



europäische allianz katholischer frauenverbände  
european alliance of catholic women's organisations  
alliance européenne d'organisations féminines catholiques

## **OUR VOICE, OUR LIVES, OUR FUTURE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS**



### **Andante Study Days & Training (online) 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2021**

On the first weekend of July 2021, after a one-year break due to the pandemic, the Andante Study Days could take place again, although the so important encounter in real life was still not possible. In the two-day seminar we tried to find answers to the following questions:

How can women be empowered? When and how do women feel strengthened? How do women support each other in their family, their social and professional environment? What is the effect of this empowerment? What are the connections between empowerment and sustainable development? Some answers to these and other questions were given by the speakers from different European countries during these days.

About 50 women from 6 countries spent two days discussing and exchanging ideas on the topic of women's empowerment in the three Andante languages English, German and French. The competent and charismatic speakers encouraged the participants to discuss in chat rooms and in groups after each presentation.

## **LEADER ON MY SHIP: Success Strategies of a Circumnavigator**

What is the secret of success? Passionate sailing enthusiast **Stefanie Voss** (Leadership & Team Coach, Circumnavigator – Germany) has a simple, pragmatic answer to this exciting question: "Successful people are able to mindfully lead themselves. And that is also exactly what makes a good sailor." If one wants to cross the open seas, one must have a clear focus on one's goals, confidence in one's capabilities, and a willingness to deal creatively with adverse circumstances.

## **Mentoring – Competent Support and Expertise towards the Goal**

In this speech, **Aiva Viksna** (Entrepreneur, Mentor, Investor, Inspirer – Latvia) treated several important topics on mentoring:

The principles of Mentoring, Mentoring vs Consultations, Basic Elements of Mentoring, History of Mentoring Development, Mentoring in Latvia, Role of Mentor, Role of Mentee, Mentoring Process, Barriers to Successful Mentoring Process.

## **Women in media and politics**

Religion in Britain is extremely complex. The country has an established Church – the Church of England – yet is also both an increasingly secular nation and a country with a multiplicity of Christian denominations and other faiths. In recent decades, a growing number of women have risen to positions of influence and power in politics and the media. In her presentation, **Catherine Pepinster** (journalist, author and broadcaster – England) examined the role of women in politics and the media in Britain, spotlighting the way in which Catholic women have made contributions in these fields, often facing opposition from all sides. She examined the contested issues where Catholic women's voices have caused particular controversy and looked at how a male priesthood both offers limited opportunities to women but has also become adept at using their voices in the public domain.

## **The voice of Andante in the Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations: Challenges, opportunities, expectations and limitations!?**

In her presentation, **Sybille Bader** (social worker, specialist judge at Baden Family Court, since 2016 representative for Andante in the Council of Europe, Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations – Switzerland) dealt with the possibilities for NGOs as an institution within the Council of Europe. She explored the questions and tried to give answers based on her own experiences of the last few years, as to what we as Andante with participatory status can achieve with other NGOs in the Council of Europe.

What is the benefit for us as an NGO? How is Andante different from other NGOs? What do I want and how can I contribute as a member of Andante?

The Andante prayer in many languages, which has united us for many years, opened this much anticipated online meeting, bringing together women from various Catholic women's associations in Europe. The second day of the conference started with a morning prayer, arranged by our English participants, and concluded with an Andante liturgical celebration.

This form of study days, which was still new for us, enabled us to exchange with each other again after a long time. We certainly saw the advantages of online participation, especially for members from our organisations with limited mobility, but we all missed the personal exchange, the togetherness in the evenings, etc. Online formats will certainly be indispensable for Andante, but there is no substitute for face-to-face meetings.

Special thanks go to the generous sponsor of this conference, the Bonifatiuswerk, the Catholic relief agency for the support of pastoral care in the diaspora in Germany, the Baltic States and Northern Europe. It was through this financial support that this online conference, which required a great deal of technical effort due to simultaneous translation into three languages, among other things, became possible.



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