

UPF Upper Austria: Austrians Revisit Israel-Palestine Peace Bridge

Maria Pammer
July 5, 2026



Reichraming, Austria – The Holzknecht Museum in the picturesque mountain village of Reichraming in Upper Austria hosted a special gathering organized by UPF-Upper Austria on July 5, 2026. The museum is dedicated to woodcutters who spent their nights there in the 19th and 20th centuries, after long days working in the surrounding forests. It is also the site of a unique peace project.

Seventeen years ago, **Mr. Bogdan Pammer** and some of his Austrian friends invited a group of young adults from Israel and Palestine to spend a week in Upper Austria for fellowship and to work on a joint peace project. With financial support from the state of Upper Austria, several companies, and especially the mayor of Reichraming and a local carpentry business, the young people cooperated in building a bridge. This Peace Bridge consists of two diverging platforms, symbolizing Israel and Palestine, connected by a metal bridge, a symbol of hope.



Although some political arguments broke out during cultural evenings and discussions, through days of working together side by side, sawing and hammering, the young people were able to forget the traumatic experiences they had endured back home.

The Peace Bridge has required some repairs over the years, as it has been used for many events, such as readings by a Holocaust survivor, Peace Road activities, and even weddings. And, even after 17 years, the

participants in that initial program still maintain contact.

While waiting for all the nearly 30 guests to arrive, attendees enjoyed coffee and cake and had the opportunity to tour the Holzknecht Museum, just behind the Peace Bridge. **Ms. Maria Pammer** then explained the background of the Peace Bridge and, since pictures often speak louder than words, showed an inspiring short film about the bridge’s creation.



After taking a group photo on the Peace Bridge, the former mayor presented Ms. Pammer a 28-page essay with his reflections on the peace project from that time, subtitled “Everything in the world depends on a clever idea and a firm resolve,” a quote from German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.



The main event of the afternoon was the showing of a documentary, “Birgitta’s Friends,” by filmmaker **Mr. Christian Kogler** (in English with German subtitles). Mr. Kogler introduced the 70-minute film, which portrays the lives of a Holocaust survivor and a member of the Palestinian resistance with great emotional depth and without judgment. The statements made by the interviewees of Birgitta – an Austrian woman who lived and worked in Israel for many years – gave everyone much food for thought as to how reconciliation and lasting peace can be achieved.



After the film, attendees had the opportunity to chat with Mr. Kogler and the film’s protagonist, Birgitta, over a farm-style snack in the beautiful natural setting. Despite the sad subject, it was very hopeful to see that there are many people who care about the fate of others and who use their respective skills to contribute to a better society.