

Press release

“How stable is peace?”

Panel to discuss the Peace of Westphalia 375 years ago: How was it possible to achieve a lasting peace? What lessons can we learn from it today? – Discussion evening organized by the Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Legal Unity and Pluralism” and the Cluster of Excellence in Münster on 22 June – Further events planned in the anniversary year

Münster, 15 June 2023 (exc) How stable is peace? How can it be maintained after years of war? Next week, researchers invited by the Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Legal Unity and Pluralism” (EViR) and the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” at the University of Münster will discuss the long-term consequences of the Peace of Westphalia 375 years ago, and implications that the historical events have for today. Announcing the discussion evening “How stable is peace? The Peace of Westphalia as a treaty under international law” on 22 June, early-modern historian Ulrike Ludwig says: “What many people probably asked themselves after the conclusion of peace 375 years ago is still a question that people, faced with war in Europe, ask themselves today: How is it possible not only to conclude peace, but also to preserve it?” And: “Given seemingly insoluble conflicts today, the question arises as to how a compromise was reached back then, when the fronts were similarly hardened, and what we can perhaps learn from looking at the historical example”.

The discussion evening will examine the long-term effects of the peace treaty 375 years ago from a historical perspective, one that also takes into account legal and constitutional history. In discussion will be historian Prof. Dr. Claire Gantet (Fribourg), legal scholar Prof. Dr. Christian Hillgruber (Bonn), historian Prof. Dr. Christoph Kampmann (Marburg), and legal historian Prof. Dr. Peter Oestmann, EViR director and researcher at the Cluster of Excellence. EViR director and researcher at the Cluster of Excellence Ulrike Ludwig, who will moderate the evening, says: “We will consider how it was possible, after 30 years of war, for a treaty to emerge that brought peace and a new, forward-looking international legal system to Europe”.

The discussion evening will take place on 22 June from 6 to 8 p.m. in the auditorium of the LWL Museum of Art and Culture in Münster, and is part of the city’s annual programme [“375 Years of the Peace of Westphalia”](#). Registration is not necessary. The discussion evening will end with the discussion being opened to the public. A reception will then take place for those interested, this allowing discussions to be continued.

Ukraine war and urban history – Further events in the year of peace

The Cluster of Excellence is participating with several events in the programme of the anniversary year, which includes around 300 events organized by 50 institutions and members of the public at 41 locations. An overview can be found at www.stadt-muenster.de/en/peace.

On 28-29 September, an international conference “Winning the Peace? A comparison of cities after 1648” will also look at what happened after the peace treaty 375 years ago. How did cities like Münster, Trier and Utrecht manage to live together after the war? The Cluster of Excellence, together with the Münster City Archives and the Institute for Comparative Urban History, invite you to the conference in the Council Hall in the *Stadtweinhaus*.

“Winning the Peace from 1648 to Today: Historical perspectives on the Peace of Westphalia and our present” – the LWL Institute for Westphalian Regional History, in cooperation with the City of Münster and the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, invites you to this symposium on 16 October at the LWL Museum of Art and Culture in Münster. Two panels and a panel discussion will take a critical look at “peace-making”, and its past and present.

To conclude the anniversary year on 24 October, the historic date of the Westphalian peace treaty, the cities of Münster and Osnabrück, in cooperation with the North Westphalia Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Westphalia Initiative Foundation, and the Cluster of Excellence, invite you to the “Westphalian Peace Summit” at the Münster Theatre. The event, which will be attended by international experts from the global North and South, will also address the question of how wars can be ended and peace safeguarded. (fbu/vvm)

Caption: Prof. Dr. Ulrike Ludwig (Photo: Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Legal Unity and Pluralism”); Poster for the event (Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Legal Unity and Pluralism”)

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The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”

The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics. Dynamics of Tradition and Innovation” has been investigating since 2007 the complex relationship between religion and politics across eras and cultures. The 140 researchers from 20 disciplines in the humanities and social sciences focus in the funding phase (2019 to 2025) on the “dynamics of tradition and innovation”. They analyze in transepochnal studies ranging from antiquity to the present day the conditions and factors that make religion an engine of political and social change. The focus of interest is on Europe and the Mediterranean region, as well as on their entanglements with the Near East, Africa, North and Latin America. The research network is the largest of its kind in Germany; and, of the Clusters of Excellence, one of the oldest and the only one to deal with the issue of religion. It will receive funding of 31 million euros from 2019 to 2025.

The Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Legal Unity and Pluralism”

The Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Legal Unity and Pluralism” (EViR) at the University of Münster (WWU) has been funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) since 2021. Fellows from all over the world, together with scholars from Münster, examine the dynamic tension between legal unity and pluralism from antiquity to the present. This is the first attempt to systematically investigate the phenomenon in its entire historical depth and across disciplinary boundaries. In addition to (legal) history, many other disciplines such as ethnology and sociology, as well as literature and religious studies, are involved in the Kolleg.