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**Commemorating Human Rights Day 2011:  
How Far Have We Progressed?  
European Leadership Conference**  
London, United Kingdom, 8th - 10th December 2011

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The last of the series of European Leadership Conferences in 2011, 'Commemorating Human Rights Day 2011: How Far Have We Progressed?' examined the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP)'s benchmark of human rights, that humanity is an inclusive global family under a loving God, contrasting it with the global problems we face and discussing strategies, initiatives and policies to reach to that ideal.



**Dr Song, Yong Cheon**, Chairman of UPF Europe in his keynote address expressed, *"The advancement of the Human Rights of all peoples is an essential part of the core mission of both organizations, and a key element in building lasting world peace. ... We meet against the backdrop of unfolding events in the Arab world that demonstrate in unprecedented ways a growing awareness of our shared humanity and of our destiny to become one global family in which the Human Rights of all, regardless of race, religion, nationality or ethnicity are respected. The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) proclaims that there must be what it calls a "common standard of achievement for all people".*

UN General Secretary [Ban Ki Moon's statement](#) for 2011 Human Rights Day: *Human rights belong to every one of us without exception. Across the globe, people mobilized to demand justice, dignity, equality, participation -- the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration. Many of these peaceful demonstrators persevered despite being met with violence and further repression. As we look to the challenges ahead, let us take inspiration from the example of human rights activists and the timeless power of the Universal Declaration, and do our utmost to uphold the ideals and aspirations that speak for every culture and every person.*

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**Plenary Session  
Human Rights around Europe**

[Pictures](#)



[The Plenary Session entitled 'Human Rights Around Europe'](#) began with Lord King of West Bromwich (Patron of UPF UK) and the session's host Rt. Hon. Tom Brake MP welcoming the international conference participants to the historic Committee Room 14 in the House of Commons.



*Mrs Carolyn Handschin - Prof. Lord Bhiku Parekh - Rt. Hon. Baroness Scotland of Asthal QC*

**Mrs Carolyn Handschin** (President WFWPI - Europe), chaired the session and expressed that a commemoration of human rights is also a celebration of human dignity.

**Prof. Lord Bhiku Parekh** ([link](#) for speech) stated that Human Rights must include socio-economic rights. He expressed his concern that “rights are being chipped away” by budget cuts, “the war on immigration” and the practice of “stop and search” by the police in the UK.

**Rt. Hon. Baroness Scotland of Asthal QC**, Britain's first black female Attorney General (2007-2010) shared her experiences in combating domestic violence in Britain. (speech [link](#)) stating that in 2003 “1 in 4 women in the UK were victims of domestic violence.” She explained that they had brought that down to 1 in 6 by 2010 but globally, on average, one in three women suffer abuse in their home. Baroness Scotland encouraged those present to be involved in the effort to eliminate domestic violence for which she has promoting the '[For the Women in My Life](#)' campaign in her capacity as Patron of '[Eliminate Domestic Violence – Global Foundation](#).'



*Mrs. Silvia Escobar - Rt. Hon. Tom Brake MP - Dr. Yong Cheon Song*

The former Human Rights Ambassador for Spain, **Silvia Escobar**, pointed out the role that institutions like the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe play in securing human rights in Europe. She highlighted that the different articles of the UDHR are closely interconnected and “the failure of one is abuse of another.” Escobar emphasised that at the core of the matter is dignity, which is the foundation for peace, security and freedom. She remarked “dignity even comes before equality.” ([Link to presentation](#))

**Rt. Hon. Tom Brake MP**, Liberal Democrat spokesman for Home Affairs issues, took a Human Rights angle on the recent riots in the United Kingdom. ([Speech link](#)) He expressed his concern that Human Rights are experiencing a backlash in UK at the moment. He expressed that Human Rights had not restricted the police in dealing with the looting “The police do not want or need new weapons, curfew powers, or the power to shut down social networks”, he stated and expressed his concern about misleading language in the media, when it comes to “so-called” Human Rights.

**Dr. Yong Cheon Song**, Chair of UPF Europe, gave the final address, '[New Vision for Human Rights](#)', which highlighting Human Rights as a key element in building world peace. He reminded the audience that UPF's founder, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, had suffered more than many from Human Rights abuses. He asked where Human Rights come from and how they can be protected. He located their wellspring as the human heart and conscience, emphasising the need to search for insight in the areas of spirituality, family and education. ([For more information about the Session - link](#))

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## Session II A

### Human Rights around the World

[Pictures](#)

[Session IIA, 'Human Rights Around the World'](#) panel included, Prof. Akiko Yamanaka, Vice Foreign Minister of Japan (2005-06), speaking on 'Responsibility to Protect from a Human Security Perspective'; Austrian Ambassador (Rtd.) Dr. Walther Lichem explaining the role of '*Human Rights Cities*' and Willy Fautre, Director of Human Rights without Frontiers International in a speech entitled '*Human Rights in North Korea*'. The session was chaired by Robin Marsh, Secretary General, Universal Peace Federation – UK.



In her speech entitled, 'Responsibility to Protect from a Human Security Perspective', **Prof. Akiko Yamanaka**, Vice Foreign Minister of Japan (2005-2006), discussed how global political dynamics have changed since the end of the Cold War. There is a need to establish a new security framework. After the Cold War problems such as drugs, terrorism, disease, WMD, financial crisis, natural disasters and resource shortages have dominated the headlines. She stated that the international community need to establish a new framework, a new world order. The challenge now facing all countries was to consolidate their identity and policies, military and non-military, and to focus on conflict resolution and prevention.

Yamanaka suggested there were three elements which define where we are and where we should be going. First, countries are moving from traditional to non - traditional identities and policies. Second, regarding security, there is a need for a change of policy from countries seeing themselves set against some other countries to their sharing common cause with every nation. Third it is important to ensure cooperation beyond national borders. Preventative diplomacy is necessary to ensure peace and promote human rights.



Ambassador (Rtd.) **Dr. Walther Lichem**, shared his passion for “Human Rights Cities”. He explained that the human rights agenda has three phases: norms setting, the adjudicative phase where violations are denounced and the developmental and operational phase, where Human Rights are made a reality. He talked about examples of this in 14 cities around the world that have declared themselves human rights cities where human rights are taught in schools and become the basis of civic life. By doing so the cities had successfully transformed themselves and, as a result, had also become more prosperous.



**Willy Fautre**, the director of [Human Rights Without Frontiers International](#) gave a presentation entitled '[Human Rights in North Korea](#)'. [\(full speech link\)](#). Emphasizing the importance of primary research he described the work he had done with North Korean refugees. North Korea ranks on every survey of human rights as one of the worst countries. It is a perfect totalitarian system in which there is no independent civil society. There are at least 200,000 people in political prison camps in bestial living conditions where they are often tortured. Many prisoners are victims of 'guilt by association' because in North Korea three generations can be punished for a person's crime. Up until now the international community has been silent on this issue but now there is no excuse for this as the facts are very clear.

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## Session II B

### House of Lords

[Human Rights Issues Around the World](#)

[Pictures](#)





Lord Nazir Ahmed of Rotherham - Keith Best - Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid – Prof. Unni Wikan

Chaired by Lord King of West Bromwich and Margaret Ali (Director UPF – UK). The first speaker was **Lord Nazir Ahmed of Rotherham** who addressed the topic [Universal Human Rights for Humanity](#) passionately asserting that all people have rights regardless of their background, religion or colour given to us by ‘God Almighty’ and that December 10<sup>th</sup> is a day to remember that we are very fortunate that we have such rights. He highlighted the double standards of those who only speak out about issues of human rights when it is in their national interest.

The second speaker, **Keith Best**, gave us his insight into torture, posing the question, [Why Do We Still Tolerate Torture?](#) Mr Best, having had much experience as CEO of Torture Care, gave a short history of torture practices, and opposed any justification for torture, calling it ‘morally repugnant’. He expressed his optimism that torture practices across the globe can finally be eradicated.

**Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid JP** (Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony UK) was the third speaker of the session, speaking on the topic of [Islam and Human Rights](#) emphasising Islam’s perspective on human rights with support from the Qu’ran, and the power of education as a tool that not only promotes human rights but also combats issues such as poverty.

The final speaker of the session, **Prof. Unni Wikan** (University of Oslo), began by telling the moving story of Fadima, a 26 year old women killed by her father in 2002, in what is known as ‘*Honour Based Violence*’. Prof. Wikan described it as a practice that cuts across religions and societies, with a solution in locating the signs that could lead to violence before that violence occurs.

### Session III A Women’s Empowerment and Human Rights [Pictures](#)



Mitty Tohma - Carolyn Handschin - Shaista Gohir MBE - Marcia Lewinson - Patricia Lalonde

**Mitty Tohma**, President, Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP) UK, chairing the Session introduced **Carolyn Handschin**, President of WFWP International I Europe, who gave the first presentation on the activities of the WFWP. She gave a brief overview of the movement for women’s rights from the time of Mary Wollstonecraft. In passing she mentioned Queen Anne who had unsuccessfully campaigned for a women’s college. She moved via domestic science to the conferences of the UN Commission on the Status of Women that emphasized the family as the cornerstone and model for human relationships. She quoted Kofi Annan who said that human rights create the space for family life and is the standard for ethical relations among people. This suggests that grass roots and global campaigns for human rights needed to be connected.

She added that Women's Human Rights issues are very important to Womens’ Federation for World Peace, the organisation was founded in April of 1992, in Seoul, South Korea, by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. The WFWP activities have been developed in three main areas:

First relating to Family Ethics with the understanding that the family is the cornerstone for peace in the community and nation. Secondly, we are dealing with Poverty Eradication and Service to others, as exemplified by our ongoing projects

worldwide. Thirdly Peace and Reconciliation activities, including working with the UN and with international NGOs; and the Bridge of Peace Ceremony.

In a speech entitled, 'Despite Barriers it is Empowering to be a Muslim Women in Britain', **Shaista Gohri MBE**, currently a 'Global Campaign Strategist' at the internationally renowned charity, Oxfam, said Muslim women were being pressured by Muslim conservatives who wanted them to cover up and right wing extremists who object to women covering up. Women's bodies and dress codes have become a battleground, whereas such decisions should be a matter of personal choice. Shaista shared that in the UK Islamophobia needs to be challenged. She explained the BigSister website (<http://www.bigsister.org.uk/>) she set up as a myth buster about women in Islam, which has attracted contacts from around the world.

**Marcia Lewinson**, Chief Executive, Women Acting in Today's Society, stated that 25% of women in Britain experience domestic violence during their life. Her presentation [Women's Empowerment and Human Rights](#) can be seen by this link. Her group provides advocacy and training to support and inform women.

**Patricia Lalonde**, Managing Director MEWA, Afghanistan Schools Rebuilding, talked about the work she has been doing since 2000 in Afghanistan. Since the fall of the Taliban the position of women in the cities has improved and they are more empowered. She explained that democracy and women's rights, Do not necessarily go together. Where will the rights of women stand as a result of the Arab Spring? In polling booths in Tunisia men and women were voting and smiling, but she worried that rights derived from greater freedom might be eroded if more fundamentalist Muslim parties gain power.

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### Session III B Real Rights: How Will We Make Dignity a Reality?

[Pictures](#)



*Monika Marekova - Alexander Nelson-Williams - Maburur Ahmed – Bogdan Pammer*

**Monika Marekova** asked us to consider that half of the world's population are under 25 years old and that it is the young who are the most vulnerable in relationship to housing, participation, and social change and who are suffering the highest rates of unemployment. They are not able to fully enjoy human rights and therefore cannot fulfil their potential – this will eventually impact future wellbeing. World leaders should agree an international treaty to protect the youth, that emphasizes the need for youth to have all the basic rights such as access to credit, housing, health etc.

**Alexander Nelson-Williams** is studying psychology at University. With help and support from family and friends he set up the Nelson-Williams Programme to advise and support young people. The programme urges them to treat each other with dignity and prepares them for financial responsibility. Alexander guides his peers telling them that they will gain more by giving and building and learn more by listening. One course teaches young people to go out into the community to start a social enterprise among their peers and to listen to each other.

**Mabrur Ahmed** founded 'Restless Beings' emphasising that self-worth is expressed through passion and creativity. It is a European youth movement of today's Facebook, You Tube generation. Youth movements have become involved in supporting basic human rights: the Occupy Wall Street Campaign, UK student protests regarding the right to an education and the Arab Spring, which is raising human rights concerns in the Middle East. Europe's youth haven't as yet risen together in one movement, but they may soon when faced by severe unemployment. Will this be connected to the call of those in the third world who are seeking dignity? Restless Beings are supporting sustainable charitable projects in different parts of the world that are aiding the oppressed and marginalized.

**Bogdan Pammer** stated that dignity first arises in the family. True dignity can be found in acts of service to others as he had experienced working with refugees.

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## Session IV Religious Freedom - Global Issues

[Pictures](#)



Jura Nanuk - Sheikh Rahman - Peter Zoehrer - Hon. Jin Hinokida

Rev. Dr. Marcus Braybrooke, President of the World Congress of Faiths, brought his extensive experience in matters of religious freedom to the task of chairing this session..

**Jura Nanuk**, Deputy President, Croatian Religious Liberty Association, gave an account of the anti-religious legislation passed in the Hungarian parliament on 14/07/2011. This gives the Hungarian government the right to determine whether or not a religious body can enjoy the privileges of religious status. This has led to the persecution of smaller religions.

He made a call to all present to take action in spreading awareness of the problem by briefing other human rights groups and European legal institutions and by appealing directly to the Hungarian Prime Minister.

**Shiekh Rahman** gave a moving account of the persecution experienced in Pakistan by religious minorities and in particular the exclusion and violence experienced by his own religious community, the **Ahmadiyya Muslims**. Draconian laws are in contradiction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In Pakistan violation of the human rights of other religious groups such as Christians, Hindus, Bahais and Shia Muslims have been state sanctioned. Shiekh Rahman

called for all people present to increase public awareness of this persecution in order to bring greater international attention and pressure on the Pakistani government to prohibit such practices.

**Peter Zoehrer** gave an account of [religious persecution](#) (link for PowerPoint presentation) currently occurring in Japan which he described as a “hidden human rights crime of an unimaginable extent”. There have been forced conversions and kidnappings of more than 4300 believers – predominantly Unification Church members, but also more than 100 Jehovah Witnesses. Those who go through such ordeals are left psychologically traumatised and in some cases, physically damaged. This matter is not receiving appropriate legal attention as judges often consider it to be a “family issue” as family members are instigating the abuse. An appeal was made for support to increase international awareness of this breach of religious freedom. (For More Information [www.religiousfreedom.com](http://www.religiousfreedom.com))

**Hon. Jin Hinokida**, a former member of the Japanese Diet, is one of the few Japanese politicians to have paid attention to this issue. He further raised the point that the Japanese authorities, particularly the police, have ignored such cases as ‘family affairs’, turning a blind eye to the infringement of religious rights. By not acting against such obvious breaches of the human rights the Japanese government is effectively setting a precedent for further violations of religious freedom. ([Link for Fact Sheet](#))

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## Evening Programme

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Delegates visited the UPF-WFWP London HQ to have dinner and enjoy a cultural evening. Peter Graham opened the proceedings with the timeless Bob Marley classic "One World One Heart", followed by a change of mood with beautiful pieces from Puccini performed by a talented young singer from Munich, Philomena Poetis. Beattles' music and traditional Mongolian singing added to the variety. 'Restless Beings' provided a moving rap-style poetic account of the suffering of the oppressed and dispossessed that illustrated the need for global justice: in keeping with the underlying purpose of the conference. The evening finished with the strains of 'Hey Jude' which brought everyone to their feet for a rousing final performance.

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## Saturday December 10<sup>th</sup> 2011 St Giles Conference Centre

[Pictures](#)



*Peter Zoehrer - Dr J.W. Bertens - Saleha Jaffer - Jack Corley - Dr Azra Hadziahmetovic*

**Peter Zoehrer**, speaking on the history of human rights, pointed out how the original US and French constitutions made reference to God or the "Supreme Being" as the origin of human value while in contrast the Universal Declaration admitted such references although it does mention that human dignity is the foundation for all other rights. Mr Zoehrer also examined human slavery and pointed out that it is still alive today, albeit under the modern title of "human trafficking." He reasserted the divine origins of human value: sacred, cosmic and eternal, going on to emphasise the positive influence of religion to motivate people to live for the greater good and achieve higher value. He concluded by stressing the importance of loving one's enemy as the greatest challenge and solution which must be applied both individually and internationally if human rights are to become a reality.

**Dr J.W. Bertens and Saleha Jaffer** gave their responses. The former entertained the audience with an entertaining look at the characteristics of the various European and other nations and their histories. He led the audience to his conclusion that deep down we really are all the same and the differences we see between us are comparatively superficial. Saleha reminded us that gender inequality results in many women worldwide receiving inadequate protection of their human rights. She explored the matter of forced marriages and concluded with an appeal for a greater respect for the principle of equality for all human beings.

**Jack Corley** from UPF UK started his presentation on the premise that we all share a desire for a world of peace and harmony. Religion and politics should provide the means but too often seem to be part of the problem. Peace is not only the absence of conflict but needs to be actively built through the practice of true love – living for the sake of others. He outlined the cause of conflict as rooted in placing one's selfish desires above the wellbeing of others and introduced a three-step approach to reconciliation, starting with reflection and reorientation, followed by restitution and renewal. Mr

Corley peppered his presentation with his own personal experience and illustrative examples and spoke meaningfully of the contribution to peace made by outstanding role models who were motivated by their profound understanding of forgiveness and love of enemy. ([Link to presentation](#))

**Dr Azra Hadziahmetovic**, an MP and former government minister from Bosnia-Herzegovina, spoke of the "un-culture" of conflict in her country and the painful damage to 25% of population and 75% of the economic potential of her country as a result of war.

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## World Cafe

[Pictures](#)



In the World Cafe Session there was an opportunity to discuss three questions regarding Human Rights in small groups. Discussants rotated with other small groups every 15 minutes. Points were raised points that extended participants' understanding of dignity, freedom and respect and explored practical ways to enhance human dignity. All agreed that this was an effective way to meet each other and to give everybody a chance to express their views and experiences.

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## Session VII

### As a Peace Loving Global Citizen – an insight into UPF's Origins & Founders

[Pictures](#)



*Mrs Marcia de Abreu - Mr Timothy Miller - Ms. Sudesh Sharma - Jhr. Dr. Pieter Beelaerts van Blokland – Mr Mark Brann*

**Mrs Marcia de Abreu**, President WFWP Spain introduced **Mr Timothy Miller**, Vice-Chair UPF Europe, to share about the best-selling autobiography of Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon the Founders of UPF and WFWP. Mr Miller gave a comprehensive account of Father Moon's life set in the context of a time of suffering for the Korean people. On the day before Easter 1935, at the age of 15 he had a direct encounter with Jesus that changed his life. He became a man driven by a vision of creating a world of peace. At the age of 92 he still lives with incredible passion and commitment to the same cause.



**Ms. Sudesh Sharma**, a UK Ambassador for Peace, read Rev.Moon's autobiography last year and profoundly agreed with the idea of one family under God. She quoted the ancient Sanskrit Vedas where it is written that "the world is a family" and commented that Rev Moon is a modern day champion of this ancient quest.

**Jhr. Dr. Pieter Beelaerts van Blokland**, Former Dutch Minister of Housing and Environment spoke of how there was no place in Father Moon's heart for anger or bitterness and painted his own Dutch masterpiece in words and images of a man of extraordinary character and unceasing optimism despite so many disappointments and hardships.

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## Session VIII

### [Pictures](#)

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**Mark Brann**, UPF Secretary General for Europe presented a PowerPoint entitled [The Universal Peace Federation-Vision, Projects, and Recent Activities](#). He outlined the five principles that UPF upholds, which are consistent with the core principles of most of the world's religions and which also influence its activities and peace making approach. He emphasised that while a great part of UPF's work lay in education it was very much action-oriented and "into" making peace not just talking peace.

He explained that all around the world UPF was engaged in peace initiatives aimed at building bridges of peace and understanding between divided communities in situations of current or historical conflict. The process in each case began with seeking to identify those higher minded leaders on either side of each such a divide who could be relied upon to see the rights and wrongs of both sides as well as their merits and demerits and whose approach to the relationship between the two was based on forgiveness and reconciliation. By bringing persons of such calibre together a "bridge of peace" could be constructed going beyond barriers and misconceptions of all kinds and eventually those enlightened individuals could lead others in their communities across that "bridge".

Mr Brann explained that although much work of this kind had been done by UPF to bridge the divides between Palestinians and Israelis in The Middle East, between North and South Korea on the Korean Peninsula and in many other places of heightened tension around the world and there was real hope of ultimate success, it was in Nepal that UPF had achieved the greatest measurable outcome and highest degree of recognition for one of its peace initiatives so far. Its principle achievement there had been to inject a heart of inclusiveness and forgiveness into the peace process between the Maoist insurgents, the monarchy together with the army under its control and the 7 mainstream political parties. This enabled them to actually enter into dialogue in the first place and to work together to end the armed insurrection and to channel all their efforts into a peaceful democratic process.

Mr Brann ended by explaining the vision behind the current series of ILCs of bringing UPF's principles of peace to the fore and into the mainstream of European public life, to enable European policy makers, opinion leaders and decision takers to better address the key issues of our times and find solutions to them.



Several Ambassador for Peace awards were presented to participating European delegates. There were several testimonies in this concluding session. ([Pictures](#))

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## Young UPF-WFWP Workshop Empowers Young Leaders to make Dignity a Reality

[Pictures](#)



37 students and young leaders from around Europe gathered on Sunday 11th December at the Architectural Association School to get empowered in their pursuits of change. The day aimed to equip young leaders with an inspirational and useful tool-kit for their own projects, campaigns, etc.

The training session started with the young social entrepreneur André Hackett (in photo above) sharing his story. One of André's projects is a mobile recording studio, where young people from the street, including ex-offenders, could record their music. "I tell my guys to help themselves by helping others. If you start thinking of others and helping others and go beyond yourself, you can deal with your own problems more easily", André summed up. He was convinced that "this is the best time ever in history to change the world!" and encouraged his audience to do so.

Tom (British Council) introduced the Youth in Action program and encouraged the audience to make use of the funding opportunities that the EU, through Youth in Action, offers. Many in the audience were very surprised that for decent projects money is quite easily available.

"Life is all about communication", stated Rioch, who has 16 years of experience in TV, in the introduction to her talk. She started her project for disadvantaged youth 'So you wanna be in TV?' after her son got stabbed at school. Together with her husband, who has 27 years of experience in the industry, Rioch wants to bring more diversity to TV and entertainment. She provides personality and career trainings for the unemployed, disabled and homeless.

The last act in our 4 hour workshop was played by VIP Minds. The participants split up into small groups to brainstorm a project idea by brainstorming concepts, developing a mission and vision. Adam Nazar (CEO of VIP minds) challenged the project groups to think about how to build sustainable relationships with funders and how to attract an audience.

Participants felt with a feeling of empowerment and the certainty of having gained a good network of like-minded and capable Ambassadors for Peace.



*Group picture with ELC participants inside the Parliament*



*Europe UPF Youth delegation*