



Conference at the Prague Parliament Inauguration of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace in the Czech Republic

Prague, The Czech Republic, October 9, 2017

By Juraj Lajda

On Monday 9th October 2017, at the Czech Parliament in Prague, a conference was held under the auspices of Czech Parliamentarian Nina Nováková. Two projects were being launched: the new association “Central European Inspiration”, initiated by Mrs. Nina Nováková, and the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), a project of the Universal Peace Federation.



The meeting was attended by four members of parliament, one member of the European Parliament, and by about 80 participants, including political leaders, scholars, media and NGO representatives.

Under the general theme of “Horizons”, the first part of the conference consisted in panel discussions on European cultural

identity, the family and human rights. This was meant to launch the organization newly registered by Nina Nováková, the Central European Inspiration - an alliance of citizens who share respect for universal values and European cultural heritage and spiritual traditions, and the conviction that the family is the core foundation of society.

Addressing the central theme of the Parliamentarians for Peace Initiative, the first panel featured a reflection on the responsibility of parliamentarians for sustainable peace by three members of the Czech parliament: the Czech Minister of Culture Daniel Herman, Mr. Ivan Gabal and Mrs. Helena Válková. Referring to upcoming parliamentary elections in the



country, Mrs. Nováková said that this was a question not often asked to politicians, but a relevant one in an election campaign. Each panelist expressed their perspective on a broad range of issues, from personal integrity to nuclear disarmament, the question of security or the rule of law.

Two Czech scholars, Dr Roman Joch, president of the Prague-based Civic Institute, and Dr Jiří Georgiew, from Charles University's Faculty of Law, went on to discuss the theme of European culture, analyzing its roots and to what extent it shapes Central Europe today.



The discussion on the family was initiated by Hon. Anna Záborská, Slovak member of the European Parliament, who described various trends and laws undermining the family in Europe. Mrs. Birgit Kelle, a German journalist and well-known pro-family activist, reviewed some strategies used by opponents, consisting for example in using core democratic values such as tolerance, diversity or equality to undermine natural family relationships, and proposed counter-strategies. Dr. Michal Heres, a Czech lawyer, spoke about legal issues regarding the monitoring of the internet and the protection of children. Finally, Dr Dieter Schmidt, a medical doctor, vice president of UPF Germany, drew attention on the health consequences of premature experiences with sexuality.

The panel on human rights featured four speakers. Dr Harald Scheu, from Charles University of Law, spoke about the interconnection between the crisis of

democracy and the crisis of human rights. Ms. Soňa Gyarfášová, a Slovak journalist, raised the question of rights of vulnerable people, the elderly. Mr. Peter Juščák, a Slovak writer, spoke about human responsibility and the danger of extremist policies based on the dysfunction of human rights. Mr. Peter Zoehrer, founder of FOREF Europe (Forum for Religious Freedom), concluded the panel by speaking on religious freedom, the need for interreligious dialogue and the negative impact of pushing any religious practice underground.



The last panel was moderated by Dr. Juraj Lajda, president of UPF-Czech Republic, who introduced the Parliamentarians for Peace initiative launched by UPF around the world. Dr. Katsumi Ostuka, who supervises UPF activities in Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East, spoke about UPF founders Dr. and Mrs. Moon, about their personal experience in the turmoil of World War II and the Korean War in their native land, and how it motivated their



pursuit for peace through many projects around the world. Then Mr. Christian Hausmann, a CDU politician from Germany, based in Stuttgart, gave his perspective on how his political party should adopt genuine Christian values.

The event was concluded by a general call to sign the IAPP resolution that was displayed on stage, and by Mrs. Novakova's call for open-minded cooperation from all participants for the sake of the future of Europe.

