

## UPF's Paris, France Meeting Promotes Families and Living Together in Peace

Jacques Marion  
May 16, 2026  
President, UPF-France and EUME



**Paris, France** – In conjunction with the International Day of Families and the International Day of Living Together in Peace, celebrated by the United Nations on May 15 and 16, respectively, the UPF-France and the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) France organized a gathering on the theme, "Living Together in the Family and in Society" at the Espace Barrault in Paris on May 16, 2026.

In front of a full audience representing a particularly diverse public, three speakers enthusiastically celebrated the shared values of family and living together. Their presentations shed light on family policy in France, the philosophical and academic foundations of these values, and the richness of African family culture.



The meeting was introduced by **Ms. Brigitte Wada**, president of WFWP France, who presented a brief history of these two UN International Days while emphasizing their complementarity and convergence.

The first speaker, **Ms. Christine Jouan-Bruneau**, an academic and honorary deputy mayor of Boulogne-Billancourt, shared the experience she gained through her many years of public service overseeing family affairs in a major city in the Paris region.

Ms. Jouan-Bruneau discussed the challenges families face today: the consequences of the erosion of family values on social, educational and emotional levels; the rise in violence among young people; and the difficulties experienced by single-parent families. While recalling the social factors contributing to this situation, she emphasized what she considers the heart of the problem: the weakening of family ties, especially marriage, as well as the decline of parental authority.

The second speaker, **Dr. Laurent Ladouce**, approached the issue of the family from a philosophical perspective. Dr. Ladouce traced the origins of the concepts of "living together" and altruism in the thought of the influential French philosophers Ernest Renan and Auguste Comte. He also referred to sociologist Frédéric Le Play, a pioneer in family studies, who highlighted the influence of family systems on social and political structures.



Comparing the natural order of the universe with that of the family – recognized by the United Nations Charter as the fundamental unit of society – he proposed a psychological and emotional interpretation of the family. Drawing on certain Eastern concepts of family order, he connected them with Austrian Israeli philosopher Martin Buber's notion of "homo dialogus," describing the four fundamental spheres of the emotional and ethical development of the human being: filial, fraternal, conjugal and parental love.

The third speaker, **Mr. Patrick Mangala**, a journalist and member of Club RFI (Radio France Internationale), a humanitarian branch of France Médias Monde (France Media World), took the audience on a fascinating exploration of African family culture.

Originally from Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of Congo, he highlighted the characteristics of the African family: its extended and supportive structure, its fundamental educational role in society, and its economic importance in individual development.



He recounted his journey as a young African confronted with a very different French culture, where family values seemed to him to be weakened by individualism. With passion and humor, he described his initial confusion, his gradual adaptation, and the conviction he ultimately reached: despite social changes, the family remains the guardian of cultural identity. As an essential pillar of African society, it is a force for cohesion, education and collective solidarity, and thus represents a major foundation for the future of the African continent.

The presentations then sparked discussions and questions, enriched by the diversity of the participants' backgrounds, sensitivities and family experiences, particularly concerning the differences and convergences between African, European and Eastern models.



In concluding the event, **Mr. Jacques Marion**, president of UPF in France and the Europe –Middle East region, returned to several key points raised during the conference. He notably emphasized the inseparable link between living together and family ethics. Recalling the guiding principles of UPF – interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universally shared values – he stressed the need for a form of living together based both on the sharing of economic resources, political cooperation aimed at common prosperity, and a strong family ethic. He explained that this ethic forms the foundation of democratic ethics and fraternity, which today face the challenges posed by the fragility of marital bonds and the weakening of the parental role, both essential in the upbringing of young people.



The meeting concluded with the presentation of Ambassador for Peace certificates to three participants, encouraging them to continue their commitment to intercultural and international dialogue by joining UPF's global network of peace ambassadors.