

Austrian UPF, FFWPU and WFWP's meeting at the Vienna Peace Embassy

Peter Haider
May 14, 2022



Vienna, Austria -- UPF and two affiliated organizations jointly commemorated International Day of Families.

The Austrian branches of Universal Peace Federation, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), and Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) held a breakfast meeting on May 14, 2022, in the Vienna Peace Embassy.

Peter Haider, president of UPF-Austria, welcomed the more than 50 guests and explained the background of this special day: In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution to celebrate May 15 annually as International Day of Families. The UN uses this day to recognize that family structures have undergone many changes due to social, economic and demographic factors. The annual event highlights the important role that families hold in communities and raises issues that may affect families. The topic for 2022, chosen by the United Nations, is "Families and Urbanization."



The first speaker was **Elisabeth Cook**, president of FFWPU-Austria. She mentioned urbanization as one

of the megatrends in today's society, including technological change, migration, demographic and climate change, which all impact family life. More than ever, family-oriented policies are needed to harness the positive aspects of those trends and counteract their negative aspects. Another point in her speech was that parents' mature and loving character is the prerequisite for a happy and successful family life. Although family relationships are considered private, they manifest publicly when family members participate in many areas of society.



Dr. Jan Ledóchowski, president of the Christian Democracy platform, emphasized the importance of being clear about the existence of a Creator and being able to convince people about it, because human beings derive their dignity from their Creator, our Heavenly Father. As a father of four children, he sees his main task as strengthening Christian values in politics and supporting Christian politicians to be successful.

Professor Ismail Yasin, a scholar of Islamic studies from Damascus, Syria, spoke about the importance of the family in Islam. For Muslims, family life is the foundation of human society, providing a secure, healthy and nurturing environment for parents and for raising children. The best place to pass on and develop human virtues such as love, kindness, mercy and compassion is in a family. Families are considered to be at the heart of every Muslim community. The traditional Muslim family is an extended family, including parents, children, grandparents and elderly relatives. Most Muslims believe that extended families mean greater stability, continuity, love and support for each other.

Dr. Melinda Fabian-Herzog, representing the organization *Elternwerkstatt* ("Parents' Workshop"), which offers courses in improving parenting skills, explained how parents can learn to communicate more effectively with their children at different stages of their development. *Elternwerkstatt* is recognized by the Austrian government as an educational institution and therefore is partly funded by the Federal Ministry for Family and Youth.

The official program ended with remarks and questions from the audience, moderated by Mr. Haider, who thanked everyone for coming to the event.

