

UPF Giessen, Germany Celebrates 100 Hundred Years of the Republic of Finland

Josef Resch
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Giessen, Germany -- One hundred years after the Republic of Finland came into existence, UPF celebrated with a program about Finnish history and culture.

The latest in a series of "International Café" events held by the Giessen branch of UPF took place in the UPF offices on June 23, 2018, under the title "One Hundred Years of Finland."

Seija Künzig, a native of Finland who lives near the town of Giessen with her German husband, gave a very comprehensive and enlightening PowerPoint presentation about her native land in just 90 minutes.

A good atmosphere had been established even before the program began, as the guests enjoyed coffee and cake and music from Finland.

Benedikta Becker of UPF gave a short introduction to UPF in general and the "International Café" in particular. Explaining that the project was begun with the goal of fostering international understanding, she mentioned the nations that already have been discussed.

Finland, in addition to earning the best grades in the Programme for International Student Evaluation (PISA) of schools, can boast free education, warm hospitality and many other points. According to the 2018 edition of the World Happiness Report, the Finnish people are the happiest in the world.

Using a map, Mrs. Künzig explained that the Finnish people make up half of the world's population who live north of the 60th parallel; the other half are spread between Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Russia, Canada, Greenland and the U.S. state of Alaska.

After giving a historical review, Mrs. Künzig went on to mention some important statistics about Finland's size, population, language, climate, education and economy.

She informed us that Finnish people are very nature-loving, artistically talented, innovative and creative, and that they love music, literature and architecture.

The many famous Finns whom Mrs. Künzig mentioned in her PowerPoint presentation included former professional racing driver Mika Häkkinen.

In closing, Benedikta Becker encouraged us to continue this kind of international understanding. She then gave a short preview of an upcoming event, a World Peace Blessing: a family festival that celebrates harmonious families as a foundation for a healthy society, peaceful nation and unified world.

The participants then joined the German-Finnish Association in an outdoor barbeque celebrating midsummer in the Finnish style. The weather was beautiful, with "Finnish temperatures" (under 20 degrees Celsius, or 68 degrees Fahrenheit). In many places, midsummer is an occasion to make a bonfire.

And -- since we were in the midst of the football World Cup -- many took the opportunity to watch Germany play Sweden, a thrilling game with an unexpected end.

(Translated into English by Catriona Valenta)

