

IAPP's Czech national inauguration at a conference held in the Czech Parliament

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Prague, Czech Republic -- The International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace had its national inauguration at a conference held in the Czech Parliament.

The event, which was held on October 9, 2017, under the auspices of Czech parliamentarian Nina Nováková, also was the occasion for the launch of Central European Inspiration, a new association initiated by Mrs. Nováková.

The approximately 80 participants included four members of the Czech Parliament, one member of the European Parliament, political leaders, scholars, and representatives of the media and NGOs.

The first part of the conference, under the general theme of "Horizons," consisted of panel discussions on European cultural identity, the family and human rights. This represented the launch of Mrs. Nováková's Central European Inspiration, an alliance of citizens who respect universal values and European cultural heritage and spiritual traditions, and believe that the family is the core foundation of society.

Addressing the central theme of the Parliamentarians for Peace Initiative, the first panel featured reflections by three members of the Czech Parliament on the responsibility of parliamentarians for sustainable peace: Czech Minister of Culture Daniel Herman, Mr. Ivan Gabal, and Mrs. Helena Válková.

Referring to upcoming parliamentary elections, Mrs. Nováková said that this was a question not often asked of politicians, but a relevant one in an election campaign. Each panelist expressed his or her 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 Georgiev 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, a 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, for example, using core democratic values such as tolerance, diversity or equality to undermine natural family relationships; she then proposed some 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. Dietrich Schmidt, a medical doctor and the vice president of UPF-Germany, drew attention to the health consequences of premature sexual experiences.

The panel on human rights featured four speakers. Dr. Harald Scheu, from Charles University's Faculty 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, particularly 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 the Forum for Religious Freedom (FOREF) Europe, concluded the panel by speaking about 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 that has been launched by UPF around the world.

Dr. Katsumi Otsuka, who supervises UPF activities in Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East, spoke about UPF founders Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. He described their personal experiences in the turmoil of World War II and the Korean War, and how these experiences motivated their pursuit of peace through many projects around the world.

Then Mr. Karl-Christian Hausmann, a Christian Democratic Union of Germany politician who is based in Stuttgart, gave his perspective on how his political party should adopt genuine Christian values.

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