

Press release

“How stable is peace?”

375 years of the Peace of Westphalia: Cluster of Excellence involved in major anniversary programme in Münster – “How can peace be kept after years of war?” – Around 300 events in total – International “Westphalian Peace Expert Forum” to close the event

Münster, 20 March 2023 (exc) How stable is peace? How can it be kept after years of war? The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” at the University of Münster will discuss these core questions in the anniversary programme “375 years of the Peace of Westphalia” in Münster in 2023. “What many people might well have asked themselves after the achievement of peace 375 years ago is still crucial today in view of war in Europe: How is it possible not only to achieve peace, but also to keep it? This is what we will be discussing in panels and lectures in the year of peace”, said early-modern historian Ulrike Ludwig from the Cluster of Excellence during the municipal presentation of the annual programme in the city hall on Monday. The programme comprises about 300 events organized by 50 institutions and members of the public at 41 locations. An overview can be found at: www.stadt-muenster.de/frieden.

A **discussion evening** “How stable is peace? The Peace of Westphalia as a treaty under international law” will examine the long-term effects of the peace treaty 375 years ago from the perspective of history, legal history, and constitutional history: Did it bring about a durable peace for Europe? Can we learn anything from the settlement achieved then that we can use with regard to seemingly insoluble conflicts today? The Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Legal Unity and Pluralism” and the Cluster of Excellence at the University of Münster invite you to the event in the auditorium of the LWL Museum of Art and Culture in Münster on 22 June from 6 to 8 p.m.

The international **conference** “Winning the peace? A comparison of cities after 1648” on 28-29 September will explore how things actually unfolded after peace was achieved, with scholars addressing what has not yet been explored much: How did cities like Münster, Trier and Utrecht manage to live together after the war? What effects did the war have on the spatial reorganization of cities between reconstruction and post-war economy? The Cluster of Excellence, the Münster City Archives, and the Institute for Comparative Urban History invite you to the conference in the council hall in the *Stadtweinhaus*. The conference will also see on 27 September the awarding of the City of Münster’s Historian Prize to the German historian Prof. Ute Daniel.

To **conclude the anniversary year** on 24 October, the date of the Peace of Westphalia, the cities of Münster and Osnabrück, together with the North Westphalia Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Westphalia Initiative Foundation, and the Cluster of Excellence, invite you to the “Westphalian Peace Expert Forum” at the Münster Theatre. The event will be attended by

international experts from the global North and South, and will also address the question of how wars can be ended and peace kept.

Annual programme with culture, science and tourism

“375 years of the Peace of Westphalia” comprises a wide range of events from theatre and concerts, to podiums and discussions, to guided bike tours and tours of the city. It is a project for all the population, as Lord Mayor Markus Lewe said in the city hall. “The Peace of Westphalia contributes to Münster’s identity. Dealing with the issue has a long tradition in Münster, which not only looks back, but always looks for the current relevance of past events. This is reflected in the diversity of our anniversary programme, which – and this is typical of the city – is shaped and made possible by the people of Münster and their creative ideas. They will look from the most diverse perspectives not only at Münster, but also at the whole world, and especially in view of the current political situation”.

The series of events “Münster in 1648: Dialogues on Peace”, which the working group of the same name organizes with the Cluster of Excellence every year in Münster, already has a long tradition. The working group is part of the “Alliance for Science in Münster”, which is an alliance between the universities and the city. The year of peace will see the series focus on the issue of monuments. There will be between 31 August and 7 September (in the run-up to the Open Monument Day) a conference on war memorials, a school academy, a school action week, and the meeting of religious communities that recurs as part of the series of events. (vvm/sms/fbu)

Caption: Numerous participants from the city are involved in “375 years of the Peace of Westphalia” in Münster. Photo: City of Münster/Münster Marketing/Ralf Emmerich. Publication with this press release free of charge.

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