster residents have given prizewinners such as Kofi Annan and Helmut Schmidt a warm welcome.

On the eve of the award ceremony, the Chairman of the Economic Society invites you to a festive dinner in honor of the winners. The prizewinners in the foyer of the LWL Museum of Art and Culture. Afterwards, the heads of state, prize winners and guests will visit the current exhibition on the Year of Peace in Münster, into which the date for the award ceremony has been integrated this time.

Background information: International Peace of Westphalia Prize

Religious peace, tolerance and federalism were the key points of the Peace of Westphalia concluded in Münster and Osnabrück in 1648, which ended the Thirty Years' War. As a symbol of the continued validity of these postulates, the Wirtschaftliche Gesellschaft für Westfalen und Lippe e. V. (Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe) established the International Peace of Westphalia Prize in 1998, on the 350th anniversary of the peace treaty.

The highest endowed German peace prize, worth 100,000 euros, is awarded every two years in two equal categories: It is awarded to personalities or representatives of states who have become role models for peace work in Europe and the world. The Youth Prize is awarded to young people or youth groups who act in an exemplary manner for peace and reconciliation.

Since 1998, the award has 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 Jordan's King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein. The most recent recipients of the Youth Prize were Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste and the youth work of the Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e. V. (German War Graves Commission).

Note for editorial offices: Background information and printable images relating to the Peace Prize can be found at www.friedenspreis-presse.de