

PRESS RELEASE

International Prize of Peace of Westphalia 2020 Greeting to the award ceremony

Markus Lewe, Lord Mayor of the City of Münster

THE SPOKEN WORD APPLIES.

Dear President Levits,

dear prizewinners,

dear Dr. Zinkann,

dear guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a special pleasure and honor for me to welcome you all here in the City of Peace Münster on the occasion of the award ceremony of the International Peace of Westphalia Prize.

This award ceremony, which takes place every two years, is a particularly special event for our city.

Due to the pandemic last year, the 2020 Peace Prize will now be awarded one year later, today on August 28, 2021. For the same reasons, as Lord Mayor of Münster, I am exceptionally unable to welcome you to our historic town hall today.

Nevertheless, I am very pleased and grateful that the LWL Museum for Art and Culture was found to be the best alternative for the Peace Prize ceremony. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to express my special thanks to the Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe and the host, Matthias Löb.

It is an extraordinary honor for us as a city that His Excellency, the Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia, Mr. Zoran Zaev, and the former Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic of Greece, Mr. Alexis Tsipras, have come to Münster to receive the Westphalian Peace Prize in person.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to them on behalf of all the people of Münster!

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the ambassadors for climate justice from Plant-for-the-planet as the other winners of the 2020 Westphalian Peace Prize: Jana Reiter and Felix Finkbeiner

Furthermore, it is a special honor,

His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Latvia, Mr. Egils Levits as laudator, the President of the State Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia, Mr. André Kuper, the Federal Chairwoman of the business association "Die jungen Unternehmer", Ms. Sarna Röser, as laudator,

the Chairman of the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe, Dr. Zinkann, and many high-ranking representatives from politics, business, culture and society here in Münster today.

Your presence makes Münster and the people of Münster proud and we are delighted to be able to host the Westphalian Peace Prize award ceremony again this year.

With this in mind, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all!

Ladies and gentlemen,

As the city of the Peace of Westphalia, Münster feels a special connection and commitment to peace.

Through the peace treaty of 1648, through the Peace Hall, through the Peace of Westphalia Square with the sculpture "Tolerance through Dialogue" by Eduardo Chillida, through the awarding of the Westphalian Peace Prize, the theme of peace is omnipresent and ever-present in our city.

373 years ago, after 30 years of war and destruction, a new form of peace was achieved: Not through the victory or surrender of a warring party, but through negotiations on an equal footing and the conclusion of international treaties - 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 remains one of the pillars of our coexistence under international law to this day.

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

Especially when we consider the conflicts, tensions and divisions that are currently plaguing us. Starting with the increasing political populism here in Germany, through the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, to the catastrophic situation in Afghanistan: peace is fragile and unfortunately cannot be taken for granted!

It seems to be difficult for us humans to create peace, to keep peace and to live in peace with each other.

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

The power of the peace order of the Peace of Westphalia has never waned. It is strengthening 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. They are great role models for active advocacy of peace.

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure that you are honoring the winners of the 2020 Westphalian Peace Prize with your presence. In doing so, you are honoring their commitment to peace and freedom in Europe and the world, and this is more important today than ever.

Welcome to the City of Peace Münster!