

## UPF Upper Austria: Peace Road Connects Austria, Czech Republic, Germany

Maria Pammer  
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**Dreisesselberg, Austria** – A hiking trail in a beautiful mountain forest in Austria was officially designated a Peace Road on the International Day of Peace, September 21, 2024. The trail leads along Dreisesselberg mountain to a point where the borders of Austria, the Czech Republic and Germany meet.

Representatives of UPF from all three countries met at the Berggasthof Dreisessel in the German town of Neureichenau, for a program to celebrate the opening of the trail. This was the outcome of a Peace Road initiative that began in 2021, when UPF participants set out from Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic and met at the border triangle, one of the places where the symbol of the Cold War, the Iron Curtain, fell over thirty years ago. Similar events were held in following years, attracting up to a hundred participants.



**Mr. Michael Leitner**, mayor of the nearby Austrian town of Schwarzenberg, opened the festive event. “Peace cannot be taken for granted,” he reminded everyone. “It has to be worked hard for every day.” He added that the trail should be a permanent symbol of peace, even as it reminds future generations of past divisions.

Mr. Leitner actively supported the trilateral meetings at the border triangle for the past three years, and was instrumental in establishing this official Peace Road.



“I have always been a child of the border,” said **Mr. Walter Bermann**, former mayor of Neureichenau. He has spent his whole life in this area.

**Mr. Daniel Hermann**, former Czech minister of culture, pointed out, “The history of the 20th century is sometimes very painful, but we cannot change it. However, we have our future in our own hands!”



**Mr. Peter Haider** from UPF-Austria, echoed that sentiment. “We can do something: People make war,

but we can also make peace!”

“We need peace with God,” said **Mr. Dieter Schmidt** from UPF-Germany. He said that during the first Peace Road hike in 2021, he experienced finding inner peace and hope in nature.



**Mr. Juraj Lajda** from UFP-Czech Republic, said the path would “remind us that all paths should lead to peace and harmony.” **Ms. Maria Pammer**, secretary general of UPF-Upper Austria, concluded her speech with the remark, “We will not be able to achieve lasting peace with human efforts alone.”

The program was accompanied by music from the Traun Klang horn quartet, and a young couple, **Michael and Polina**, expressed the wish of all those present with the song “Let There Be Peace On Earth.”



“Everyone is invited to walk the path of peace!” proclaimed **Father Martin Felhofer**, abbot emeritus of Schlägl Abbey, as the indoor event concluded. As an enthusiastic former footballer, he added: “It is important that we don't take God out of the game! In this case, the path is not the goal, because the goal must be peace among people. But it is important that we are on the way there.”

Father Felhofer was joined by **Bishop Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger** in saying prayers for peace and blessing the Peace Trail. He then cut the ribbon for the official opening and all visitors and guests were invited to walk the approximately seven-kilometer trail.