

Linz commemorates the UN Family Day with a political podium discussion

(Linz) On 15th May 2017, the Austrian public found out that the country would face a re-election. On the same day, the United Nations commemorated the 22nd International Day of Families. It took place under the theme “Families, education and well-being”.

The Universal Peace Federation (UPF), a non-governmental organisation with UN(ECOSOC) consultative status, held a podium discussion in Linz (Humboldtstraße 49) on the topic “What value does the family have?” in commemoration of the UN day. The promotion of the family as “the school of love” and foundation for a peaceful society is one of the key focuses in the global peace efforts of the NGO. Mag. Maria Maria (UPF OÖ) moderated the evening.



Vienna parliamentarian MMag. Dr. Gudrun Kugler made a powerful plea for family-friendly politics in her main address, and outlined five concrete political questions in reference to the event's title.

Firstly Kugler asked whether it is a value that *children under the age of 3 should not be put under the care of strangers*, making a clear statement in its favour. According to

Kugler, parents should be supported whether they leave their children in daycare or take care of their children themselves. Kugler referred to the [Berndorfer Model](#) (Salzburg) in relation to the topic.

Next, she raised the question, *is the family worth being supported?* Many politicians, even today, see the family for ideological reasons as an instrument of suppression. Kugler disapproved this view, stating that politics should free the family from external pressures in order to perform well internally. It should, first and foremost, succeed in providing tax equality for families and pension allowance for children's education.

Dr. Kugler, having graduated in theology and gender studies alongside her law education, brought an ideological argument into the middle of her presentation with three further questions which dealt with current social challenges and political decision processes.

- Do I experience the fundamental difference between man and woman as good or not?
- Is the education of stable relationships valuable and is it meaningful to be in control for something greater?
- Is it a value that we expect something of ourselves and allow ourselves to be used by others for something greater?

Kugler addressed here in particular the in her opinion ideologically one-sided sexual education in Vienna schools.



Heinrich Krcek, theologian and author, began his presentation with a quotation from the book „True Family Values” which develops a great synthesis of Judeo-Christian and Confucian family ethics.

It addressed the so-called family pledge, credo of the Family Federation for World Peace. Mr. Krcek emphasised the seventh point in particular, which referred to the realisation of a world of the culture of heart and a life for sake of others. The family is the germ cell of society and cornerstone for a peaceful world family.

At the same time he highlighted the tension between the ideal and its failure, which practically every family experiences. Krcek proceeded with the historical development of the term “family” and the different models of cohabitation besides the nuclear family. He continued by emphasising how important it is for the development of the children that the father and mother are mature in character and how enriching the existence of grandparents is for all family members. In the family, values are passed on, special occasions are celebrated, through the experience with parents the image of God is impressed on the children and it is a place of freedom that cannot be experienced in nurseries or daycare. In the family, the child learns that freedom also has its laws and it learns to deal with boundaries. What leads people to give up the single-life and take on the responsibility of a family? It is the love and communion with a “Thou” by which we arrive at the purpose of life.



The final discussion, prompted by Mr. Brunnbauer (Family Federation for World Peace), touched upon the role the religious council of the Upper Austrian government can play in the valorisation of the family and family politics.

Other points touched on the importance of healing injuries in family relationships and supporting parental education in language use. The participants asked how parental education can be supported and if, for example, it could be integrated in the Mother-Child Passport. An ideologically broad selection of such offers, including churches and religious communities, were mentioned. Mr. Paul Ettl (Peace Academy Linz) raised the topic of an economy for the common good and unconditional basic income as approaches to free the family from “outside pressure.” An Upper Austrian councillor present at the event also suggested the establishment of family representatives on the municipal level.

The lively and thought-provoking discussion ended with the call – also in view of the upcoming election - to take the family as a future theme and with the encouragement that every letter and public effort would contribute to an improved family politics and thereby an improved cohabitation.

About the speakers:



The Vienna parliamentarian and councillor MMag. Dr. Gudrun Kugler (ÖVP) is married and mother of four strong personalities (11, 9, 7, 3) and is a postdoctoral lawyer. She holds a master’s degree in Theological Studies (marriage and family) and a master’s degree in Gender Studies.

She is the ÖVP-Vienna (Austrian people’s party) representative for Integration, Europe and Human rights and is the Austrian representative of the European citizen’s initiative “One of Us” and initiator of the parliamentarian citizen’s initiative “By the Hand.”

Furthermore, she is co-founder of the Youth Academy of the Dr. Karl-Kummer-Institute and led the World Youth Alliance Europe in Brussels from 2001 to 2004.



Mr. Heinz Krcek, theologian, author and translator is married and father of two daughters. He translated the book “True Family Values” into German and is, in the German-speaking area, a lecturer on the themes of peace, relationships and family. A selection of his lectures, talks and sermons is published under the title: *“How does one get to Paradise from here?”*