

PRESS RELEASE

**Defence Minister Pistorius opens peace conference**

Kiev's Mayor Vitali Klitschko and Evonik's CEO Kullmann give speeches

Münster, 7 September 2023 - In just over a week's time, on 15 September, the 1st Westphalian Peace Conference will open in Münster Town Hall in the 375th year of the Peace of Westphalia. The Wirtschaftliche Gesellschaft für Westfalen und Lippe e. V. (WWL) has invited high-ranking national and international politicians and business leaders to spend a day discussing the current crisis situation in the world and especially in Europe following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

After the welcoming address by WWL Chairman Dr. Reinhard Zinkann and Conference Director Armin Laschet MdB, Federal Minister of Defence Boris Pistorius will address the 350 invited guests. In his opening speech, he will assess the current security situation in Europe following the start of the war in Ukraine, discuss the formation of blocs in global politics and mention the consequences for the global economy. Afterwards, Pistorius will take part in an in-depth discussion with the two conference moderators Dunja Hayali and Dr. Wulf Schmiese.

The first panel, which will be opened by the Austrian Dr. Othmar Karas, First Vice-President of the European Parliament, with a keynote speech, will be exciting. This will be followed by a debate on "Europe's role in the world in 2030" by the former NRW Minister President and Federal Minister of Finance, Peer Steinbrück, the former Head of the Chancellery and last Chairman of the German-Russian Peterburg Dialogue, Ronald Pofalla, the German Ambassador to Washington and London and long-time head of the Munich Security Conference, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Ischinger, and Elmar Brok, a Member of the European Parliament for almost 40 years, together with political scientist Dr. Magarete Klein.

After a one-hour lunch break, the conference will focus on the Middle East. Conference chair Armin Laschet MdB welcomes international guests on the topic: "How important is sustainable peace in the Middle East for global peace?" An exciting discussion is expected between Luca Di Maio, EU Representative for the Gulf Region, Noura Al Kaabi, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, and the political scientist from King's College at Oxford University in London, Prof. Peter Neumann.

North Rhine-Westphalia's Minister President Hendrik Wüst MdL will then speak.

Christian Kullmann, CEO of the global chemicals group Evonik Industries AG, will open the discussion on "The economy between the blocs" with his keynote speech. In the subsequent discussion, moderators Dunja Hayali and Dr. Wulf Schmiese want

to find out "what role entrepreneurs can play for peaceful societies". To this end, they invite not only the Deputy Minister-President and Minister of Economic Affairs of North Rhine-Westphalia, Mona Neubaur, to the stage, but also the entrepreneurs Dr. Reinhard Zinkann (Miele & Cie. KG), Andreas Engelhardt (Schüco International) and NRW employer boss Arndt Kirchhoff.

The conference will then eagerly await the mayor of Kiev, Vitali Klitschko. Are there any new strategies for resolving the war with Russia? The close confidant of President Zelenskyy will know. Perhaps he can give the peace conference a little hint as to how a peace agreement on the Black Sea could be initiated. That would be a good final "signal from Münster", from the 1st Westphalian Peace Conference.

Every two years since 1998, the "Wirtschaftliche Gesellschaft für Westfalen und Lippe e. V." has awarded the International Prize of Peace of Westphalia to personalities who have made a special contribution to peace in the world. Previous winners include outstanding statesmen and stateswomen such as Vaclav Havel, Giscard d'Estaing, Helmut Schmidt, Helmut Kohl and Carla del Ponte. French President Emmanuel Macron, who has been working with great commitment to mediate between the warring parties since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, will receive the Peace of Westphalia Prize this year, which will be presented in Münster in the first half of 2024.

### **Media office/press office**

Karl-Heinz Steinkühler  
Claudiusstraße 17 A  
40474 Düsseldorf  
T +49 211 1596 9888  
M +49 151 234 55 580 p  
E: [presse@steinkuehler-com.de](mailto:presse@steinkuehler-com.de)