

UPF Austria: Peace Road Event on the Austrian, Slovakian, and Hungarian border

Peter Haider
June 3, 2023



Central Europe -- The Austrian, Slovakian and Hungarian chapters of UPF and affiliated organizations held a Peace Road event at the point where their nations' borders meet.

More than 150 representatives of UPF, Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), and International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) participated in the event on June 3, 2023.

The program opened with the participants singing the European Anthem, based on Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," with each singing in his or her own language. As the program moderator, **Elisabeth Cook**, the president of FFWPU-Austria, welcomed the participants.



UPF-Austria President **Peter Haider** reminded the listeners that in 1989 the Iron Curtain still divided Europe. We should be grateful for those who gave their lives for freedom, he said. "Peace has to be cultivated and not taken for granted!"

Gerhard Zapfl, the mayor of Nickelsdorf, an Austrian village located at the border with Hungary, said that in 2015 he was responsible for managing 300,000 refugees crossing the border and for maintaining the social peace in his small community. His experience showed him that integration is possible with good management and the goodwill of the people.

Gabriela Ferencáková, the mayor of Čunovo, a Slovakian village near the border with Hungary, highlighted the importance of cooperation, common values and common solutions to problems.

UPF-Slovakia President **Miloš Klas** and his wife, journalist and historian **Barbara Grabner**, were also present. Mrs. Grabner gave a talk on the European Greenbelt initiative, which aims to implement a zone from Norway to Bulgaria, mainly along the former Iron Curtain, based on nature protection and sustainable development.

Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) was represented by **Renate Amesbauer** (Austria), **Lubica Magnusson** (Slovakia), and **Katsuyo Bendsza** (Hungary).

Youth and Students for Peace (YSP) was represented by **Marlies Ladstätter** (Austria) and **Monika Nanys** (Hungary).



The official program ended with a speech by **Péter Mészáros**, representing UPF-Hungary. He recalled the severe border controls at the Slovakian and Austrian borders that he witnessed during his childhood, each time his family intended to travel abroad. His desire to cross the borders freely has been fulfilled, at least for this part of Europe. We should never take peace for granted, but work for it, he said.



The event concluded with a picnic at the Aranykárász campground in Rajka, Hungary, about 8 km from the tri-border point. Some of the participants set out on a boat or kayak on a tributary of the Danube River, a well-known nature reserve called the Szigetköz.

The [Peace Road](#) is a global goodwill project of the Universal Peace Federation. The project dates back to 1981, when UPF founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, speaking at the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, proposed an international highway that would connect all the people of the world.

The Peace Road initiative promotes two projects in particular: an undersea tunnel between Korea and Japan, and the Bering Strait Project to connect Alaska and Siberia. The founders' vision and desire was the peaceful reunification of Korea, which is surrounded by the competing superpowers of the United States, China, Russia and Japan. Only when the world is connected peacefully can Korea be reunited, the founders said.



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[JUL 22: Peace Road Austria-Czechia-Germany](#)

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LANGUAGES

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PEACE ROAD INITIATIVE



The Peace Road and the World Peace Road Foundation are global goodwill projects of the Universal Peace Federation. The project dates back to 1981, when the late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon proposed an international highway that will physically connect all people of the world. The Peace Road initiative promotes two projects in particular: an undersea tunnel between Korea and Japan, and the Bering Strait Project to connect Alaska and Siberia.

Until today, there has never been a road or highway specifically conceived and built as a highway to world peace. The International Peace Highway epitomizes Rev. Moon's conviction that humanity is one family under God and that if people could meet each other in daily life, through culture, trade, and travel, the historic fears and misunderstandings that often divide us from our closest neighbors would break down.

- [Peace Road Programs and Reports](#)
- [Backgrounder on the Peace Road](#)
- [History of the Peace Road Initiative](#)

PEACE ROAD PROGRAMS AND RELATED REPORTS

2023

Jun 3 [Slovakia - Austrians, Slovaks, and Hungarians Meet at their Border for Peace Road Event](#)

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Jan 29 [Ireland - UPF-Ireland Gathers Peace Ambassadors](#)

Jan 19 [Russia - UPF-Russia Webinar Introduces IAAP](#)

2022

Nov 13 [Thailand - Thailand "Peace Road" Draws Hundreds of Cyclists](#)

Nov 13 [Argentina - UPF-Argentina's Peace Road Activities: "Connecting Argentina through Peace"](#)

Nov 4 [Russia - UPF-Russia Hosts Webinar on Prospects for a Bering Strait Tunnel](#)

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Oct 9 [Switzerland - UPF-Switzerland Organizes Peace Road Event](#)

Sep 25 [Ireland - UPF-Ireland Brings Peace Road to Northern Ireland](#)

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BACKGROUNDER

Trade routes and infrastructure have been vital to the growth and stability of civilizations since the dawn of human history. Until roughly 9,000 BCE, a land bridge connected Siberia and Alaska, allowing humans to cross from Afro-Eurasia into the Americas. Around 114 BCE, the Han Dynasty of China expanded its Central Asian trade network, creating the "Silk Road," which contributed to the economic and cultural interconnectedness of Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania for millennia thereafter. The Romans built a massive network of roads throughout their Empire, connecting Western Europe to the Middle East and North Africa, many of which are still in use today, after thousands of years. President Dwight Eisenhower, a former general, concerned about the United States' ability to mobilize in the face of military attack, advocated for the building of the interstate highway system, which was authorized by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. In 1994, the Channel Tunnel or "Chunnel," was completed, creating the first-ever fixed link between the island of Great Britain and continental Europe. In 2013, the People's Republic of China launched the Belt and Road Initiative, an ambitious global development involving infrastructure development and investments in 152 countries.

The vision of the Peace Road Initiative goes beyond the materialistic desire for the economic and political benefits of an international road, and champions the spiritual dimension, which aims to tear down the walls that have historically divided us – racism and cultural differences, prejudice and fear – and bring humankind together as one family under God.

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HISTORY OF THE PEACE ROAD INITIATIVE

The Peace Road Initiative seeks to continue this legacy with two major projects: the Bering Strait project, which will reconnect the Americas to the Eurasian continent for the first time in eleven thousand years; and the Korea-Japan tunnel, which will unite two nations, which once were enemies, but which now share a strong economic and political bond.

1981: UPF founders Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Rev. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon suggested the construction of a highway between Korea and Japan, two former enemy nations, at an international science conference in Seoul.

2005: At the UPF Inauguration, the founders began advocating for the building of a "Peace Tunnel" across the Bering Strait, to connect North America and Asia. Rev. Sun Myung Moon made the following statement:

"This tunnel can help make the world a single community at last...Think of how much money the world is wasting on war. The time has come for nations to work together, pool their resources and, as the prophet Isaiah taught, beat our swords into plowshares and pruning hooks."

2008: The Foundation for Peace and Unification (FPU) was established, which sponsors an international thesis competition on the topic, "The Significance of the Bering Strait Project and the Korea-Japan Tunnel Project from a Providential Viewpoint and Ways to Pursue These Two Projects."

2009: FPU sponsored the Bering Strait International Ideas Competition. The first-place winner is submitted by Taller 301, an architecture firm based in Bogota, Colombia. They propose the creation of a series of artificial islands by dredging and land reclamation at the narrowest point between the Chukchi Peninsula, Russia and the Cape of Prince of Wales, Alaska — a distance of about 52 miles.

2012: The first Peace Road Forum was held.

2014: The World Peace Tunnel Foundation (WPTF) established the Peace Road Academy, for university students.

2015: The Peace Road initiative began with an event at Las Vegas, Nevada, followed by programs throughout the world along the course of the proposed international highway. Teams of participants walked, bicycled and drove, with all teams converging in the Korean town of Imjingak, on the 38th parallel.

2017: The World Peace Tunnel Foundation changed its name to the World Peace Road Foundation.

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