

UPF Peace Road 2024: France, Belgium and the UK's Chunnel 30th Anniversary

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Universal Peace Federation - UK *A Global Network of Peacebuilders*



The 30th anniversary of the completion of the Channel Tunnel between France and the UK marks a significant milestone, not only as a remarkable engineering feat but also as a symbol of international cooperation and peace. The Channel Tunnel, a key component of the broader International Highway concept, can be seen as a precursor to other ambitious projects such as the proposed Bering Strait bridge-tunnel linking the United States and Russia, and the Korea-Japan bridge-tunnel. While these future projects require substantial shifts in current international relations, the Channel Tunnel itself represents a seismic change in political relations between France and the UK when seen from the two nation's complex, and often contentious, history.

Events in France and the UK



The Peace Road 2024 initiative saw vibrant activities in both France and the UK. A delegation from the UK, including a missionary team from Greenwich University supported by the River South Family Federation and World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) Community, traveled to France. Joining the UK delegation were Keith Best, Chair of the Board of Trustees for Universal Peace Federation (UPF) UK and a former Member of Parliament, and his wife, who were staying nearby. Keith Best addressed a Peace Road 2024 conference in Coquelles, France near the Channel Tunnel terminal. The conference was organized by FFWPU and UPF members from northern France, with support from their Belgian counterparts.



During the conference, Jacques Marion, Co-Chairman of UPF Europe and the Middle East (EUME) as well as President of UPF France, explained the origins of the Peace Road initiative, referencing Father Moon's visionary speech at an ICUS scholars' conference in 1981. Hugo Veracx, President of the West Region FFWPU, along with two assistants to local MPs, also delivered speeches, highlighting the ongoing importance of international unity. The conference concluded with a visit to the Channel Tunnel exhibition center, where participants commemorated the historic achievement.

Following a post-conference lunch, the UK delegation returned to the UK, accompanied by French members, including Jacques Marion, Patrick Jouan, Vice President of UPF France, and leaders from the North France FFWPU.

Activities in the UK



Despite challenging weather conditions due to the remnants of a hurricane, the spirit of the UK participants remained high. The event brought together approximately 40 participants, divided into three main groups: the River South Community led by Pastor Adza Mould, the Top Gun Missionary team and their friends, and students from Greenwich University coordinated by Mieko and Trevor Davies. The UPF UK group also joined, including several Ambassadors for Peace (AFPs) and Young Achievers, who are also students.



Most participants drove from London to the Dover region. They engaged enthusiastically in photo opportunities and enjoyed a visit to the Battle of Britain Memorial, reflecting on the sacrifices made for the peace we now cherish. With the assistance of the Exhibition Centre staff, participants appreciated the time spent at the memorial, with occasional views of the Channel and the iconic white cliffs of Dover.



The next destination was the Samphire Hoe Nature Reserve, created from land reclaimed using soil and rock excavated during the Channel Tunnel construction. Although the visit was shorter than planned due to weather conditions, participants were able to briefly experience the unique environment of the nature reserve.



In the evening, a delegation from France and Belgium joined the UK group for a dinner for more than fifty participants, at a seaside hotel in Dover. The dinner featured several speeches, including those by Pastor Adza Mould, Dr. Siama Niaz (a UPF UK Patron who generously supported the event), Ahmed Shebani (who worked on the construction of the Channel Tunnel), and Mieko Davies.

Conclusion



The Peace Road 2024 programme was a resounding success, inspiring all who participated. The events in France and the UK not only celebrated a significant anniversary but also underscored the ongoing importance of international cooperation and unity.

Peace Road Explanation:



The Peace Road is a global goodwill initiative of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), inspired by the visionary ideas of its Co-Founder, the late Father Moon. Originally proposed in 1981, Father Moon envisioned an international highway that would physically connect all people of the world - a symbol of his belief that humanity is one family under God.



Father Moon believed that by facilitating direct encounters among people from different cultures through daily life, trade, and travel, we could break down the historical fears and misunderstandings that often divide us. The Peace Road initiative seeks to bridge these divides and promote global unity.



Two significant projects under the Peace Road initiative include the proposed undersea tunnel between Korea and Japan, and the Bering Strait Project, which aims to connect Alaska and Siberia. These projects, much like the Channel Tunnel, represent bold steps towards a more interconnected and peaceful world.