

Peace Road 2021 -- Border triangle Germany-Austria-Czech Republic

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On the occasion of the Day of Refugees participants from 3 nations joined in a common meeting at the hill of Trojmezí where three nations have a common border, organized by UPF Austria, Germany, and the Czech Republic on Sunday 20th June 2021.

Due to the cooperation of the Universal Peace Federation Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic this Peace Road became a deep experience for almost 100 participants. The oldest participant was 80 years old -- the youngest 2 years old. We met hikers who asked us what initiative we were because of our T-shirts with the Peace Road logo. When we explained our cause to them, they were very taken with it, as they still knew the time when the Iron Curtain separated our countries and a meeting at this interesting piece of nature was not possible. Although the ascent of the star hike was difficult in different ways, the friends from Germany were on the way for one hour and those from the Czech Republic for more than three hours, we still met almost on time at 1 pm for the joint celebration.

In a beautiful nature, the participants from the Czech Republic walked 18,6 kilometers in both directions up the hill overcoming the 659-meter slope. The tour in beautiful scenery and landscape that was described by the great Austrian poet Adalbert Stifter who was born here, took almost 4 hours in one direction.

At the top, the participants could meet bringing their national flags around a monument pointing at the border. The European anthem was sung and the program started.

Dr. Juraj Lajda, UPF president of the Czech republic in his welcoming speech emphasized that the German and Czech nations are living next to each other for almost 1000 years. In their history, there were sometimes times full of suffering and pain. The second world war was unprecedented in history. After the second world war, the people of German origin had to leave our country. The way how they were treated was not smooth and created resentment on both sides. Now we need reconciliation.

Next, the existence of communism and democracy divided our nations for 40 years. Our countries and people were divided due to ideological reasons. In 1989 communism collapsed and a new era in Europe started. The hatred had been more or less overcome and all these countries started anew.

Still, there is one country and one nation in the world which is still divided by ideology. It is the Korean peninsula. The 38th parallel still divides the country and is a borderline between communism and democracy.

We hope that one day the Korean people can meet and unite as we are meeting here now, concluded the speaker.

Magister Maria Pammer who represents the UPF Upper Austria emphasized in her speech the idea to initiate this Peace Road.

After the Peace Road activities of UPF Upper Austria over the last 4 years on the traces of the death-march of the Hungarian Jews in 1945, the wish arose to meet this year at the border triangle with friends

from Germany and the Czech Republic. Europe has a long history of conflicts, so too between our three countries. The prominent meeting point was the three-country border point A-CZ-D at Plöckenstein in the Bohemian Forest at an altitude of 1321 meters. It was marketed in 1993 by a two-meter-high three-sided border stone. The stone symbolizes the three states united under one roof with a common root represented by the base.

The founders of UPF and the Peace Road Initiative, Rev. and Mrs. Moon, had to flee their home in North Korea and are investing their whole lives for world peace and the unification of their homeland, Korea. June 20 is also World Refugee Day and we wanted to set an example for a world in freedom and peace, where there is no need for a World Refugee Day in the future, said Mag. Pammer.

Mayors of the Czech Republic and Austria of the adjacent municipalities sent greetings and want to receive a picture report afterward.

Dr. Dieter Schmidt, UPF president for Central Europe mentioned the hope for the future. He emphasized in his speech that we see many dead trees here, which he sees as symbolic of the conflict-ridden past, but that many young trees are growing in between, pointing to a hopeful future when we all become aware again of our common origin, the Heavenly Parents.

After the piece of music "Morgenstimmung" (E. Grieg) performed by Mr. Ledermüller, **President Yoo Je-Heon** (Association of all Koreans living in Europe) expressed his joy to set a sign here at this special place together with friends from three different countries for the unification of the Korean peninsula. Through the song "Arirang", which the Korean group then sang, the longing for reunification became tangible.

Bishop Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger gave the blessing after the prayer of Francis of Assisi, prepared in three languages we read simultaneously.

The common song "Urie" (Unity) was the official end of the celebration followed by beautiful personal encounters, which have become rare in recent times due to the Corona pandemic, and we felt the need to intensify this initiative Peace Road in our countries, to be on the way for peace and understanding.

One participant expressed his feelings like this:

No, we did not come here for a walk, we had a goal, mission. It was to show the connection and unity among nations and religions. Among individuals, families, churches, states, continents. We all are of the same spiritual nature, sons, and daughters of the Supreme Lord. Personally, I have a very good feeling of the Peace Road. We could get to know new places, new people and could have good sharing. Thank you to all.

Mr. Stefan Schmid, co-organizer from Germany said: "I was most impressed by the Czech delegation. Altogether we were almost 100 participants and from the Czech Republic, there were already more than 50 people, most of them young people. In addition, the Czechs had the longest way to go, three hours. The Austrians had two hours to walk and the Germans one good hour."

Finally, we received a message from the founder and president of the Korean School and Cultural Association of Augsburg Mr. Chong Sum Paulus:

„The time and the day today passed so quickly because I was with really nice people. I am deeply impressed to have met people who are working for the reunification of my homeland with so much love and dedication. That so many foreigners, from three nations, are praying together and making conditions for the reunification of Korea, I am deeply touched and very grateful. In addition, I am totally surprised that with such a long journey (350 km), hot weather, and 4 hours of arduous mountain hiking, no one scolded, complained or grumbled. In my whole life, I have never experienced anything as special as the UPF movement – I am grateful to God for that. Then the wonderful speakers like Mr. Yoo, who talked about how the three countries belong together like love, faith, hope. And during Dr. Schmidt's speech, I thought to myself, how can a non-Korean speak so lovingly about Korea? I have never experienced anything like that. To all the participants and preparation people, I would like to thank you with the deepest heart."

Since 2012 Universal Peace Federation all over the world initiates the Peace Road projects to interconnect nations, countries, and people based on goodwill and desire to create unity.

We hope that our gathering of three nations will contribute to these noble goals. We want to send out a signal for reconciliation and unity in the Korean peninsula.

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