

## UPF-Austria Is Partner in the Opening of the Peace Museum Vienna

Vienna, Austria, 21. June 2014



By Peter Haider, Secretary General, UPF-Austria  
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June 21, 2014 marked the 100th anniversary of the death of Bertha von Suttner, the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She was an Austrian novelist and a radical pacifist. Suttner became a leading figure in the peace movement with the publication of her novel, *Die Waffen nieder!* ("Lay Down Your Arms!"). She gained international repute, and in 1911 she became a member of the advisory council of the Carnegie Peace Foundation.

During the week leading up to this day honoring this outstanding woman, events were organized for the start of the "Peace Museum Vienna," which is located at Blutgasse 3, right in the city center of Vienna. Its key element, the "Windows for Peace Project," will utilize windows in the City Center of Vienna to showcase influential figures throughout history who have devoted their life and career to peace and tolerance. The exhibition will highlight such figures as Vienna's own Bertha von Suttner, Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi. This is the first project in the world to exhibit peace heroes in windows, available to everyone to view.

Mrs. Liska Blodgett, the president of the Peace Museum Vienna, expressed her vision to bring the message of peace from conference centers to the people on the street. "Windows of Peace" will be on view in the very center of Vienna, with heavy tourist traffic. A large number of historical and touristic sites and a shopping area are nearby, making the museum very easily accessible for people to view and talk about. It is within a short walking distance of St. Stephan's Cathedral and Mozarthaus Vienna.

UPF-Austria readily accepted the request of the organizers to present an Ambassador for Peace certificate to Mr. Akio Komatsu, president of the Human, Nature and Science Institute Foundation in Japan, which is working for the creation of wa (Japanese word for harmony/peace) culture. Mr. Komatsu, guest of honor and a patron of the Peace Museum Project, gave a keynote speech on June 17 in the Hayek Centre near the museum regarding the importance of Bertha von Suttner for his own work for peace and reconciliation between Japan, Korea and China.

Before his lecture a film about his impressive humanitarian projects was presented. Mr. Peter Haider, secretary general of UPF-Austria, before giving the award praised the readiness of Mr. Komatsu to approach Koreans and Chinese as a Japanese citizen with the spirit of sincere apology for the cruel things Japan inflicted on her neighbors during World War II and for all his projects to promote reconciliation between these countries and beyond. Mr. Komatsu later unveiled a Bertha von Suttner bust, the first of its kind in Austria, which he had ordered for this occasion as a copy of an existing sculpture in the Peace Palace in The Hague made by the Dutch artist Ingrid Rollema.

Among the speakers during the opening event on June 18 for the "Windows of Peace" project were Dr. Peter van den Dungen, head and general coordinator of the International Network of Museums for Peace; Fr. Toni Faber, head priest of St. Stephan's Cathedral; Prof. Hope May from Central Michigan University; and Mrs. Heide Schütz from the Women's Network for Peace in Germany. A vernissage (preview of the exhibit) with portraits of famous peace heroes by the renowned Austrian artist Werner Horvath, was the highlight of the evening program.