

ECWF (European Council of WIZO Federations) Conference hosted by WIZO Finland
15 -17 November 2024
Helsinki, Finland

The recent WIZO Finland conference was a resounding success, offering attendees a unique blend of inspiring speeches, enriching cultural moments, and a deep dive into the history of the Jewish community. Held in the vibrant city of Helsinki, the event brought together distinguished speakers, notable figures, and passionate community leaders, providing both inspiration and insight into the challenges and opportunities facing today's global Jewish community.

Inspiring Keynotes and Thoughtful Discussions

The conference was inaugurated by opening remarks and greetings by Anita Friedman, Chairperson of World WIZO followed by a keynote speech by Inbal Rahav, the dynamic CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Israel Austria, who delivered a vibrant keynote address. As an accomplished consultant for Startups and Female Founders, Rahav's speech was a call to action for empowering women entrepreneurs, emphasizing the critical role that Jewish women play in shaping innovation and entrepreneurship. Her insights into creating supportive ecosystems for women in business resonated with the audience, urging the need for mentorship, networking, and breaking barriers.

The conference was enriched by reports from Anita Friedman, Chairperson of World WIZO, Anat Vidor President of World WIZO, and Ora Korazim Chairperson of WIZO Israel , who shared updates and reflections on the impact of their work within the WIZO network. Their reports emphasized the role of grassroots initiatives, the power of Zionism, the status of women in Israel, and how women are managing difficult times of war and distress. The role and special achievements of WIZO in Israel to overcome these times. Their presentations were met with much enthusiasm and engagement.

Historical Insights into Jewish Communities

The keynote delivered by Dr. Dora Pataricza was a powerful exploration of the history of the Finnish Jewish community. Dr. Pataricza, an expert in Jewish history and culture, presented a captivating overview of the community's origins, its challenges, and its contributions to Finnish society. Her talk was both educational and inspiring, shedding light on the resilience and perseverance of the Finnish Jewish people through the centuries resisting an evolving antisemitism.

Further deepening the conversation on historical context, Professor Karmela Liebkind delivered an outstanding keynote on the roots of antisemitism and its historical evolution. Professor Liebkind's meticulous research and insightful analysis helped contextualize current global issues surrounding antisemitism, calling for a more united front to combat hate in all its forms.

A Gala Evening to Remember: Celebrating 100 Years of WIZO Finland

A major highlight of the conference was the Gala Evening, commemorating the 100th anniversary of WIZO Finland. This milestone was celebrated with grandeur, as the evening brought together dignitaries, community leaders, and guests from all over Europe with the distinguished presence of the President of the Jewish Community Celco Khalili, Ambassador of the State of Israel to Finland Boaz Rodkin and Minister Sari Essayah who were in attendance, underscoring the importance of the event and expressing their support for WIZO Finland's impactful work over the past century.

The evening also featured a remarkable cultural program, with performances by the talented singer Angelika Klas and an iconic actress Seela Sella. Their performances added a touch of artistry and elegance, making the

Gala a truly memorable celebration of WIZO Finland's legacy.

The European Council of WIZO Federations: A Constructive General Assembly

A key component of the conference was the General Assembly of ECWF (European Council of WIZO Federations), where leaders from WIZO federations across Europe came together to discuss collaborative initiatives and shared challenges. The assembly featured insightful reports by Dr. Hava Bugajer, Anne Argi, Manuele Amar, Dina Baranes (on behalf of Renee Goldfarb Rubin), and Nathalie Elmalieh, who all presented on various WIZO initiatives and activities at international and European level, such as the UN in Vienna and Geneva, the European Parliament and the European Women Lobby.

Their presentations highlighted the strength of the European WIZO network and underscored the importance of continued collaboration to support women, children, and families in need. The assembly also provided a platform for sharing best practices and forging new alliances to strengthen WIZO's mission across Europe.

Impeccably Organized by WIZO Finland

The entire conference was perfectly organized by WIZO Finland under the astute leadership of Päivi Mishael. The seamless coordination, attention to detail, and warm hospitality ensured that attendees felt welcomed and engaged throughout the event. The conference not only celebrated WIZO Finland's century-long legacy but also set the stage for continued growth and impact in the years to come.

Conclusion: A Platform for Empowerment and Unity

The WIZO Finland conference was a remarkable gathering that inspired, informed, and united the European Jewish community. From powerful keynote speeches and historical explorations to meaningful reports and a celebratory Gala Evening, the event underscored the importance of women's leadership, community engagement, and the ongoing fight against antisemitism. With its successful General Assembly and cultural highlights, the conference demonstrated the strength and resilience of the WIZO network and its commitment to creating a better future for generations to come.