

## VIENNA NGO COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY



[www.viennafamilycommittee.org](http://www.viennafamilycommittee.org)

Digital-Networks:

[www.10yearsIYF.org](http://www.10yearsIYF.org)

[www.20yearsIYF.org](http://www.20yearsIYF.org)



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### *ANNUAL REPORT 2025*

#### Vienna NGO Committee on the Family - PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES 2025

At two Full Committee Meetings, which, were held in person, and as a Zoom video conference, representatives of the 41 International Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), who are members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, and 22 associate member organisations, discussed various institution-building projects and activities. The Board of the Committee had worked out a schedule for their implementation, which was realised in co-operation with the support of the member organisations of the Committee and their representatives. The worldwide network of civil society organisations, research and university institutions, government agencies and individuals, continues to be, not only a beneficiary of interactive exchange, but is in many cases, directly involved in the work of the Committee. The Vienna Committee on the Family understands itself, as a non-political non-denominational umbrella organisation, with a global focus on the well-being of families worldwide, providing a bridge between families-oriented Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), The United Nations, Governments of Member States of the United Nations and Academia, as well as between CSOs themselves, through the various digital-networks set up and maintained by the Committee.

#### *The following projects were realised in 2025*

##### **1. Families International (FI)**

Issues, Nos. 133-136 of the Quarterly Bulletin of the Committee, were published online in 2025 at [www.viennafamilycommittee.org](http://www.viennafamilycommittee.org). The Editorial Committee consists of the Editors, Julia Birner B.A., Christin Kohler, M.A., Karin Kuzmanov M.Sc., Hannah Pruewasser, B.A., and the Deputy-Editor, Peter Crowley, Ph.D., who had been the Editor from 2009 to 2020.

Special features in FI in 2025 included, amongst others: Issues relating to Families at the 63rd United Nations Commission for Social Development (CSD) 2025, The State of the World's Children, Nutrition & Child Survival, as well as other relevant texts from United Nations Agencies.

Each issue of Families International also included texts submitted by member organizations of the Committee. Ca. 700 readers of 'Families International' are informed, by the Secretariat of the Committee, when each issue is published and available to download free of cost from the Committee Website.

##### **2. International Forum: April 28<sup>th</sup> 2025**

At the International Forum, The Vienna Committee hosted the distinguished speaker Caroline Berghammer PhD, who has been leading the research group "Family and Labour Market" at the Vienna Institute of Demography (Austrian Academy of Sciences and Wittgenstein Centre) since 2025. She has been affiliated with the Vienna Institute of Demography since 2005. From 2011 to 2025, she worked at the Department of Sociology at the University of Vienna, most recently as an Associate Professor. Caroline Berghammer earned her PhD in Sociology from the University of Vienna in 2010. In 2006/07, she attended the European Doctoral School of Demography at the Max Planck Institute for

Demographic Research in Rostock, Germany. She also completed short research stays at Princeton University, the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Toronto, and the University of British Columbia (Vancouver).

### **3. 40th anniversary of the Committee Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> 2025**

On 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025, we invited guests to a networking gathering and joint celebration at Café Sluka on Kärntnerstraße to mark the **40th Anniversary** of the Committee.

In her address, Chairperson Ulli Ehergott emphasized the importance and necessity of networking and working together to advance the interests and concerns of families.

### **4. International Forum: Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> 2025**

The Committee further organised and held a second International Forum, during a Full Committee Meeting, on Monday Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>2025 at the United Nations Vienna International Centre, with the Austrian Ambassador in Kenya, Dr. Christian Fellner, who teaches “Psychology of Politics” at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, exploring how cultural contexts shape worldviews.

Fellner also critiques media’s dramatic Africa portrayals, despite three decades of gains in rising life expectancy, widespread school attendance, surging university graduates, and Gen Z activism. During the Full Committee Meeting, the new Board Officers were also elected. They can be found at the end of this document. Peter Crowley, who played a key role in establishing the committee, was honored with the title of Honorary-Life-President.

#### **Cooperation with the United Nations Focal Point on the Family in New York**

The Board of the Committee keeps its various networks informed with documents of United Nations Resolutions and Reports of the United Nations Secretary-General pertaining to family issues, and organised the above mentioned International Forum to observe the United Nations International Day of Families in May 2025.

**The 63<sup>rd</sup> United Nations Commission for Social Development (UNCSD)** scheduled for February 2025, had as its **Priority Theme: ‘Strengthening solidarity, social inclusion and social cohesion to accelerate the delivery of the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development as well as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’**

The Committee Coordinator for the UNCSD, Franziska Reichel, drafted a statement for the Committee on this theme, and was signed by a number of member organisations of the Committee, and subsequently timely submitted in 2023 to the UNCSD by the Committee, and has since become an official document of the UNCSD in 2024.

<https://docs.un.org/en/E/CN.5/2026/NGO/23>

An eighty page report, of a study update entitled: **‘Documenting Contributions of Civil Society Organisations to the Well-Being of Families’** by Peter Crowley Ph.D. Secretary of the Committee, in cooperation with the United Nations Focal Point on the Family, which was presented by the author, at the United Nations in New York, to observe the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations International Year of the Family in 2014, is available to download, on the United Nations website:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/international-day-of-families/2014-3.html>

### **5. Website of the Committee**

[www.viennafamilycommittee.org](http://www.viennafamilycommittee.org)

This website, which was set up in 2000 is, amongst others, the main vehicle to publish our online quarterly bulletin ‘Families International’. Issues Nos.133 to 136, which were published in 2025, may be downloaded from our website without cost to the reader. A button entitled ‘Families Online’ is also available on the homepage, with a direct link to the proceedings of three International Forums organised by the Committee, between 2017 and 2021, dealing with families and digital media usage.

## **6. The Digital Networks of the Committee CSOs Networked - in Sub-Saharan Africa**

In the Digital Networks, set up and maintained by the Committee, many are based in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is particularly affected by the 'Digital Divide'. These CSOs offer important knowledge resources for the well-being of families, especially in the first 1000 days of a child's life, which are so important for its future development, as UNESCO already pointed out in 2014. These digital knowledge networks expand the concept of Civil Society being an advocacy and discourse entity, to also being a resource entity, especially of knowledge relevant for, amongst others, families.

[www.10yearsIYF.org](http://www.10yearsIYF.org)

This website continues to experience interest, as a digital network, and also as a resource archive for the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF) in 2004, with many relevant links to other sources. It resulted out of the participation of the then Chairperson, and present Secretary of the Committee in a consultative meeting of twenty international and regional Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) set up by the United Nations Secretariat in New York, in 2002, to implement a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly to observe the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF) in 2004. There it was agreed to prepare a study, under the Chairmanship of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family entitled: 'Contributions of Civil Society Organisations to the Well-Being of Families' since 1994. The original study, in which thirty two CSOs, from eighteen countries in five continents participated, was also published in book form with the financial support of the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities in 1994, under the title: 'Documenting Contributions of Civil Society Organisations to the Well-Being of Families' and edited by the then Chairperson and present Secretary Peter Crowley, who presented the study at a meeting of the United Nations in New York, to observe the United Nations International Day of Families on May 15<sup>th</sup> 2004. The book was also submitted to the members of the special session of the 59<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations on Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> 2004, to observe the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

The United Nations Secretary General referred to the above publication in his Report to the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly (A/59/176, 2004). The contents of the book, which also includes a comparative perspective of international, national, and local families-oriented civil society organisations enhancing social justice, are also available to download at [www.10yearsIYF.org](http://www.10yearsIYF.org)

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To facilitate the implementation of an update of the above-mentioned study, originally carried out at [www.10yearsIYF.org](http://www.10yearsIYF.org), a further website was setup by the Committee at: [www.20yearsIYF.org](http://www.20yearsIYF.org) to gather data entered by the twenty-eight participating CSOs, from seventeen countries in four continents. This network continues to offer knowledge resources on family issues for visitors to the website, by creating a so-called 'Cyber Street' of websites of families-oriented CSOs, which deal with the eight categories of the study relevant for families: 'Children; Economic-Financial; Education; Gender; Health Issues; Organisation; Parents; and Subsistence-Services.' This website is also a further digital network and includes a series of links, inter alia, to the United Nations Focal Point on the Family in New York.

The above outlined 'facts and figures', reflect perhaps, the ever-increasing interest generated by issues relating to families and also speak for themselves, with regard to the continued and increasing endeavours worldwide by the Committee, which observed in 2025 the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its inception in 1985

## **7. The Newly Elected Board of the Committee**

### **Board Officers:**

Chairperson: Ulrike Ehrgott, European Union of Women

Deputy-Chairperson: Dipl. Päd. Silvia Janoch, Kolping International

Secretary: Martin Jelcic, MEd, Kolping International

Deputy-Secretary: Louis Jelveh, Katholischer Familienverband Österreich

Treasurer: Mag. FH, Claudia Schatzl-Alqudah, MBA, European Union of Women

Honorary Life-President: Peter Crowley, Ph. D.

### **Board Members:**

Julia Birner B.A., Families International,

Christin Kohler M.A., Families International,

Karin Kuzmanov M.Sc., Families International,

Hannah Pruewasser B.A., Families International

Alexandra Pirker, Committee Co-Ordinator,

United Nations Commission for Social Development,

Dr. Eleonora Teixeira Da Costa Rossoll,

Federation of Catholic Family Associations.

Dr. Maria Riehl, Women's Federation for World Peace,

**Vienna NGO Committee on the Family**

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**Chairperson: Ulrike Ehrgott**

**January 2026**

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# THE FOUR-PILLAR STRUCTURE OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY

The Roof is built and maintained by the Board of the Committee

