



Welcome to Bellevue Palace!

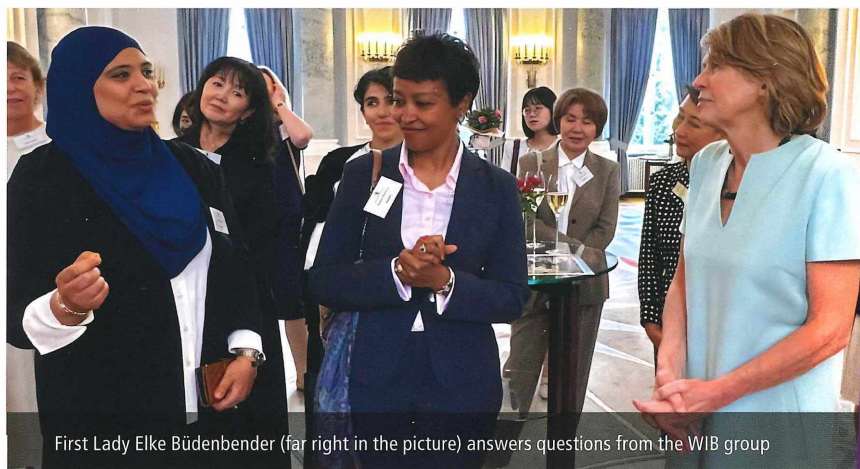
Family photo. The WIB Group with First Lady Elke Bündenbender (front, centre) on the steps in front of Bellevue Palace

One of the last events organised by „Willkommen in Berlin“ (WIB) before the summer break was a reception hosted by First Lady Elke Bündenbender at Bellevue Palace. This event, organised by the „History and Politics Group“, was a highlight of the club’s year and was attended by 33 WIB members, including 25 diplomats accredited in Berlin.

The meeting began late morning in the foyer of the administrative building of the Office of the Federal President with a tour of the gardens and palace, the great hall, the salons and the Federal President’s office. A member of the palace staff explained the protocol for state visits, the history of the grounds, and the Federal President’s media engagements. He also explained the flag hoisted on the roof of Bellevue Palace, also known as the *Standarte*. It is the emblem of the head of state and is always flown when the Federal President is in Germany and has not temporarily moved his official residence to Bonn or another location.

First Lady

At 1 p.m., the group was welcomed by Elke Bündenbender. Following her welcome address and words of thanks to the two organisers of the ‘History and Politics’ group, Tansy Law and Daniel Lenski, a lively question-and-answer session took place, followed by an engaging exchange with the First Lady. Topics ranged from balancing voluntary work with her role



First Lady Elke Bündenbender (far right in the picture) answers questions from the WIB group

as the wife of the Federal President to her career, family and personal projects, particularly in education, as well as the role of women and girls in the workplace and society. The First Lady also answered personal questions: What is everyday life like in the palace? Does she have a say in the decoration of the rooms? How does the couple deal with differences of opinion? And so on.

A final photo on the steps in front of Bellevue Palace concluded this extremely exciting behind-the-scenes glimpse, which contributed to a greater understanding of the roles of the Federal President and his wife.

The First Lady gladly accepted the honorary membership of the WIB Club offered to her by group coordinator Kazuko Gehrig.

WILLKOMMEN IN BERLIN is the diplomats’ club at the Federal Foreign Office. It is currently under the patronage of the State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office, Susanne Baumann. The club has around 300 members from well over 100 countries. Membership is open to diplomats who are on the Federal Foreign Office’s list of diplomats, as well as their partners. www.willkommen-in-berlin.de