



Eastern Europe

Highlights from October 2023

UPF Conference Brings Hope for Balkan Unity



The Europe-Middle East branch of UPF was the co-sponsor of a Balkan Leadership Conference in Skopje, North Macedonia, on 14 October. The conference was held in partnership with the Podgorica Club, an organization founded by former presidents of Southeast Europe in 2019. H.E. Stevo Pendarovski, the president of North Macedonia, gave the opening speech. Ten former heads of state and government from the six Western Balkan nations—Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia—plus Croatia and Slovakia attended the conference, whose theme was “Western Balkans Integration into the European Union: Perspectives and Challenges.” Jacques Marion, the EUME co-chair of UPF, moderated the Opening Ceremony and Session One, and Dr. Michael Balcomb, the EUME senior adviser for UPF, concluded the conference with a speech on the need for spiritual values. – *Jacques Marion and Alan Sillitoe*

UPF Conference Brings Hope for Balkan Unity



Pres. Pendarovski
North Macedonia



Pres. Vujanovic - Montenegro
President, Podgorica Club



Pres. Ivanic – B&H



Pres. Moisiu – Albania



Pres. Sejdiu – Kosovo



Pres. Mesic – Croatia



PM. Cvetkovic – Serbia



Jacques Marion – UPF



FFWPU Refugee Care in Moldova Peace Embassy



A gift of books from the Ukrainian Embassy

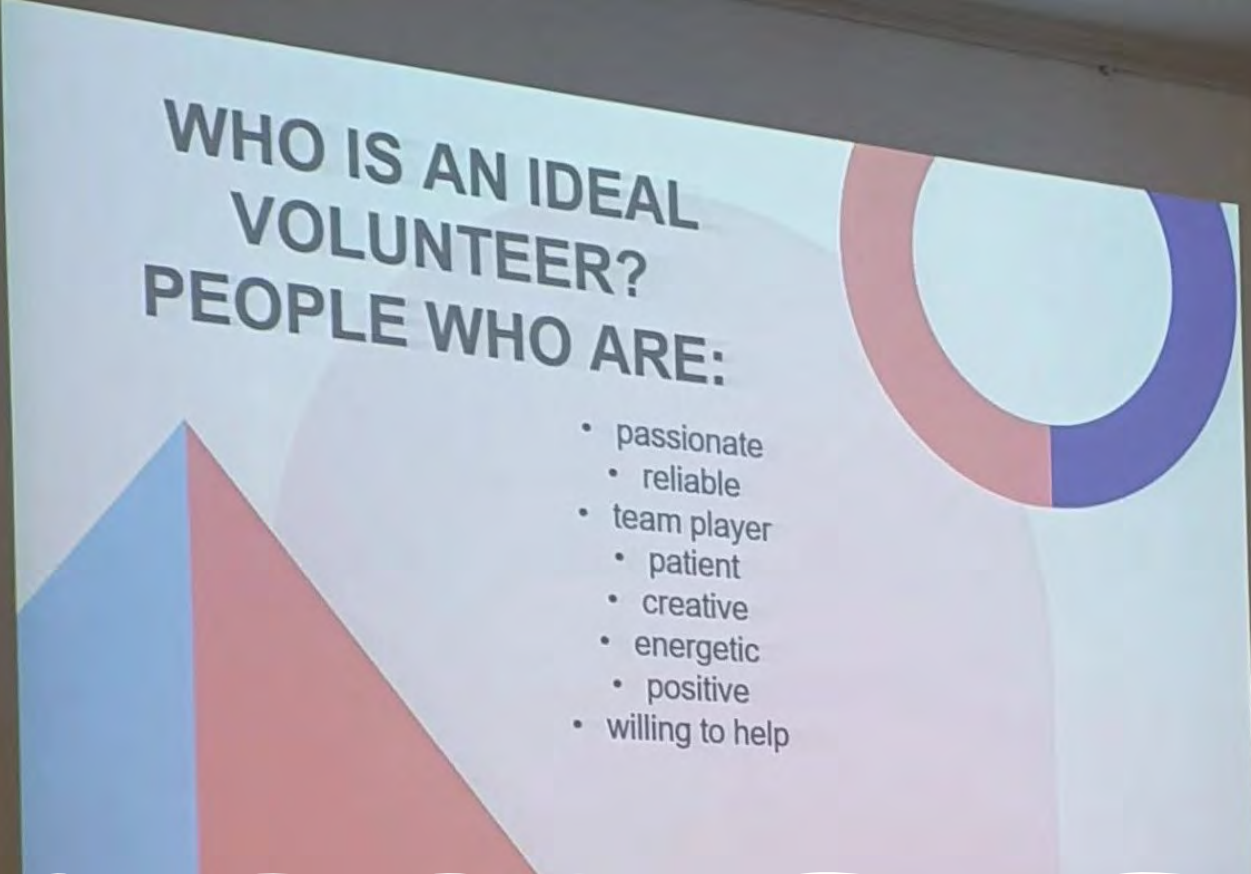


Refugee children in the grounds of the Peace Embassy



Wife of Ukrainian Ambassador
to Moldova Visits Peace
Embassy in Chisinau
to Support FFWPU Refugee
Programme

The Ukrainian Embassy in Moldova donated many beautiful Ukrainian-language books for children and adults to the Sunflower Centre. Olesya Shevchenko, the wife of the Ukrainian ambassador, brought the donation on the occasion of Day of Ukrainian Writing and Literature. A small library for children and parents is being created at the Sunflower Centre. – *Sabina Nadejdin*



Guidance to YSP Moldova members from an 82-year-old American Peace Corps Volunteer

An 82-year-old Peace Corps volunteer who is serving in Moldova was the guest speaker at a recent YSP weekly meeting. The volunteer, Bonita Osborn, is one of three Peace Corps volunteers who began assisting in the Sunflower Centre in September and will work there for nine months. – *Sabina Nadejdin*



Elena Knyazeva (r)



Certificate of Gratitude

UPF-Russia Eco-Education Encourages ‘Green Decisions’ and Receives National Recognition

Nearly 3,000 people in the city of Voronezh and the Voronezh region took part in an environmental education project that held 21 events between May 19 and September 30. The project—titled “Make Green Decisions!”—was created by the local UPF leader Elena Knyazeva, who is also the coordinator of environmental programs for UPF-Russia. The basic principle of the “eco-game library” was “eco-education through play.” The two co-organizers were the head of environmental information at the local scientific library and the head of the local volunteering centre, which provided 30 volunteers. The project partners included state and regional administrations, social initiative centres, businesses, and NGOs. “Make Green Decisions!” was entered in an environmental competition and received a grant from the regional authorities. The project received wide coverage in regional media and social networks as well as a Certificate of Gratitude from the deputy head of the Russian parliament. — *Elena Knyazeva*



Youth Ambassadors for Peace and Eco Warriors

Romanian CARP Gains Three Members After Workshop

Because of the effort and sincere devotion of the SunMoon UPA missionaries, three new guests attended a two-day Divine Principle workshop, along with two CARP members. The guests already had studied DP one-on-one at the CARP centre and were eager to learn more. The workshop was international and interreligious, with the participants coming from Romanian Orthodox, Muslim and Hindu backgrounds. The second day started with HDH, and the participants were inspired by True Father's words and also by learning about his life. At the end of the workshop, all the guests wanted to become CARP members. – *Miki Predescu*



Excerpts of the participants' reflections:

"After listening to all the lectures, it made me really feel that I want to change for the better and that I can do it, because with determination, everything is possible."

"It was a wonderful experience, because in this workshop we considered ourselves like brothers and sisters. You can say that we were a family."

"In this two-day workshop I felt that I was improving more than the last time. I became more comfortable with the people, and I felt I was in a family in which everyone respects each other and everyone can be transparent in that place."





Romanian CARP Proves That 'Food Is Love'

The SunMoon UPA missionaries organized a cultural event related to food from different countries. Addressing the theme "food is love," they prepared food from Japan and Brazil for about 30 guests and CARP members. They guests really liked the food, and they were very interested about our international family. It was really beautiful to see each person making new friends and getting to know about other cultures. – *Miki Predescu*



Croatian Members Look for People Who Like to Help

Croatian members and SunMoon UPA missionaries joined forces in a campaign called “Do Good for Your City” to find public-minded people to join in service activities like picking up trash and donating blood. In seven volunteer actions, one to three guests participated each time. ... These service volunteers then were invited to a two-day DP workshop which was fully organized by Croatian Second Gens. Lectures were given by Dora Purgar (23) and Sara Tomas (26). We concluded by introducing some of our movement’s many activities. The atmosphere was excellent, and guests received the lectures well and said they want to continue participating in volunteering and lecture activities with our members. Now that the workshop has finished, the Croatians restarted the “Do Good for Your City” campaign to find new potential guests! – *Sara Tomas*



Belarus Teens and Parents Attend Blessing Preparation Seminar

Second Generation Belarusian teenagers and their parents attended a weekend seminar on the Blessing. There were more than 30 participants, including 14 Second Gens. Two special guests came from Moscow to speak at the seminar: Elena Kalmatskaya, the Eastern Europe director of Second Generation education, and Oksana Salmanova, the leader of Moscow Sunday school programs. – *Olga Plotnikova*



Shin Albania Event Combines Blessing and Ambassadors for Peace

The Albanian chapters of UPF and FFWPU jointly organized a festival in the city of Kuçovë, which combined a Marriage Blessing and an Ambassador for Peace assembly. The mayor of the city and a member of Parliament both attended the event, which was held in a large cinema. About 300 people, including 175 couples, came to the festival – the result of both door-to-door witnessing by a team of young people and also efforts by the local UPF Peace Council to bring Ambassadors for Peace and UPF supporters. –*Manjola Vasmatics*



Tirana Peace Embassy is a Candidate for Prestigious European Union Architectural Award

The Embassy of Peace is part of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), an international and interreligious network of individuals and organizations, including representatives from religion, government, civil society, and the private sector, dedicated to achieving world peace. An NGO in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, UPF supports the work of the United Nations, particularly in the areas of interfaith peacebuilding, peace education, and the strengthening of marriage and family.

The new headquarters of the Embassy of Peace is in a prime location just off the Elbasan Road at the Eastern entrance of Tirana, near the Great Park. The steep terrain on which the building was built was challenging, and the slope and the dense urban conditions influenced the basic elements of its design.

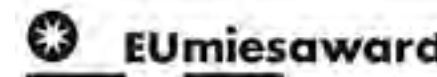
Conceptually, the building has been treated as a “House of Peace”, where the primary and simple form of the building has undergone a sculptural process of cuts and clefts to give it a contemporary and dynamic appearance. These features include a large panoramic roof terrace, as well as an impressive main entrance to the building. Other distinctive features allow for the entry of natural light into the below-ground floors, which are used for offices and conference rooms.

The white color symbolizes the purity of the peace that exists and should exist among people, whilst the red color in the clefts made over the building emphasizes the fragility of peace. This contrast between the two colors takes on different appearances as it intensifies or fades with the movement of the sun during the day, whilst nighttime illumination presents a different perspective.

Looking from the building, people can have a panoramic view of the city and the large park from the large terrace and the various openings in the facade. This is made possible by a special construction project in reinforced concrete.

The exterior image of the building reflects a modern style of clean lines, through white tiled facades, interspersed with glass elements, giving it a balanced composition. The building is equipped with high technology and features special elements, that make it one of the most advanced institutional buildings in Albania.

The 300-seat hall located underground, together with a series of offices and ancillary facilities, is the result of a detailed study of the introduction of zenithal light through the windows located on the ground floor plan. - *EUmiesaward*





Members Work Hard to Restore Russia's Kalmykia I

Russian national leader Alexei Saveliev and his wife, Olga, recently revisited the Russian Republic of Kalmykia, where they have been doing HTM work for several years. Their goal is to build a pilot region of FFWPU to make a True Family Movement and go toward a society of Interdependence and Mutual Prosperity based on Universally Shared Values. This time they again invited nine students of Volgograd State University (including one Second Gen) and organized three big areas of activities.





Members Work Hard to Restore Russia's Kalmykia II

After writing to the chief of the Maloderbetovsky District region, they received approval. Olga Vakulinskaya, the Eastern Europe leader of WFWP, visited a school to give pure-love lectures for schoolchildren and teachers. The nine students from Volgograd joined it as well. ... The team took part in planting an "Alley of Mothers," dedicated to the 80th anniversary of Stalin deporting the Kalmykian people for 13 years. Together with the Union of Kalmykian Women, the local administration, students, and schoolchildren, they planted 60 trees outside a local Buddhist temple. FFWPU offered the trees for free and was a key organizer of this project. So Maloderbetovsky is one of the potential districts for the pilot project strategy. – *Alexei Saveliev*

WFWP Visits School in Russian Republic of Kalmykia

WFWP-Russia journeyed to Kalmykia, a republic in southwestern Russia, to hold a master class on pure-love education at a new school. The main ethnic group are Kalmyks, who are related to Mongolians and are mostly Buddhist. More than 50 pupils, aged 15 to 18, and 10 teachers and psychologists attended the two lectures: “The Consequences of Using Obscene Language” and “Love and Sexuality.” Besides the schoolchildren, a number of student-volunteers from the city of Volgograd attended the lectures. The young people listened attentively and asked many questions. In their reflections afterward, many wrote that because of the lectures, they wanted to become more serious about their life and future family. Several wrote that they would like to give this kind of lecture to other children. The teachers and psychologists expressed gratitude and said that they want to use our lectures in their work.

– Olga Vakulinskaya





Russian Seminar Promises 'Happy Blessed Families'

“Each Blessed Couple Can Become a Happy Blessed Family” was the title of a two-day seminar jointly organized by the Blessed Family Departments of Russia and Eastern Europe. There were 32 participants in Moscow and 12 in St. Petersburg, with more than 60 online connections from other Russian locations, as well as Belarus, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia and Albania. Russian-English translation was provided for the online transmission. In addition to presentations, the program included a night vigil with testimonies and deep prayers. The seminar continued the next day with a special Sunday service led by the two main lecturers and speakers – Galina Chernomorets (EER BFD) and Oleg Kuzmin (Russia BFD) and enriched by special surprise performances by blessed couples. Feedback from the participants showed that the seminar was a great success, especially for some couples who had been absent from the community for many years. – *Galina Chernomorets*



Russian Seminar Promises 'Happy Blessed Families'



Thank You!

