

Weekend Seminar

International Conference

The House of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, 29. May 2017



By Juraj Lajda

Following the World Family Congress in Budapest last week Hon. Nina Nováková, member of the Czech Parliament in cooperation with the Czech chapter of the Universal Peace Federation convened a half day international conference on the topic ***Where is the Borderline between the Responsibility of the Parents and State in Education of Children.*** This event took place in the Czech Parliament in Prague on the 29th May 2017.

Over 20 participants from the field of experts took part in this event. There were representatives of civil society, family organizations, Christian seniors or political party.

The conference was opened by **Hon. Nováková** who explained the purpose of this meeting with relevant people in

this area. There were representatives of the civil society sector dealing with the family issues who try to minimize the negative consequences of some governmental decisions concerning the family. The purpose of this discussion is to protect family, Mrs. Nováková explained. There are some clashes between the area of parental responsibility and the responsibility of the state. In other words, the question is how far the state can intervene with the rights and responsibility of the parents in education their children. As an example, Hon. Nováková mentioned a case when a doctor prescribes a contraception to a 14-year girl without notifying the parents.

The first speaker **Prof. Dr. Harald Scheu** from the Law Faculty of the Charles University in Prague spoke about children's rights as they are

anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He mentioned that the children have the right for a good and loving, functional and healthy family environment which the legislature can hardly cover. The European court does not deal with national legislature, only deals with the question if the rights of parents were restrained.

Mrs. Lynn Walsh, co-chair UN NGO Committee on the Family and representative of the Office of the Family UPF spoke about the importance of parent's involvement in children's education. Parents adopted the myth that children need other children for socialization, said the speaker. We created friendly society nor parental society. The prevailing concept is that the children should be liberated from their parents as soon as

possible. No state, nor government can substitute the parents. The parents are the foundation for the education of the whole personality, concluded her speech L. Walsh.

Mr. Robert Clarke, director of European Advocacy, Association Defending Freedom International Vienna, pointed out that according to the UN the parents have the prerogative to decide the type of education for their children. The state should respect the parental rights. Concerning the home schooling the speaker emphasized that the parents should have this possibility. In Germany home schooling is forbidden. The view that the state knows what is best for the child is very dangerous. Mr. Clarke mentioned some study cases from Norway where the Norwegian Child Welfare Services Barnevernet took away 5 children from one Romanian family without a serious

reason. There are more such cases. The education of children is the fundamental right of parents and the state should respect that, concluded Mr. Clarke.

Mrs. Jana Chalúšová from the Parents Forum informed shortly about their activities. They are doing campaigns in order to wake up the parents to be aware of their role in education of children and to finish with the so called “silent parents “. They try to anchor in the law the role of parents in education of children.

Mrs. Jana Jochová from the Alliance for Family said that the family based on the relationship between husband and wife is mostly in danger. The responsibility of parents is the bigger the more harmful influences exist. When family does not function properly various institutions try to

replace family with various preventive programmes. People are losing self-confidence to be a parent. The solution is to change it and give back the parents their trust. In conclusion Mrs. Jochová mentioned that often the people who have no children decide about the family policy.

In a fruitful discussion which followed afterwards the participants could express their views and determination to protect the family. In summary, the participants agreed that the parents should be responsible for religious and sexual education and state should not replace in this area the family. It is important not only to protect the family but also the religious freedom which is an inseparable part of this process. The series of events on family issues will continue.

