

PRESS RELEASE



International Prize of Peace of Westphalia 2020

Welcoming speech by Dr. Reinhard Zinkann

Chairman of the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe (WWL)

THE SPOKEN WORD APPLIES.

Ladies and gentlemen, President and Prime Minister,

It is a great honor for us to welcome you to Münster today. We are delighted, ladies and gentlemen here in the hall and you as viewers on the screens, that you are here with us.

A special welcome goes to our prize winners, whose personalities and work we would like to honor at this ceremony in line with the objectives of our prize foundation.

I would like to extend a special welcome to H.E. Prime Minister Zoran Zaev and you, former Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, together with your respective delegations.

I would like to welcome H. E. Mr. President Egils Levits and your companions from Latvia. We look forward, Mr. President, to your laudation on the occasion of this award, which will honor the Prespa Agreement. With this agreement, the two laureates have succeeded in resolving the decades-long Macedonian name dispute between their respective countries. In doing so, they have removed the obstacles to common prospects in south-eastern Europe. Mr. President Levits, we look forward to hearing what you have to say about this.

We are delighted that the Ambassador of the former prize-winning country Latvia, H.E. Ms. Inga Skujina, is with us for the second time. I would also like to welcome H.E. Ambassador Ramadan Nazifi. He represents North Macedonia in Berlin.

We welcome Felix Finkbeiner together with Jana Reiter. As Youth Award winners, they accept our award on behalf of the many young people who are actively working towards the goals of Plant-for-the-Planet around the world. I will come back to your important commitment to our climate future in a moment.

I am particularly pleased that you, Mr. Kuper, President of the State Parliament, are among us as a representative of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. A warm welcome to you!

I would also like to extend a special greeting to the Lord Mayor of Münster, who represents our city of peace from 1648: Mr. Markus Lewe, of course, regularly attends the ceremonial events for the awarding of our prize with his wife. A warm welcome to you! Together with you, we are now commemorating the Peace of

Westphalia in Münster and Osnabrück for the 12th time. And with its everlasting symbolic power. The honorary chairman of our jury, Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, also refers to this on many occasions when it comes to international politics. I am particularly pleased to take this opportunity to extend his greetings to you.

Welcome, Most Reverend Bishop Genn, we are particularly pleased to have you here!

I would also like to welcome you, dear Ms. Feller, as a representative of our state government here in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have all come together here in the atrium of the LWL Museum of Art and Culture to award our prize for 2020 in a place other than the Town Hall of the Peace of Westphalia here in Münster. Many thanks to the director of the Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe and our board member, Mr. Løb, and the director of this museum, Dr. Arnold, for allowing us to be guests in this impressive and important museum.

Here we experience an equally dignified setting, but at the same time contemporary with a ventilation technology that is part of our hygiene concept.

That brings us to the pandemic. It is causing serious impairments and restrictions in all areas of our lives. I would like to emphasize this to the entrepreneurs on our Board of Trustees: It is thanks to you, ladies and gentlemen, that we are able to award this internationally renowned prize every two years with the necessary funds and its considerable endowment.

This prize of the economy of our beautiful and vibrant region of Westphalia sets a shining example of peace, reconciliation and relaxed coexistence in the international community. Peace and stable framework conditions make it possible for us as a company to make our contribution to social equality and prosperity. Politics and business have a corresponding effect on people - not only here in Westphalia: We need each other - everywhere.

The 350th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia concluded in Münster and Osnabrück in 1648 has prompted the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe to regularly award prizes to internationally active personalities and young people who act in an exemplary manner since 1998. Our prize is awarded for commitment to peace, understanding, sustainability and social responsibility.

This includes what we are distinguishing today.

The agreement that the then Prime Ministers Alexis Tsipras and Zoran Zaev negotiated in 2018 against fierce resistance in their own countries and achieved with diplomatic skill prompted us, together with the jury and the Board of Trustees, to honor you both as the then acting heads of state for what was achieved under the name Prespa Agreement. At that time, you set a European signal of hope.

We are proud and happy to have the President of one of our three 2018 award-winning countries from the Baltic States honor this agreement. Mr. President Levits represents Latvia. As an experienced politician, diplomat, legal scholar and former judge at the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, he seemed predestined to join our

prize winners and to give the laudatory speech at the award ceremony.

For us in Central Europe, the perspectives of smaller states in the border region of the Community and the significance for their further development are particularly important. The view from Latvia on North Macedonia and Greece as well as on the EU as a whole is not part of our everyday political life. The relevance is made widely visible by the fact that the development of migration is now suddenly also a direct issue in the Baltic States as an important part of Europe. We are dealing with the consequence of the almost unbelievably aggressive behavior of the Belarusian dictator Lukashenko. In addition to the pressure to flee around the Mediterranean, we are now also experiencing what is currently affecting the Baltic countries and therefore all of us in Europe. We cannot leave this problem to the affected border countries alone. Europe must find a solution as a community.

Our committees also decided on the awarding of the Youth Prize at an early stage. For several years now, we have been impressed by the idea and possibly the right solution that a then nine-year-old schoolboy came up with in 2007.

He anticipated much of what now concerns the whole world: our climate future. A year earlier, a group of UN employees had launched a project on the subject. The question was how we can reduce man-made CO₂ emissions to zero and at the same time remove the excess CO₂ from the atmosphere. Felix Finkbeiner was the name of the young gentleman we are welcoming today. Since his father founded a foundation with him, the aim of which is to raise awareness of climate change and global justice among children, young people and adults. We will also hear more about this in a moment from Ms. Sarna Röser, who represents the next generation of our entrepreneurs. We all face the future task of bringing successful business even more in line with climate justice.

So-called greenwashing is currently a widespread feature of entrepreneurial activity. What is this? It is the attempt by companies and institutions to neutralize their CO₂ consumption by donating money to ecological projects in a publicity-effective manner. In addition This includes the motive of appearing particularly environmentally conscious and environmentally friendly. The corresponding organizations must be able to meet the wave of this demand - for example for reforestation certificates. For our award winners, this issue has triggered debates and media reports that have raised doubts.

The Foundation's open approach in response to individual critical reports on the meaning, impact and success of its approach ultimately made us certain that we made the right choice in awarding the Youth Prize.

First of all, we are delighted to be able to present the International Peace of Westphalia Prizes today. Unfortunately, our Minister President Armin Laschet is unable to be present because, for current reasons, a commemoration of the victims of our terrible flood disaster is taking place in Aachen at the same time. Our thoughts are also with them, just as we extend our sympathy to the victims of the fire disasters in the Mediterranean region. This is especially true for your country, Mr. Tsipras.

I would now like to hand over to Ms. Susanne Wieseler, who will continue to guide us through this award ceremony. Thank you very much for your attention!