



**The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual WFP-Europe Women's Leadership Conference  
Lisbon, Portugal, 2 - 5 novembre 2017**

**« Le Role of Women Leaders and Mothers to  
Facilitate Cohesion and Integration in Europe »**



Nearly 140 participants came from over 23 countries in Europe, Middle East and Northeast Asia to assess the current “integration” crisis with its many strains on personal and social development. Women leaders, representing all facets of society, met to share their knowledge and best practices toward finding sustainable solutions and implementing them in partnership with governments and social institutions.

The main venue and accommodations were situated by the sea just outside of Lisbon at the Tryp Lisboa Caparica Mar Hotel. Due to the fact that the sessions scheduled for the National Parliament were advanced by one day just 2 weeks before the events, many European participants could not attend the high-level program on Thursday because they had already bought their tickets to arrive later that day. Nevertheless, the two sessions were held at the National Assembly of Portugal at the Senate Chambers and what was missing in numbers was gained in the quality of the debate.

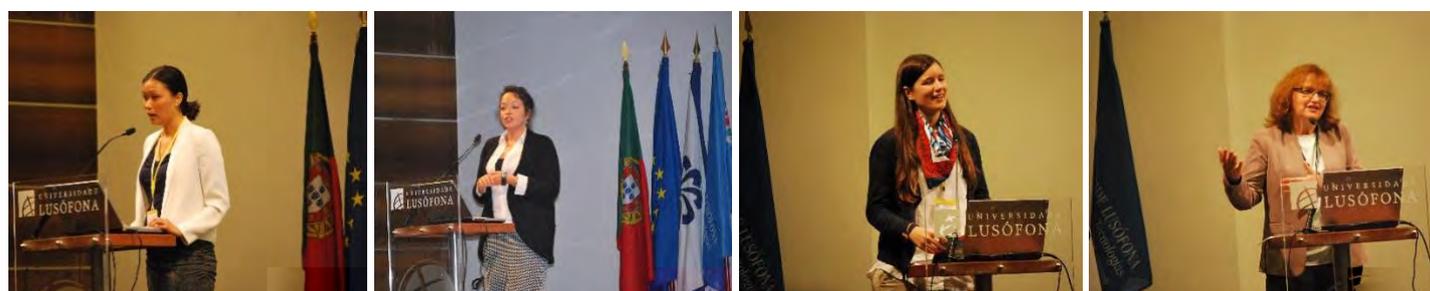
The themes of the two sessions were, “The role of women leaders and mothers to facilitate integration and cohesion in Europe” and “Protecting the most vulnerable: How can we keep our families safe and our multicultural communities prospering?” Speakers included lawmakers from Portugal, Spain and Switzerland, as well as the WFP President in Europe and the Chairman of FFWPU for the Greater European Region.



That afternoon, the delegates were received by the representative of the Mayor of Cascais at the City Hall, where two debates were held with representatives of the city council, the president of a prominent political party, educators, integration experts and NGO leaders- including UPF and WFWP. The topics “Women’s contribution to preventing violence and promoting integration” and “Role of family in raising global citizens for a future peace culture”. An evening walk to the picturesque Cascais Harbour followed.



The President and founder of the renowned University of Lusofona in Lisbon welcomed the WFWP delegation on Friday morning for two sessions. This time three of our WFWP Europe young representatives could make presentations to the admiration of the audience and university faculty alike. To a full auditorium, debates ensued on the two themes: “Sustainable Development Goals and the International Crisis of Refugees and Migrants. Where do Universal Rights begin” and “Contribution of Women to Social Peace through Resilience and Reconciliation”. One remarkable presentation was given by the WFWP Poland representative about a “home grown” model of reconciliation that she and her husband have been cultivating between Jewish and Polish residents in her village.



A fourth public event was held at the Palácio dos Marqueses and Municipal Council Chambers in the city of Loures, with a surprise visit from the Mayor herself. Two Italian National Parliament members and one European Member of Parliament were among the speakers on the theme, “New ideas for social inclusion and safer cities”. The final session was facilitated by Dr. Maria Riehl, Head of the WFWPI UN Office in Vienna

who had worked with her daughter in law to prepare a multimedia presentation depicting the hundreds of WFWP Bridge of Peace (reconciliation and harmony) Ceremonies held in Europe over the last 20 years which brought the room to tears.



Once back at the hotel that evening, welcoming remarks and speeches reset the tone for the two full days of working sessions to come. WFWP President in Portugal, Dr. Marta Carvahlo and FFWPU President in Europe, Dr. Michael Balcomb welcomed guests with heartfelt expression. Mrs. Carolyn Handschin, WFWPI UN Office Director, gave an overview of the WFWP's project, the "Global Women's Peace Network" and explained some of their issues and the vast recent activities throughout Europe.

In the early morning of November 4th, participants travelled by bus to Fatima, the famous catholic holy site where the Virgin Mary appeared to three children in 1917 on several occasions. For many, it provided a deep moment for prayer and reflection.

The themes of the afternoon: "Peace starts with me: The Role of Family in Education and Socialization" and "Countering Current Problems of Society through Education : Prevention Works", were alligned to the Sustainable Development Goals:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17.

Among the notable presentations was a young Australian woman, Mrs Jody Dontje, founder of the charity "the Help Nepal Appeal", Mrs Anna Galovicova, president of the "Slovak Network against Poverty", and Dr. Marcela Rosehnalova, who has been pioneering an educational system focusing on character-building for youth in the Czech Republic.





Mrs Tina Coombs and Ms. Sharon Kabubi started off a festive evening program with a video commemorating the 25 years of WFWP. This was followed by songs performed in Russian, Polish and Portuguese, and dance. As the evening came to a close, many participants wanted to take part at the Sisterhood Ceremony/Bridge of Peace and thus, numerous multicultural, interfaith pairs were formed in the spirit of reconciliation and healing of historic enmity.



On Sunday morning, the discussion revolved around the theme “Creating and Living in a Healthy Society (Culture of Heart)”: the participants were asked to choose among the 12 Concurrent Capacity Building Sessions:



1. Character-based Leadership and Awareness – Sammi Van der Stok
2. Action for Change and Sustainability – Evelyn Youmans and Natasha Shellen
3. The Psycho-Emotional Triangle and Education Towards Responsibility – Maria Neuberg Schmidt
4. Communication as a Strong Tool – Lenka Salamoun
5. Having a Voice and Influence in Society – Rostya Gordon-Smith
6. The Dignity of Women and its Implications on Social Life - Tina Coombs
7. Peace is Possible Campaign – Rahsan Celik
8. Women’s Empowerment through Regular Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue, building Friendship and networking, Social Action Projects, centring on Common Issues in Society, and our Women’s Heart for Peace – Patricia Earle
9. Volunteering Abroad: making a Sustainable Influence – Jody Dontje
10. Advocacy: Quick Actions in Response to Government Debates and Decisions – Lubica Magnusson
11. “Storming4building” – Carla Marina Santos
12. Emotional Intelligence will Birth a Culture of Peace and Resilience – Sharon Kabubi

Then each group was asked to summarize their discussions.  
Some examples of WFWP’s global programs were presented (GWPN)



1. Middle East Women's Leadership Conferences (Zoe Bennet, IVP, Middle East)
2. Moslem and Jewish Mothers Peace Project (Rosa Shmueli, WFWP Israel)
3. Women's Peace Academy (Kyung In Van der Ven, WFWP Netherlands)
4. Character Education & Culture (Olga Vakulinsky, WFWP IVP, Northeast Region)
5. European Peace Education Project (Lubica Magnusson, President, WFWP Slovakia)
6. International Council of Women & Leaders Network (Anna Kalmatskaya, WFWP Ukraine)

The Closing Session ended with the WFWP Ambassador for Peace Certificates being awarded to numerous participants.

