

UPF - Activities in 2017 and Perspectives for 2018

On 9th Dec 2017, the Austrian chapter of UPF organised a meeting of Ambassadors for Peace - in order to reflect on the events of the past year, and set a direction for 2018.

Almost 100 guests came to the event. Focus was on reports about IAPD – the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development - which has been founded in Seoul Korea recently, and on events connected to the founding of the “International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP)”.

The Austrian president of UPF, Peter Haider, reminisced about the UPF Conference at the United Nations on the theme of the Interfaith Harmony Week - which was at the same time the founding conference of IAPP in Austria. All political parties of the Austrian government sent speakers to that conference, with altogether around 200 attending, including numerous leaders of society.



After Mr. Haider’s presentation, Dr. Elmar Kuhn - Secretary General of CSI (Christian Solidarity International) - shared impressions of his recent journey to South Korea, following an invitation to attend the founding conference of IADP at Seoul’s biggest stadium.



DI Abdalla Sharief, reported about the activities of the “Horn of Africa Peace Initiative”. In one of their events, they introduced the nation of South Sudan; another conference was held about Eritrea’s capital Asmara, which had gained the status of UNESCO’s “World Cultural Heritage”; rounding out with a third conference - held on the topic of refugees and migration.

Ulrich Haider reported about „Peace Road Austria 2017” - organised in the district of Upper Austria - where participating bikers covered a distance of 30km. Their destination was the so-called “peace bridge” which had been built by Palestinian and Israeli young people in auspices of “Service for Peace” - organised by an Austrian 2nd gen brother and his family. Several mayors of the area participated in that program, which also attracted media coverage from local newspapers.



Dr. Walther Lichem reviewed a UPF-Conference in Pristina, Kosovo; followed by a report about the founding of "Parliamentarians for Peace" in Ljubljana, Slovenia by Mrs. Elisabeth Brandner - which she participated in. Elisabeth, belonging to the Croatian minority in Austria herself, had been a missionary to Slovenia during the time of communist Yugoslavia, and has since kept her good relationships to Slovenia and Croatia.

Marlies Haider - representing Youth UPF - reported about an event at Vienna University which they had organized in early summer this year, on the topic „Populism, Integration & the Future of Europe“. More than 60 persons attended, many of them University students. Among the 4 speakers, was a Syrian professor who is running programs for better integration of young foreigners in Vienna. Many of his students also attended that event.



With a performance of the Bosnian Women's Choir „Mimosas“, the program officially concluded. Guests were subsequently invited to taste Bosnian specialities and Christmas cookies, which gave the opportunity to get to know each other better and deepen relationships.

We all felt that the year of 2017 was a very fruitful year, filled with Heavenly Parents' Blessings and protection.

Written by Peter Haider



