

Round Table on the Family

Vienna, Austria, 8. July 2016



By Jacques Marion

This is an initial report on the Round Table on the theme “Family Values, Family Policies, European Culture: Challenges and Opportunities in Central Europe Today”, which was convened by UPF Europe and the Czech Parliamentarian Mrs. Nina Novakova at the hotel Regina in Vienna on July 8, 2016.

This Round Table was initiated after our Conference on the Family at the Bratislava Parliament in Slovakia, that was to be held on June 10, was suddenly cancelled by the organizing parliamentarians a few days before, due to a negative article in the local press. Other participants from Slovakia

and the Czech Republic, particularly Mrs. Novakova, who attended our ILC in Korea last February, feeling the urgency of the matter, encouraged us to quickly move on and organize a round table discussion on strategies to protect family values in Europe. With the help of Austrian UPF and FFWPU leaders, we then decided to hold this meeting in Vienna, benefiting from the good foundation they have there.

The meeting was divided into three sessions: The first session was on “Current Threats and Controversies regarding the Family”; the second on “Family values, human rights and the Judeo-Christian legacy in modern-day Europe”; the third on “Family policies

and strategies in the Visegrad group of nations and Central Europe”.

Participant included parliamentarians, scholars and pro-family activists.

From the Czech Republic: Mrs. Nina Novakova, Member of Parliament; Dr. Roman Joch, president of the Civic Institute; Dr. Scheu, a human rights lawyer.

From Slovakia: Mr. Jozef Mikloško, former Member of Parliament and Vice Prime Minister of Slovakia, currently President of Slovak Senior Citizens; Mr. Stanislav Trnovec, Chairman, Large Families Club; a young lawyer for Caritas in Slovakia, and a young representative of the Association for the Defense of the Family.

From Hungary: Mrs Marianna Kovacs, a lawyer and human rights mediator; Mr. Peter Hetenyi, a former Administration official and current Vice President of UPF.

From Austria: Dr. Gudrun Kugler, a Member of the Vienna Parliament and well-known pro-family activist; Prof. Ismail Yasin, a Project Member of the Austrian Center for Digital Humanities; Dr. Walter Baar, Director of the Institute for Trends Research; Dr. Slawomir Redo, Senior Advisor to ACUNS Vienna; Mr. Joseph Gundacker, President of the Family Forum, and Mrs. Maria Neuberger-Schmidt, founder of the NGO „Parents Workshop“.



Dr. Walter Baar, Austria, giving an overview of family issues in Europe from a demographic viewpoint

UPF, WFP and Family Federation leaders from these nations also attended.

Both presentations and discussions were very enlightening. A final

memorandum was approved by participants to develop a platform in Central Europe to protect and strengthen the family and develop policies to this effect.

We plan another round table in late September with politicians and experts, leading to a conference at the Prague Parliament this coming autumn..



Mrs. Gudrun Kugler, a powerful pro-family activist at the Vienna Parliament, with Mrs. Novakova at her right



Dr. Roman Joch, President of the Civic Institute in Czech Republic, gave a very articulate assessment of the Family situation – Mr. Trnovec (Slovakia) looking on.