

Dear Reader

An intense and successful year for the Family Forum Austria draws to a close. I wish to thank you for your support and interest in our work.

With this annual report I'd like to present an overview of the activities of the past year. The first trip to Brussels to the 61st International Conference of ICCFR was in May. International speakers and guests met on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family. Then there was the event in Linz and on 30th June and 1st July the European Leadership Conference (ELC) in Geneva, staged jointly by Universal Peace Federation (UPF), Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI) and FAFCE. The peak was the invitation to the ELC in Parliament in Prague, Czech Republic. My father-in-law left his hometown over sixty years ago to migrate to Australia and it was a moving moment for me to return to Prague on his behalf. Further regular commentaries, mail outs to politicians and critical essays resulted in great resonance.



Despite the successes it is apparent that the trend to broken families and the sexualisation of the society is rapidly progressing. Families are coming under pressure, because family politics serves largely the interests of the economy, rather than the families. Ideologically motivated education plans encourage a hedonistic lust oriented life through promoting sexual diversity, even kindergarten children should be confronted with. Further the LGBT (Lesbian-gay-bisexual-transsexual) lobby seeks to push their agenda on the European level disguised as equal rights.

I see it as an absolute necessity to seek a closer network and cooperation with family organizations and righteous people in public life. With this report I also express the hope that in future more people actively support the concerns of the family.

We wish you successful New Year in 2015

Josef & Lilly Gundacker

Forward

I am sometimes asked: „“Why do we need a *Family Forum*? There are surely lots of family and aid organisations which do wonderful work! Yes, many organisations do valuable work, offer help and advice for parents’ education, family management and education.

The *Family Forum Austria* seeks to address not only legal, structural and economic questions, but also fundamental issues about the value and significance of family and parenthood. Family is the literal nucleus of society and parents are the architects and shapers of the family system. Mature and authentic parents are thus the foundation for healthy and stable families. Family is also the first and most important educational institution. A lot is said about education and standards of education, but education begins in the family! Attachment research says without attachment there is no education. The relationship between parents and children creates the most important foundation for the development of the child. Politics must not ignore this any longer. The education system must address the need to prepare young people for the demanding role of parenthood.

A further question is still unanswered: What is family? Social scientists, politics and media stresses that there are so many different life models and family forms and none of them should be excluded. Whether traditional family, single-parent, patchwork family or life-segment partner, everything is family. The modern definition of family is: “Family is where people love one another and take responsibility for each other.” – This is where the problem lies!

We humans want to be loved; however we often do not know how we should love the other. We strive to create a comfortable environment and improve the standard of living and hope for the right partner, but seldom are we prepared to change ourselves. Family does not work like that! It is not enough to manage time and interests without investing in relationships. The question of compatibility of work and family is thus secondary. The primary question is how can parents establish and maintain a lasting relationship of mutual trust to the child and with each other.

For a secure future and stable family situation, we need to seriously consider the value of the family and the role of parenthood. Because,...

Family is not the problem – it is the solution!



Activities 2014

20 Years UN International Year of the Family
“The important significance of the Family to reach
the Millennium Development Goals”

Humboldtstrasse
49/1.Stock
4020 Linz
15. Mai 2014



What support does the family in Europe need and are the 8 UN Millennium Development Goals relevant for Europe?

Why is a definition of the family so important and what are the consequences of the various models? What is the role and duty of the state and what duties, rights and responsibilities does a single citizen, a couple, a family etc.? Suggestions for a common welfare society.

Josef Gundacker from Austrian Family Forum spoke, how important it is to strengthen the family and family values to actively guide and support to lead to a better direction.

Mr Phil Poeschl from Association "Safer Surfing" explained that young people need to be better protected and informed about addictive games, pornography and other destructive behaviour and its consequences.



Paul Ettl, Trainer, Speaker and Software-Specialist gave very practical insights to a vision of a future society which values sustainability in the economy to achieve a better quality of life for all.

"Family Values and Their Link to Economic Well-being and Social Outcomes"

June 30-July 1, 2014

UN Headquarters
Geneva



Geneva, Switzerland - A conference took place at the marking the 20th anniversary of the UN International Year of the Family. Speakers included educators, researchers, government officials and activists from Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Slovakia, Switzerland, the UK, and the US.

Conference organizers Heiner and Carolyn Handschin noted news of the June 25, 2014, adoption by the UN Human Rights Council of a resolution for the "Protection of the Family"



Josie HAUER Josef MISSETHON



Dr. Walter BAAR





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Anna ZABORSKA, Member EU Parliament, Slovakia



ELC 2014 – “The Family in the 21st Century”

Prague, House of Parliament, Czech Republic, 14. October 2014



Following the successful conference on Family and Society in the year of the 20th anniversary of the Family Day proclaimed by the UN which was organized together with the German UPF chapter in May 2014 in the Czech Parliament, the Czech UPF chapter convened the European Leadership Conference in the House of Parliament in Prague on the 14th October 2014.

The purpose of the conference was to give argumentation equipment to the parliamentarians, make connections with the pro-family oriented NGOs and other organizations and last not least to educate the civil society. We can say all these three goals were in some way fulfilled. Speakers included educators, researchers, parliamentarians and activists from 10 countries all over the world - Austria, Holland, France, Germany, Slovakia, Switzerland, the UK, Czech Republic, Korea and the USA.

The conference was under auspices of 3 members of the Czech Parliament - Mrs. Nina Nováková, Radka Maxová and Jiří Mihola and in cooperation with the WFPW and Civic Institute.



Jan Bartosek
deputy speaker



Nina Nováková, MP



Juraj Lajda UPF secretary
general Czech Republic



Antoine Renard, president of the Catholic Association of Family Organizations in Europe made a clear distinction between the family and social policy. First, family is a natural and fundamental unit of the society. It is a unit not a group of individuals (more than singles). For the future we need to have a goal but this goal is not seen and people are individualistic. In business term the social aspect of the society means expenses whereas the taking care of a family means an investment for the future. Social problems are problems but family issues are the solution.

The second session focused on the „Role of the NGOs in Strengthening the Family“. **Richard Kane**, president of the Family week project spoke about his own experience. 20 years ago he initiated a National Marriage Week project which later widespread into 26 countries. This project could show why marriage is better than cohabitation because it means a deeper internal and external dedication whereas people who cohabitate can easier finish their relationship.



Josef Gundacker, president of the Family Forum Austria emphasized the importance to present a positive image of family life in the society. The problem with European family policy is that it considers only the material wellbeing of family and pays almost no attention to family relationships. Without parents, there would be no children; they are the bearer of human capital, the carrier of love, life and lineage. The solution is to make a family policy appreciating the families, parents and children.

Gabriele Kuby warned before the gender ideology which is wide spreading very rapidly. It is a political strategy to destroy the family. Man is a raw material and can decide about his design – this is the concept of freedom. The gender ideology destabilizes the differences between men and women. The loss of identity of an individual leads to the loss of the identity of family and nation. Most parents reject the teaching of genderism. They want to have a family but nobody teaches them how to make a good family, was the conclusion of the speaker.



Discussion evening about the future of the family

Graz, Austria, 3rd of October 2014

“What comes when family goes” was the title of a discussion evening on 3rd October 2014. The event to discuss the future of the family was organized by **Family Forum Austria** and took place in WIKI a meeting and educational centre in Graz.



Mag. Josef Misethon spoke in his presentation about the significance of values in people’s lives: **“Values and Leadership”**. The person’s life is formed by their values. Normative-religious values have lost their acceptance across the generations, but especially notably in young people. Thus a long held traditional tenet which also provided security was lost. He used the example of Viktor Frankl, who discovered that those people who found purpose and value in their lives survived the concentration camp.

One participant noted: “During this evening I discovered what values are and that we should pay attention to them. I came to understand that due to the different concepts of values we experience various difficulties in the family or at work.”

When family values take centre stage in public consciousness, then the family will not be the problem but the solution!

The Future Topics

Who is more dependent on whom? The Family on the state or the state on the family? The answer to this question will determine the fate of the family as well as the state. Alexandre Vinet, theologian and literary historian said: "The fate of the state depends on the situation of families." What did he mean by that?" Strong and emotionally healthy families are service providers; broken families however are a great burden on the state.

Family values have no fertile breeding ground in our western democracies. Family politics has for decades sought to prioritize the individual interests of women and men. It is very sceptical towards parents and in the name of self-realisation, has reduced man and woman to an economic service provider. Distrust towards parents was largely promoted by revolutionary thinkers, radical feminists and liberal media. This led to strong insecurity of women, to a massive rise in the divorce rate and to a refusal to have children. This insecurity is the actual reason for the negative demographic development.

For politics to reverse the trend in the future to functioning families and more children, more family friendliness and a better compatibility are not enough. Independent of cultural, world view and political background, everyone would agree that the family is the best place for the socialization of a person. However, for too many people, their family is a place of disappointment, neurosis and even violence and apparently only a few families succeed in making their family a place of joy and belonging, the best place for socialization. In order for politics to fulfil the real needs of families, it is not enough to play the role of a fire brigade in times of crisis and divorce, but it needs to promote family relationships and strengthen family unity.

Family relationships should be the place where the individual within this unit can develop freely and experience all types of human relationships. The personal maturity and relational capacity of the parents is a fundamental prerequisite. ***We need a clear understanding of family and answers to the question under what conditions can family and family relationships succeed. Ultimately also a clear understanding of the significance and meaning of freedom through responsibility as an individual, family and society.*** Every society is limited by the quality and the standard of the individuals who make that society.

Family is not the Problem - Family is the solution!

Many people are of the opinion that their problems are a result of their circumstances: lack of freedom and opportunities, lack of knowledge etc. But our human problems are relationship problems. Distrust, jealousy and egoism destroy family relationships. Trust and a life for the sake of the other can reconcile the family again.

What can and should politics do?

1. Politics has to strengthen the family and trust parents!

Politics and the economy need to learn to see the family as a subject partner and to trust the parents to educate and accompany responsibly. Family is not only the nucleus of society in the normative sense, but family is the carrier of human capital. Family is thus the foundation of every society and culture. Family is closely tied to the highest form of love, with life itself and the blood lineage, the passing on of love and life. Parents are thus the central and critical factor in the family system. When parents do not or only partially fulfil their central role, then not only the children, but the whole society, suffer. There is no substitute for parents! That is like a physical law. If the future of children is a concern of politics, there is no way around upgrading the parental role and strengthening parental competence.

2. It should facilitate parents to fulfil their educational responsibility!

Upbringing is the duty of the parents. Those men and women who are prepared to take the responsibility for the education of their children should be supported.

3. Children have a right to parental love!

Children not only have a right to life, the right to free development, the right to dignity, but also a right to parental love. The best structure for emotional/spiritual development of a child is formed through a stable relationship, the unconditional love of the parents who give the child trust and security!

Children have a right to parental love, and our children only have a secure future when we as parents create the foundation for this future.

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