

Members of the European Parliament and Bundestag Join International Congress “The World Needs a Father” in Moscow

The International Congress “**The World Needs a Father**”, dedicated to strengthening the institution of the family, promoting responsible fatherhood, protecting traditional spiritual and moral values and defending religious freedom, was held in Moscow on June 26–27, 2026.

The Congress was organized by the International Union of Fathers with the support of the World Association of Christian Parliamentarians.

The event brought together parliamentarians, spiritual leaders, public figures and representatives of civil society organizations from Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America, including Russia, Romania, Luxembourg, Germany, the United States, Brazil, India, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, Ecuador, Uganda, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. Delegates from a number of countries attended the Congress in person in Moscow, while other participants joined the international program online.

The central idea of the Congress was that strong families, responsible fatherhood, religious freedom and shared spiritual and moral values are essential foundations for social stability, intergenerational continuity and peaceful international dialogue.

During the two-day program, participants discussed legislative support for active and responsible fatherhood, children’s right to maintain contact with both parents, national practices for strengthening families, the role of faith and cultural heritage in raising the next generation, protection of religious freedom and international cooperation in family policy.

European lawmakers emphasize fathers’ rights, family stability and cultural continuity

On the first day of the Congress, international expert discussions were held at the State Duma of the Russian Federation. Participants focused on legislative mechanisms to support responsible fatherhood, the role of fathers in children’s upbringing, the protection of children’s interests during parental separation and the importance of preserving traditional spiritual and moral values in family policy.

Diana Iovanovici-Șoșoacă, Member of the European Parliament from Romania and a lawyer with three decades of experience in family and child-related cases, drew attention to the consequences of divorce conflicts for children.

According to her, children are too often drawn into disputes between parents and can become “an instrument of punishment” in family conflicts.

“A mother and a father are the foundation of a child’s world. A child who grows up in love and harmony gains confidence in their abilities and looks to the future with dignity and hope,” said Diana Iovanovici-Șoșoacă.

She also emphasized the importance of grandparents and older generations in a child's upbringing.

"A child must know their roots. The presence of grandparents and older generations in their life plays an important role in shaping character. Deep roots make trees strong and long-lasting — the same is true of children," she said.

Diana Iovanovici-Șoșoacă also pointed to the growing social and economic pressures on European families, including long working hours, housing costs and the weakening of intergenerational family support. She argued that fathers should not be pushed to the margins of family life, but should remain a source of responsibility, protection and support for both children and mothers.

Fernand Kartheiser: shared values can bridge East and West

Fernand Kartheiser, Member of the European Parliament from Luxembourg, joined the Congress online. In his video remarks, he stressed that the issues discussed in Moscow are not limited to one country or region, but belong to a broader European and Christian civilizational context.

"The issues discussed at the Congress belong to our shared values in the East and in the West. They are central to our common Christian heritage," said Kartheiser.

He expressed regret that Europe remains divided by conflicts despite sharing many common moral and cultural foundations.

"We have seen the loss of life — tens of thousands of men dying in a conflict in Europe. We should do everything we can in diplomacy and politics to put an end to this armed conflict and to save lives," he said.

Speaking about his own political experience, Kartheiser noted that one of the reasons he entered politics more than 20 years ago was to support fathers who, after divorce or separation, lose contact with their children.

"Children absolutely need their fathers. It is important to ensure that fathers, including divorced fathers, can maintain contact with their children, and that laws guarantee both parents continued contact with their children," Kartheiser emphasized.

He added that legal uncertainty in family and social relations may discourage men from entering long-term relationships and forming families, which is especially concerning for Europe amid demographic challenges.

Family policy as an international agenda

Participants noted that responsible fatherhood today goes far beyond a private family matter. A father's active involvement in a child's life affects upbringing, socialization, the transmission of moral guidelines, intergenerational ties and the reduction of social risks.

Special attention was paid to legislative and public mechanisms for supporting families, including programs to promote responsible parenting, protection of children's interests, the development of family-oriented initiatives and the exchange of successful national practices.

Richard Vanlalmangaiha, Member of the National Parliament of India, said that genuine social development cannot be reduced to economic growth alone.

"Genuine development includes strong families, social unity, the preservation of culture and moral responsibility. The role of fathers deserves special attention: together with the irreplaceable role of mothers, they help shape stable families and a healthy society," he said.

John Crane, State Senator from Indiana, USA, also stressed the importance of fathers guided by faith and moral responsibility.

"At a time of serious instability facing the modern world, the role of strong, responsible fathers guided by faith and moral principles is needed more than ever," Crane said.

International Prayer for Peace brings together participants from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas

A key event of the first day was the international "**Prayer for Peace**", held in Moscow on June 26 as part of the Congress. The event brought together in-person delegates in Moscow and online participants from 20 countries across Europe, Asia, Africa, North America and South America.

Dmitry Kuznetsov, Member of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, highlighted the spiritual meaning of the initiative.

"Our main goal is to testify that the love of Jesus Christ is greater than any political disagreements and divisions," Kuznetsov said.

Dastan Bekeshev, Member of the National Parliament of Kyrgyzstan, stressed that peace begins with respect for human dignity and a willingness to engage in dialogue.

"Peace begins with respect for human dignity, dialogue and a shared desire to understand one another. Despite differences in cultures, beliefs and political views, we all bear responsibility for preserving peace and creating a better future for the next generation," Bekeshev said.

David Soares, Member of the National Congress of Brazil, noted that prayer remains a source of hope for peace and restoration for nations.

"The world seeks to overcome its problems, but the only One who can lead us to victory is Jesus Christ. Through prayer, in Him, peace and restoration can come to our countries," Soares said.

European online participants also emphasized the importance of faith, dialogue and shared values in international relations.

Martina Kempf, Member of the Bundestag from Germany, said that such international meetings help politicians who share Christian and traditional values support one another.

“The International Prayer for Peace is a wonderful opportunity to meet Christian parliamentarians from different countries and exchange views on responsible politics and important values, including responsible fatherhood. Such meetings help us strengthen one another,” Kempf said.

Dr. Rainer Rothfuss, Member of the Bundestag from Germany, stressed the importance of faith as a moral guide for nations seeking peace.

“Only faith in Jesus Christ can give us direction on the path toward peace and mutual understanding among nations. Instead of rivalry, Christ leads us toward the ability to ask, listen, understand, forgive, heal and love,” Rothfuss said.

He added that these qualities are important foundations of peaceful international relations, “which Europe — and the whole world — so urgently need today for a safer future.”

Participants from African countries also joined the prayer online, emphasizing peace, human dignity, responsible leadership and support for families affected by conflict and social hardship.

Dr. Laddy Yangotikala, Member of Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, said the international prayer was “a valuable opportunity for Christian parliamentarians to unite, strengthen one another and promote peace, human dignity, responsible leadership and family values.”

Zelalem Bogale, Member of Parliament of Ethiopia, said that prayer gives people hope in times of conflict and calls them to become peacemakers in their families, communities and nations.

Alan Atugonza, Member of Parliament of Uganda and one of the founders of the World Association of Christian Parliamentarians, noted that peace is impossible without strong families, responsible leadership and respect for human dignity.

“Peace is not only the absence of war, but also the presence of justice, unity, compassion and mutual respect among people and nations. As leaders and lawmakers, we must support policies that strengthen families, protect religious freedom, develop dialogue and promote peaceful coexistence,” Atugonza said.

The organizers emphasized that the Prayer for Peace was not conceived as a political action, but as a spiritual and humanitarian event intended to remind the world of the need for reconciliation, moral renewal and dialogue at a time of deep international tensions.

Igor Dodon highlights family and intergenerational continuity

In a video address to the Congress, **Igor Dodon**, former President of Moldova and leader of the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), said that more political parties and public figures in Europe are recognizing the need to defend traditional family values

“We live in a difficult time. The world is changing, technologies are changing, social processes are changing. But there are things that remain unchanged and eternal: family, love, respect for parents, the connection between generations and the spiritual foundations that form a person and make society strong,” Dodon said.

He described fatherhood as not only a right, but above all a duty — the willingness to care, educate, protect and pass on values preserved by previous generations.

“Preserving traditional values is not a return to the past, but a concern for the future. Without a strong family and respect between generations, it is impossible to build a harmonious and prosperous society,” Dodon emphasized.

According to him, responsible fatherhood is one of the key pillars of a strong family and should be regarded as a matter of social and national importance.

Following the Congress, participants emphasized the need to continue international dialogue and the exchange of legislative, public and humanitarian practices in the fields of family support, responsible fatherhood, protection of freedom of religion and preservation of traditional spiritual and moral values.

International Union of Fathers expands its global network

A separate outcome of the Congress was the expansion of the international community of the **International Union of Fathers**. The Union was established at the 2nd BRICS Forum “Traditional Values”, held in Brazil in September 2025. At that time, fatherhood organizations from Brazil, South Africa and Russia joined the initiative, including LEGENDARIOS from Brazil, the New Africa Foundation from South Africa and the All-Russian Union of Fathers.

Following the Moscow Congress, organizations and representatives from the United States, Romania, India and Pakistan joined the community of the International Union of Fathers.

The new participants signed the **Declaration of International Solidarity and Invitation to Join the International Union of Fathers**. The document emphasizes the fundamental role of the family as the cornerstone of a stable and prosperous civilization and calls for international cooperation to protect traditional spiritual and moral values and strengthen fatherhood.

“The International Union of Fathers recognizes the urgent need to combine international efforts to protect traditional family structures against modern challenges. We emphasize the irreplaceable role of the father in providing a stable environment for the upbringing of children and affirm that every child has the right to a sustainable childhood, protected by the active involvement of both parents and supported by the community,” the declaration states.

Participants noted that the expansion of the International Union of Fathers will help strengthen a global network of organizations and leaders working to support families, promote responsible fatherhood, advance legislative advocacy, conduct social research and implement programs that reinforce the father’s role in the family and society.