

Press release

“The Peace of Westphalia shows that violence can never solve conflicts”

International experts invited to the Westphalian Peace Summit in Münster on 24 October – Guests such as Nobel Peace Prize laureate Leymah Roberta Gbowee to discuss questions of global peace – Highlight of the anniversary year “375 Years of the Peace of Westphalia” – Event organized by the Westphalia Initiative Foundation, the North Westphalia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the City of Münster and the Cluster of Excellence – Speaker Michael Seewald: “Peace and conflict research is needed now more than ever in view of war in Europe”

Münster, 18 October 2023 (exc) To conclude the anniversary year “375 Years of the Peace of Westphalia”, international experts will discuss questions of global peace at the Westphalian Peace Summit in Münster next week. Invited are guests from the global South and North, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Leymah Roberta Gbowee from Liberia, Indian political scientist Prof. Dr. Ummu Salma Bava from New Delhi, and Prof. Dan Smith, Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The Summit will focus on the question of which paths lead to peace when crises worldwide threaten a safe future. Former European Parliament President Prof. Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering is patron of the Summit. The Summit will be held in English and German with simultaneous translation.

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Gbowee said prior to the Summit: “The Peace of Westphalia is important because it teaches us the following: That violence can never solve any conflict, that in our current global order, Westphalia presents a road map for negotiations and mediation. That dialogue remains the best and most efficient tool to ending hostilities. That Peace is Possible!”

Taking place in the Großes Haus of Münster Theatre at 6 pm on 24 October 2023, the Summit is part of the “DAS JUBILÄUM!” programme to mark the 375th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia. It is organized by the Westphalia Initiative Foundation, the North Westphalia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” at the University of Münster, and the City of Münster. Moderated by ARD journalist Georg Restle, the discussion will be with Head of ZDF Studio Washington D.C. Elmar Theveßen.

“Conversation on an equal footing with experts from the global South”

According to Prof. Dr. Michael Seewald, speaker of the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”: “Peace and conflict research is needed now more than ever in view of war in Europe and crises worldwide, to work out conditions for a global peace in the 21st century.” The Cluster of Excellence has long investigated past and present conflicts, as well as strategies and symbols of peace. “With the ‘Westphalian Peace Summit’, we want once again to promote academic dialogue with international politics and civil society – and on an equal footing with representatives of the global South, without whom a global peace order is inconceivable.”

The “Westphalian Peace Summit” is part of the “DAS JUBILÄUM!” programme. There will be a discussion beforehand held by the student initiative “MUIMUN” (12 pm, Kleines Haus). An ecumenical peace vespers will begin in the Apostelkirche at 4.30 pm. The large open-air production “Longing for Peace” will begin on Prinzipalmarkt at 8.30 pm after the summit. A journey by image and sound created by the light artist Michael Batz from Hamburg and an international music ensemble is supposed to send a sign of hope in troubled times.
(vvm/tec/fbu)

Registration for those interested: You can register on the waiting list for tickets at:
<https://www.stadt-muenster.de/frieden/jubilaem>.

Caption: Photos of the participants at
<https://www.presse-service.de/data.aspx/static/1139063.html>

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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 transepochal 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.