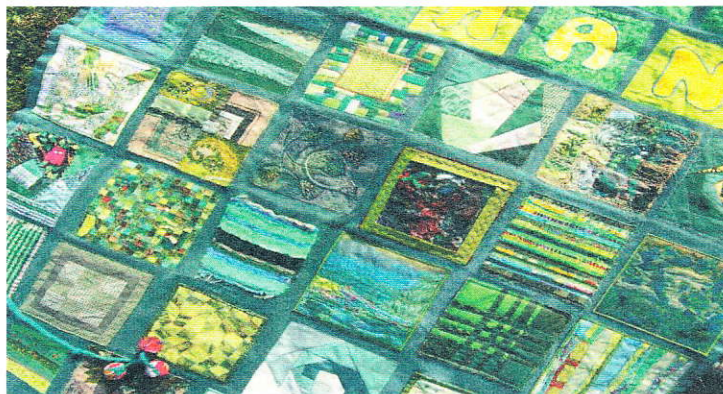


**A warm welcome to the participants
 at the General Assembly 2013 of Andante !**



We are very happy to welcome you here in Bratislava, on the occasion of the third General Assembly of Andante since its creation in 2006. In line with our (still young) tradition, the Assembly will consist of two parts: the Study Days and the Statutory Assembly. The overall theme will be '*Andante – weaving together a Europe of Hope*'. Why this theme?

The image of weaving goes back to the old tradition of women weaving something 'great' together. Think, for example, of the 70m. long tapestry of Bayeux which came into existence in the 11th century thanks to those who continued weaving with steady perseverance. However, as women of Andante we do not want to follow the example of Penelope who, according to the Homeric tradition, undid at night what she had woven the day before. What we want is to weave, in a constructive and practical way, those patterns into the 'tapestry Europe' that are necessary to create a 'Europe of Hope'.

As women coming from all parts of Europe, we will recognize that national and regional differences do exist, that living conditions and social systems are not the same, that a variety of languages may cause confusion and sometimes estrangement. And yet at the same time it will become clear that all these challenges also constitute an enrichment.

The focus of these Study Days will be to make us reflect upon what being a European means to us today and which elements will be essential in building the Europe of tomorrow. It will also depend on us, Catholic women united in Andante, what kind of tapestry our children and grandchildren will inherit. What colours, textures and threads have to be woven in that tapestry by ourselves, and our organisations, to make it look the way we are wanting it.

Some of these threads and colours are making the pattern of our own organisation – national or not. We can assemble these patterns in this tapestry of Europe and in this way create together a larger pattern, the one woven by Andante. How recognizable will it be? Will it be a part of the base of the tapestry, will it be meaningful, or just a decoration? These are some of the questions to be discussed and developed during this Assembly and, hopefully, also later within our own organisations.

We hope and wish that our stay here in Bratislava will be enriching and bring fruit. May our discussions and reflections show us how important it is to recognise and acknowledge the convictions and values cherished by each of us, by others. And how essential it is to co-operate and communicate on these matters. Because only in this way it will be possible to create a promising future for each and everyone: a Europe of hope.

For the Co-ordinating Committee,

Marie-Louise van Wijk-van de Ven, Chair

Programme



Study Days

Thursday 25th April

15.00 guided tour of Bratislava; short concert at the cathedral (optional)

18.00 Dinner

19.00 Opening of the Assembly, Welcome, Introduction to the Study Days

Friday 26th April

8.00 - 8.45	Breakfast
8.45 - 9.00	Morning prayer
9.00 - 9.40	Input Mária Raučinová: <i>'Tradition: Obstacle or Treasure?'</i>
9.40 - 10.30	Group work
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee Break
11.00 - 11.40	Input Christa Nickels: <i>'Action, not only words!'</i>
11.40 - 12.10	Group work
12.10 - 13.00	Feedback from the groups
13.00	Lunch
14.00 - 14.45	Round table with 3 women politicians active at various levels: Christa Nickels (former member of the 'Bundestag', the German Federal Parliament), Anna Záborská (member European Parliament/EU), Doris Stump (former Swiss delegate to the Council of Europe)
14.45 - 15.15	Discussion in national organisations. Setting priorities
15.15 - 15.45	Coffee Break
15.45 - 17.00	European 'Women's Cafe'
17.00 - 17.30	Resume
17.45	Departure into town for dinner at the invitation of KhzS

Saturday 27th April

8.00 - 8.45	Breakfast
8.45 - 9.00	Morning prayer
9.00 - 9.45	Input Doris Stump: <i>'The Council of Europe and the NGOs'</i>
9.45 - 10.15	Group work
10.15 - 10.45	Coffee Break
10.50 - 11.35	Work in national organisations
11.35 - 12.00	Summary / Conclusions
12.00 - 12.15	End of the Study Days
12.30	Lunch

Statutory Assembly

Saturday 27th April

14.00	1 st part of Statutory Assembly (i.a. elections new CoCoA)
19.30	Cultural evening, international buffet

Sunday 28th April

8.00 - 8.45	Breakfast
8.45 - 9.00	Morning prayer
9.00 - 11.00	2 nd part of Statutory Assembly
11.30	Eucharist
13.00	Lunch, departures

Moderator and speakers



Anja Appel (1975, Koblenz, Germany) will be our facilitator during the Study Days. After qualifying as a draughtswoman for road construction and civil engineering, she spent the years from 1996 to 2007 at the University of Münster studying for and obtaining a doctorate in Political Science, Applied Cultural Studies and Modern History. Her doctoral dissertation dealt with 'The Development of Strategy by NGOs in Development Work'. From 2010 to 2012 she trained in Vienna in Supervision, Coaching and Counselling for organisations. From 2001 to 2011 she spent some time in Asia and Latin America researching and working with a number of projects. From 2007 to 2011 she was consultant for development policy at kfbö - the Catholic Women's Movement of Austria. Since 2011 Anja Appel has been General Secretary of kfbö. Apart from that she works as supervisor, coach (trainer) and facilitator.

Mária Raučinová (1960, Bratislava, Slovakia). She graduated in pharmacy (M.D. in 1984, doctorate in 1986) and theology (M.D. in 2007, licentiate in 2011) at Comenius University, Bratislava. During the years 1984 – 1988 she worked in clinical pharmacology specialising on serotonin effects and the trombocyte function in hypertension. Later she worked in the State Hospital Pharmacy (1991–1998). After the fall of the communist regime and maternity leave she completely changed her profession and started to work for the Slovak weekly *Catholic Newspaper*. At the same time she studied and graduated in theology and continued her licentiate in moral theology:

'The theological aspect of women in Christian Personalism'.* She currently prepares a doctorate thesis on *'Christian feminism and its interpretation in the Catholic Church'*. Mária Raučinová was one of the constituent members of the Slovak Catholic women's movement (KhžS) in 2005, and represented Slovakia from the beginning of Andante on the Co-ordinating Committee (2006–2010). She is married and has two children. In the *Catholic Newspaper* she specializes on spiritual retreats and bioethical topics.



**Personalism is a philosophical school with the human person in the centre of thinking.*

Friday morning Mária Raučinová will set the tone for the Study Days with her talk on:

Tradition – Obstacle or Treasure ?

After the fall of communist regimes in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the subsequent boom of movement and transport across the continent, and with the new communication possibilities in Europe, also the various cultural and religious backgrounds have come into contact with each other.

Nobody – no woman and no man – can break herself/himself free from her/his roots, from the background in which she/he grew up and which determined her/his personal evolution and contributed to the formation of her/his identity. Through the meeting of people and the exchange of their personal stories traditions revive again, they 'speak' and dialogue. In order to come to a meaningful dialogue and achieve a fruitful development of civilisation, it is necessary – on the one hand – to distinguish between what is old in a tradition, what is dead, not revivable, historical and – on the other hand – what is still alive and capable to enrich the coexistence of people.

On the basis of my experience within the Slovak context, I will try to illustrate, to what extent the religious (Christian) tradition can be seen as vital and viable, and when it starts to be a source of conflicts and hostile struggle. Women are particularly sensitive to mediation and transmitting traditional values to the next generations. It is related to their maternity, women's genius for love, solidarity and their sense of making relations.

With my introductory talk I would like to open the sensitive question of how to harmonise tradition and modernism in our lives. I am looking forward to your reflections and questions and our common search for answers coming from our various backgrounds.



Christa Nickels (1952, Geilenkirchen, Germany). After obtaining the School Leaving Certificate (Abitur) at the Ursuline Grammar School, 1971–1974 nursing training from; worked altogether 13 years as a nurse, mainly in intensive care). From 1975–1977: Career break to bring up children.

1977–1983: Night nurse in intensive care departments. In 1979: co-founder of the Green Party in North-Rhine Westphalia; 1983–1990: Member of the Green Party in the *Bundestag* (Federal Parliament; among other things, member of the committee on petitions and the committee on legal affairs; head of the department for criminology of the Green Party Faction; Parliamentary Secretary

of the executive of the Green Party). Between 1991–1994 she works in an intensive care unit for internal medicine and obtains a further professional nursing qualification for intensive care. 1994–2005: Member of the Green Party Faction (1994–1998 Chair of the Committee on Petitions; 1998 - 2001 Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Drug Tsar in the Federal Government; 2001–2005 Chair of the Human Rights Committee of the German *Bundestag* and member of the Select Committee on Law and Ethics in Modern Medicine). Between 1983–1985 and 1994–2005: Spokesperson for the Greens on Church affairs in the *Bundestag*.

2000–2012: Member of the Central Council of German Catholics (a body of Catholic Lay People)

Since 1983: Member of the Union of German Catholic Women (kfd) and of Pax Christi.

Since 2005: talks, publications and voluntary engagements

Since 2013: Co-Publisher of '*Publik Forum*' (a German magazine)

Christa Nickels is married and has two children.

Friday morning Christa Nickels will give a talk on:

Action, not only words!

1. We are called in the 'freedom of the children of God' to cooperate without fear in shaping His creation.
2. The exodus from unjust conditions begins with keeping one's eyes open, confronting what one has seen, exchanging one's views with others and together taking steps into the open unknown.
3. Anything creative and new is more likely to develop out of unorthodox and possibly strange alliances rather than out of what is well-known and familiar to us.
4. To put what is small and weak into the centre is not a policy that panders to minorities, but it opens up creative possibilities which benefit everybody.
5. Challenges tend to attract people who are competent in finding possible solutions, and what are apparently diversions or side tracks in the end often turn out to be 'royal avenues'.
6. The ability to look beyond the boundaries of one's own family, community, religious denomination and political affiliation, and to form alliances with 'people of good will' is a basic prerequisite for problem analysis and the choice of solutions.
7. In all this, theory is important – but it must never be seen in isolation from the experiences and understanding of those who are directly affected and involved. These must be met where they are, must be listened to attentively, their advice must be sought, and they must be involved in any action taken.
8. The Christian Churches in Europe have in the course of history gone through the fire of the Reformation and the Enlightenment and their message of salvation (gospel) offers diverse bases for the formation of humane living conditions and democratic structures.
9. Despite its own need for reform, our Church is still an essential provider of (and advocate for) just living conditions, education, welfare and human rights.
10. We, as Christian women and men, are expressly called to care for the 'salvation' of all humankind. This includes also that we commit ourselves to the political community as far as we possibly can.

Anna Záborská (1948, Zürich) graduated from the Medical Faculty of the Comenius University of Bratislava in 1972. She received a certificate of postgraduate study in oto-rhino-laryngology (ORL) in 1978 and a specialised certificate of postgraduate study in paediatric ORL in 1993. Before getting into politics, she was a doctor of ORL and practiced in France (Dijon), Algeria, UK (London) and Slovakia. In 1993 she was elected Chairwoman of a district centre of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) in Prievidza until 2004. She has been a Chairwoman of the regional council of KDH in Trenčín since 1999. She also served as Vice-Chairwoman of KDH for foreign policy from 1999 to 2000. She has been involved in numerous committees. Specifically, she has served as a member of the board of KDH, a member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Vice-Chairwoman of the Committee on Health Care, Chairwoman of the Slovak-French Friendship Group, a member of the Permanent Delegation of the National Council of the Slovak Republic to the EU-Slovak Republic Joint



Parliamentary Committee, Chairwoman of the Committee on Health Care, a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and an Observer at the European Parliament.

Member of the European Parliament from 2004, she was the Chairwoman of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality between 2004 and 2009. Currently, as a member of the European People's Party, Anna Záborská is Chair of the Slovak Delegation, a Full Member on the Committee on Development and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. She is also a substitute on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

Friday afternoon, Anna Záborská, will take part in a round-table discussion, together with Christa Nickels and Doris Stump.



Doris Stump (1950, Wettingen / Switzerland) spent her childhood and youth in the Canton of Aargau. In 1968/9 she took part in an exchange programme and attended school in the USA, staying with an American family in the Mid-West. Her strong commitment to issues of justice is rooted on the one hand in her experiences in Switzerland, where women were denied the right to vote and confronted by strong stereotypes, and on the other in the experience of the still strong discrimination suffered by the Afro-American and Red-Indian population in the USA.

She studied German and English at the University of Zürich and after obtaining her degree spent a year at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, a Women's College where women professors offered programmes in Women's Studies. On her return to Switzerland she taught German and English at a grammar school, wrote her doctoral dissertation about the Swiss writer Meta von Salis-Marschlins (1855-1929) and became involved in the women's movement. Her thinking was strongly influenced by her encounter with two German linguists, Senta Trömel-Plötz and Luise Pusch, who showed how the usage and system of language reflect and help to continue the discrimination suffered by women.

In 1985 she joined the Social-Democratic Party and became engaged in local politics. From 1987 to 1989 she was a member of the parliament in Wettingen, and from 1990 to 2005 a member of the local executive and responsible for social and health policies. During this time she was also committed to Spitex (Outreach Help and Care at home), first in the Spitex Organisation Wettingen, today as president of the Association of the Canton.

In 1995 she was elected to the National Council to which she belonged till 2011. She was concerned primarily with issues of equality, education, energy/environment. From 2003 to 2011 she was a member of the Swiss delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and from 2007 to 2011 a member of the Swiss delegation to the Council of Europe. In both bodies she was primarily engaged in issues of gender equality. In the Council of Europe she was the presenter of two reports, one about 'The stereo-typing of women and men in the media' and the other on 'Prenatal Gender Selection'.

Since 2001 she has been director of the eFeF publishing house, a small Swiss company, for Swiss women writers and for the publication of texts concerned with questions of gender equality as well as gender research. In 2012, they published a book celebrating the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Catholic Women's Union in the Aargau.

Saturday morning Doris Stump will give a talk on:

The Council of Europe and the NGOs

The international non-governmental organisations (INGOa) enjoy a status at the Council of Europe that affords them the possibility of active involvement. They can participate in events, formulate and file petitions, make statements. But they also have obligations: the realisation of standards (principles), worked out in the Council of Europe, needs the support of the national NGOs in the individual member states.

The Council of Europe is a complex entity comprising many areas of activity. It is important that those who represent various interests (lobbyists) concentrate on a few issues and work on those continuously and with tenacity. A prerequisite for this, is good information about the subject under discussion and the status of the negotiations. And that is not altogether easy in a Parliamentary Assembly which at times works under severe pressure of time and with rapidly alternating delegations.

There are both official and unofficial opportunities for co-operation. The unofficial contacts with selected members of the Parliamentary Assembly are above all useful for exerting influence on relevant reports and recommendations. Any concerns must be clearly formulated and submitted in good time. Contacts with members of the parliament – women or men – should be made before the sessions of the Assembly or the committees take place.

It is recommended that lobbyists work with parliamentarians from various parties and countries. Well-prepared (well-researched) suggestions and submissions made by NGOs have a good chance to be heard and taken seriously. It is really worthwhile to make the necessary efforts and to maintain and cultivate this co-operation.

We are very grateful to the organisations and foundations which have supported this General Assembly with their generous donations, a. o.:



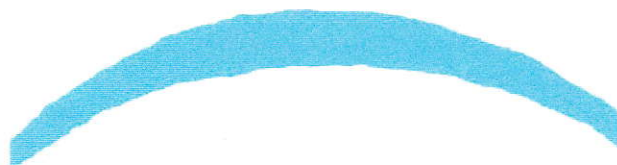
**Solidarity Action of the German Catholics
with the people in Central and Eastern
Europe**



**kfd Foundation St Hedwig
Cologne**



World Day of Prayer, Switzerland



Foundation Communicantes Netherlands
ΚΟΙΝΩΝΟΥΝΤΕΣ
since 1974

We also thank the Andante member organisations as well as the individual women who donated money for this Assembly.

A special 'thank you' goes to Karin Boden, Andante secretariat, for her organisational support in the preparation of this General Assembly. We also are very grateful to Maria Demeterová and other members of our Slovak member organisation KhzS for their great hospitality and their practical help on the spot.