

## UPF Slovakia's World Interfaith Harmony Week Event creates Deep Bonds

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Bratislava, Slovakia, on February 7, 2024, once again, UPF Slovakia organised an event on the occasion of World Interfaith Harmony Week.

The popular song "Where Peace Begins" created a solemn atmosphere in our Peace Embassy, before Milos Klas, UPF-Slovakia Secretary General, greeted the participants. His statement: "People of other faiths should not initially see themselves as representatives of a religion or worldview, but foremost as fellow citizens," sums up the essence of address.



Then followed the panel discussion. Representatives of five faith communities gave their opinions as to how religions can contribute to peace. Each speaker presented some project or story to illustrate how conflicts between believers can be resolved or avoided altogether.

Miroslav Lopusný from the Dianetics and Scientology Centre used an educational video "Respect the Faith of Others" to support his point.

Czechoslovak Hussite Church priest Peter Mojžišik, spoke about love and trust as keys for religious

dialogue.

Ing. Katarína Mikitová from the AllatRa movement presented the results of a world-wide faith-based survey in which the majority of respondents were of the opinion that religious tolerance is essential because the basic teachings of all religions are so similar.



Hare Krishna representative Raghunatha quoted appropriate passages from Indian scriptures outlining a common origin.

Ing. Igor Koromház from the Unification Church shared that when he was challenged by a group protesting at a large church event, he expressed appreciation for their great zeal. This surprised them so much that they calmed down and went home.



Following this, Lubica Magnusson, president of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) Slovakia, an organisation affiliated with UPF, spoke about the activities of women from Israel and Palestine who had held a peace march only three days before the Hamas invasion. Despite this horrific event, both sides remain willing to cooperate. Holocaust survivor Dr. Ivan Pasternak from the Jewish Community then spoke about the charity provided by Israeli citizens for the Palestinians.

To commemorate the day, every speaker received a candle with the logos of UPF and WIHW.



Finally, we asked the audience questions to ascertain their own attitude:

Should religions in Slovakia intensify exchange and cooperation?

Why is interreligious dialogue so important?

Have you asked people from another faith the question?

Would you like to visit a place of worship of another religion?

Do you have a friend from a completely different religion or faith?



The thirty-seven participants were asked to raise their hands where the answer was in the affirmative and it was clear that more than half practised interfaith harmony in their own lives.

The contributions inspired such lively and amicable discussion that some were reluctant to leave even after four hours!

*(English editing by Catriona Valenta.)*