

UPF Europe and Middle East: Hundreds Bike for Peace at Berlin Peace Road

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Berlin, Germany—Peace enthusiasts from 50 nations gathered in Berlin to take part in an international Peace Road event.

The Europe and Middle East branches of UPF and its affiliated organizations Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) and International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) jointly organized the event. It is estimated that 1,000 people took part in the program, either in person or online.



The event on July 27, 2022, began with a peace rally in front of Berlin's famous Brandenburg Gate. With the slogan "No New Walls in Europe," the rally called for stopping the war in Ukraine, the reunification of Korea, and freedom and peace in Europe.

The participants then bicycled or walked to the Reichstag, the seat of Germany's parliament, where the rally continued in front of the building.

From there, participants on bicycles rode through Berlin, carrying Peace Road flags, while other participants boarded an electric boat to continue the Peace Road event on the Spree River.

Berlin was chosen as the location for the event as it is the city that symbolizes peace and reunification in Europe, even at a time when the war in Ukraine raises fears of a new Cold War and of new walls rising on the continent.

In addition, the date of the event, July 27, was the anniversary of the armistice that in 1953 officially concluded the Korean War. Speakers reminded the participants that the armistice ended the fighting but did not end the division on the Korean Peninsula.

On the morning of the event, accompanied by a police escort, approximately 100 mostly young bicyclists, holding Peace Road banners and chanting, “No New Walls in Europe – Remember Korea!,” arrived at the Brandenburg Gate, where a stage had been set up. Hundreds of other participants arrived on foot.



The rally alternated speeches by peace activists with songs of peace performed by the German bands Berge and InTune, to which the crowd responded enthusiastically.

Speakers from throughout Europe and Asia called the crowd’s attention to conflicts in Ukraine, the Middle East, Africa and the Korean Peninsula. German journalist Klaus Kelle spoke of the immense hope he felt when, at the same location 33 years earlier, the German people celebrated the collapse of the Berlin Wall.



The crowd then moved to the Reichstag, where the rally continued with more speeches and songs.

“We must not repeat in Ukraine the division of Korea,” said Dr. Michael Balcomb, FFWPU president for Europe and the Middle East and the leading organizer of the event. “The Berlin Wall [was] visible. But today the wall is invisible yet no less real. It is a wall in the hearts of men and women,” he concluded.

The Peace Road program actually had begun one day earlier, with the first two sessions of an International Leadership Conference on the afternoon of July 26. Organized by UPF of Europe and the Middle East, the ILC was held at the Berlin City Mission on the theme “From Swords to Ploughshares – Prospects for Peace on the Korean Peninsula and in Europe.”



Approximately 200 participants had gathered from Europe and the Middle East, including a delegation from Korea and Japan, with many more watching the conference online.

Session I, “Prospects for Peace on the Korean Peninsula,” analyzed the current conflicts in Europe and Asia in the light of 20th century conflicts.

Session II, “Peace Road: A Global Project toward Sustainable Peace,” focused on the Peace Road Initiative’s vision and application.

Three more ILC sessions were held in London on August 4, while the two final sessions were held in Larnaca, Cyprus, and Tirana, Albania, on August 5. All of the sessions could be watched online.

