

# UPF Denmark celebrated UNs International Day of Peace

Copenhagen, Denmark, 27. September 2015



By Karsten Nielsen

The event hosted by MP Yildiz Akdogan was held in the beautiful Common Room of Christiansborg, the seat of the Danish parliament. The 150-seat room was filled with Ambassadors for Peace, community leaders, religious leaders, NGOs and UPF friends.

In her welcoming address **Yildiz Akdogan** introduced the theme of UN Peace Day 2015 "Partnerships for Peace – Dignity for All", a theme which emphasizes the importance of including all segments of society to work together for peace and she referred to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moons message which sets focus on a new global sustainable development agenda and meaningful action on climate change.



UPF vice chairman, **Thorkil Christensen** briefly introduced UPF, its mission and explained the relationship between UPF and UN. The first part of the program featured four speakers:



**Stine Bosse**, since 2010 member of Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon's MDG Advocacy Group and twice appointed one of the most influential business women in the world, set a positive tone of hope, presenting the many advances in the fight against poverty and better opportunities for children's education in Africa and many other areas in the world. She emphasized the need of a united Europe to support UN.



**Jens-André Herbener**, religious historian and postdoc researcher at the University of Southern Denmark, spoke about "Climate change and the responsibility of religions for sustainability and peace". He started from the global climate crisis as one of the biggest threats to peace, that climate change might result in hundreds of millions of climate refugees in the future if we do not seriously put climate on the agenda worldwide. According to Jens-André Herbener religions can play a crucial role in solving the global climate crisis, because religions are major suppliers of values and man's view of nature; therefore religions have a large responsibility for sustainability and peace.



**Nadia Plesner**, a Danish artist, spoke about art as a driving force. Nadia Plesner became known worldwide when her cartoon-like picture (see it here: [www.nadiaplesner.com/simple-living--darfurnica1](http://www.nadiaplesner.com/simple-living--darfurnica1)) of a naked little African child bearing a copy of Paris Hilton's bejeweled little dog and a Louis Vuitton bag went viral. After being seriously injured in a traffic accident and unable to move, with crushed dreams and full of self pity, she became outraged by newspapers prioritizing entertainment stories above humanitarian disasters. She decided to use her art for victims of disasters and got the idea for her picture. It brought on a lawsuit against her by Louis Vuitton, one she eventually won after a long, arduous battle, a battle during which she also slowly regained her health. In November 2012 UN asked Nadia if they could use her Simple Living drawing on their website as illustration on the page about artistic freedom. Today she raises funds for emergency aid in several countries through her art. Her story is a great example of what a single person can do.

**Lotte Heise**, well known speaker and radio host, spoke about how art and culture can create peace and harmony. Music is a universal language understood by anybody, and Lotte gave ample examples of how songs and music can heal and bring people together. She encouraged everybody to be an ambassador for music which eventually can lead to peace.

Before the peace ceremony the audience sang together "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream".



Thorkil Christensen introduced and gave a moving explanation of the deep symbolic meaning of the peace ceremony before seven religious leaders representing Judaism, Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism poured water in

a common bowl in a serene and solemn atmosphere.

The celebration finished with a cultural performance.



First by the world-renowned recorder virtuoso **Michala Petri and Lars Hannibal** on guitar. Michala Petri played recorder since she was three years old and has toured all the continents appearing in famous concert halls all over the world. With their music the hall was filled with intensity, presence, humor and virtuosity which stroke the hearts of the audience.



They were followed by **Cæcilie Norby and Lars Danielsson**, a Danish jazz singer and a Swedish basist called Europe's dream couple of Jazz. They performed two tracks from their new duo-album, "Just The Two of Us", a meditation on reality and fantasy, which has been praised by critics across Europe. This left no one unmoved - it was really magical!

Both speakers and artists were impressed with the audience and atmosphere of the event and many positive comments were heard from the participants.