

WFWP Vienna, Austria Meets with Filipinos in Austria

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WFWP Austria had a first "in-person meeting" with Philippine-Diaspora - Organisations in Vienna. The meet and greet was a possibility to introduce the vision and activities of each of our organisations.

Dr. Marai Riehl shared about her experience at the founding of Women's Federation for World Peace in Seoul/South Korea, April 1992. Also about how we contribute through friendship among women to a more unified world, building "Bridges of Peace." Dr. Riehl, born in Slovakia, told us about her own story having become a refugee in Austria, when the Warsaw-Pact troops entered her country virtually over night in 1968. She brought awareness to the value of three-generation families. Sometimes it is challenging, but even more so it brings so much joy and chances to teach and pass on what has become valuable in one's own life, not only to the children, but also to the grandchildren, by spending time together!



Ms. Kristine Cruz, who together with her colleague, Ms. Dulce C. Chica were representing the Philippine Embassy as attaché's, shared her joy and gratitude that they could be there with us on this day, and how much they feel being aligned with the goals and vision of WFWP. They were glad for cooperation amongst the organisations. Her field of responsibility is to share the culture of her home country. The Embassy closely communicates with the activities of the various Philippine NGO's in Vienna.

Ms. Marizel Rojas is the current chairperson of ENFID-Austria, European Network of Filipino Diaspora:

She shared their inspiring Vision: ENFiD envisions a community of Euro-Filipinos whose talents, contribution and potential as social and economic remitters are recognized globally (global and local) and fully integrated in Europe, keeping their cultural values and traditions while enriching the diversity in Europe and being cognizant of the future generation. (ENFiD- Homepage) And a beautiful Mission: To be the prime organization of Euro-Filipinos in Europe in promoting programs, projects and activities that will lead to character transformation and strengthen solidarity, sharing and principled volunteerism in the framework of respect for human rights, upholding democracy and the rule of law, the Global Goals and the Paris Agreement.



Ms. Majorie Guidangen Akistov, President of "Filipina in Austria," explained that it is estimated by the Filipino Ambassador to Austria that 30,000 Filipino Austrians currently live in Austria. 13,499 Filipino Austrians were born in the Philippines, with 5,823 of them holding Philippine citizenship. She also explained how diverse their culture and languages actually are back home, a country that consists of more than 7000 islands! Here in Vienna/Austria they are able to meet and live and work together.

An "Ambassador of Peace Award" was passed on to Ms. Cecilia Orola Cech for 47 years of service in the Austrian community, as a nurse and for her boundless investment in the Philippino Community, where she has always reached out with a helping hand to many. The text of the Award: 'The Women's Federation for World Peace acknowledges as Ambassadors for Peace those women leaders

whose lives and decisions are rooted in the "logic of love" and guided by universally shared values as they strive for interreligious/intercultural cooperation, strong family life, academic excellence and partnership between men and women in creating a lasting culture of heart and peace as one Human Family.'

This was followed with a Peace Toast, that was shared with great enthusiasm, as a sign of new sisterhood (and brotherhood) among the attendees.

The conclusion was a most beautiful song "Blessing" by Becky Moshammer, whose mother comes from the Philippines. The song and its lyrics moved everyone to tears.

Now all were ready to enjoy a rich buffet with Philippine, and other specialities, that gave opportunity for sharing and getting to know each other on a more personal level.

No one seemed to be in a hurry to leave!

Grateful thanks to technical staff, Toni Cook and Patric Umgeher, that made Zoom transmission possible, and Merle Soquila Blaschke, Margit Holzer who greatly contributed to the buffet.

Reported by Renate Amesbauer
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