



## EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)

Newsletter "SENIOR INTERNATIONAL" (SI") No. 132 (English edition) 16<sup>th</sup> April 2016

### War-crimes tribunal demanded

The International Society for Human Rights (ISHR), with its headquarters in Frankfurt (Main), and the Human Rights Centre in Cottbus (MRZ) request the Security Council of the United Nations to establish "an *ad-hoc* tribunal on the genocide offences committed by IS against religious and ethnic minorities". The basis for this is Chapter VII of the UN Charter, according to the MRZ press release of 11<sup>th</sup> April.

It continued: "also, the *ad-hoc* tribunal for Yugoslavia, as well as the emergence of the International Criminal Court, have arisen from an initiative and massive pressure from civil society. Therefore, our voice is louder than we think. Please join our appeal as individual citizens as well as organisations." The original text of the petition is available from: tel.:+ 49- 355 -290 -133 - 0 (or -129). Internet: [www.menschenrechtszentrum-cottbus.de](http://www.menschenrechtszentrum-cottbus.de)  
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*For its contribution to international understanding, the Human Rights Center was presented with the Cross of Nails from Coventry. 2<sup>nd</sup> from right: Sylvia Wähling, director of the MRZ and the "Memorial Prison of Cottbus".*

The signed petitions will be presented to the UN in Geneva on 1<sup>st</sup> September, the International Anti-War Day. Mrs Wähling has visited camps twice in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq to deliver aid, while learning about the victims among the Yazidis and other groups in the population. She points out that criminal law in neither Iraq nor Syria, where most crimes against ethnic minorities are committed, has the possibility to track IS criminals. Moreover, none of these countries has joined the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

The International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) was founded in 1972 by a Russian. Its members include more than 30,000 citizens in 26 national branches worldwide. Its annual conference in early April had the topic “combating causes of refugee flight/our engagement in Syria, in Iraq and in Turkey”.

## **EUROPEAN Parliament:**

### **Steps toward more security ...**

...were undertaken by the plenary assembly recently. It agreed the worldwide collection of airline passenger data and other anti-terrorism measures. The parliament called for a stronger commitment to cope with the migrant crisis. Manfred Weber, chairman of the EPP Group, addressed President Erdogan, in connection with the EU/Turkey co-operation, to respect civil liberties in his own country as in Europe.

## **POLAND:**

### **Honorary presidency for fighters against Nazi dictatorship**

In Warsaw, Zbigniew Zielinski (born 1927) has been appointed as Honorary President of the provincial association of Warsaw/Mazovia, a part of the Polish Seniors' Union (PUS). With that, the life work of a passionate fighter against the Nazi regime and for the recognition of its victims was appreciated. Colonel Zielinski belonged to the opposition “Home Army” (Armia Krajowa) in the 1940s, and after the liberation he founded the Association of Combatants and Oppressed, of which he was also the chairman. He was a state secretary in the governments of Bielecki, Olszewski and Pawlak.

### **Care Allowance law demanded**

In Kraków during the last few days, at the first Congress of Seniors' Councils of the whole of Poland, the PUS President and ESU Vice-president, Janusz Marszalek will compare the social situation of pensioners in Poland with other European countries. From this event shall come an initiative to create a Care Allowance law on the German model, so fulfilling the proposal by the then ESU President, Dr. Bernhard Worms (DE), four years ago in Warsaw.

The congress participants want the parliament and the government to fulfil their duty because regulation of a care allowance payment is long overdue. In August last year, the Polish Seniors' Union (PUS) was among the founders of a Seniors' Council for the whole of Poland, which made itself public in Kraków recently.

## AUSTRIA:

### Support for Andreas Khol

Heinz K. Becker MEP, ESU Vice President and Secretary General of the Austrian Seniors' Association, addressed a very personally held message to his fellow countrymen. On 24<sup>th</sup> April, Prof. Andreas Khol should receive the votes of all those entitled to vote, he writes, because he is the most experienced and most competent candidate for election to the federal presidency. The long-standing Federal Chairman of the Seniors' Association stands for security, a strong country, a willingness to reform and social prosperity; as President of the Parliament he has acted convincingly in a non-partisan way, according to Becker. The ESU values his friend, who belongs to the Executive Committee, as the host of the Vienna Summer Academies and president of the election congress.



*The candidate receives support in his own country also from the magazine "Senioren Aktuell" in Lower Austria Wallsee-Sindelburg, that adds a photo of the candidate (centre) with this statement: "Khol combines experience with vision, is legally highly competent and recognised as a constitutional judge. He would therefore be a statesman-like and courageous Federal President who does not have to learn the necessary trade once in office." (Info: Peter Krupholz, SB honorary chairman).*

## BELARUS:

### "Cancelled and invited again"

On 11<sup>th</sup> April, the government announced an increase in the retirement age by three years - to be 63 years for men and 58 years for women. The ESU partner organization "Our Generation/Nasha Pakalenne," based in Minsk, will take action against these plans, especially as the average life expectancy of the rural population is only 60 years, and the price index has increased by 2.9 percent again in February. A parliamentary decision is expected in the summer.

"Our Generation" wants to engage itself more strongly for a common approach with interested organizations - also for more jobs and alternatives to social security in old age. The chairman of the Pensioners' Association, Tatjana Zelko, was denied renewed participation in a social forum of the Republic of Belarus, which is taking place now in Minsk. In contrast, she received an invitation to Pulheim-Brauweiler (DE), where she will give a lecture about the contacts of the elderly in the context of the "Eastern Partnership" (EaP) on the occasion of the ceremony for the opening of the "Youth and Seniors' for Europe" Foundation.

## **GERMANY**

### **For the reception and integration of refugees ...**

...the Government will make an additional 5.6 billion EURO available in 2015/2016. For the current year, an estimated 4.2 billion EURO will be used for integration into the labour market, language courses and vocational training. For the year 2016, the participation of 300,000 people in integration courses is expected, for which more than half a million EURO is provided.

As is apparent from the report of the parliamentarian, Michael Stübgen (CDU), currently 66 percent (and so far an increase of 6 per cent more than expected) of the 55- to 64 years-old citizens got a job. Against the current child poverty and that of (future) pensioners, a number of measures have been decided and/or changes are being discussed.

### **Controversy over the limits of satire**

Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel has stated her position on 15<sup>th</sup> April with her opinion on the admissibility of a criminal prosecution of the satirist Böhmermann. After controversial discussions in the Federal Cabinet, she stated that no prejudgement has been made with her decision. Preceding this was a programme broadcast by the Second German Television channel, in which the Turkish President was heavily attacked. Opinion remains divided among the German population. It ranges from the unconditional right of freedom of speech, art and freedom of the press up to an inadmissible violation of human rights - regardless of the character, position and nationality of the affected person.

### **The image of humanity in the religions ...**

...is the topic of a discussion to which the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Berlin, Tiergartenstr. 35, invites. On 25<sup>th</sup> April, an Islamic scholar as well as a rabbi is expected. The strong influx of Muslims into central Europe, and the current debate on how to deal with political satire (see previous news), means that this question is becoming important again. The "position of the individual and his dignity in the community of faith" of Jews, Christians and Islam will be addressed.

## **UKRAINE**

### **Guide for older citizens**

An advice centre for future pensioners ("The First Pension Guidance Centre") has been established by the All-Ukrainian Pensioner Association UARP (an ESU partner) at its premises in Kiev, announced its International Secretary, Roman Oliinyk. The address: 47 G Khoryv Str.; tel. +38 (0) 44 425 -03-57. With this new service, growing needs will be met to inform oneself competently about the timely and on-going yearly provision for a sufficient pension in retirement.

According to further reports from Kiev, the UARP chairman, Volodymyr Dzjobak plans to use the occasion of an official trip to Lithuania to re-establish contact with the local ESU members' organization and its chairman, Zibartas Jackūnas.

## Forthcoming ESU Dates

29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> April: On the occasion of the EU Day of Solidarity between the Generations: ceremony for the introduction of the charitable **“Youth and Seniors for Europe” Foundation** (Benedictine abbey in Pulheim-Brauweiler, near Cologne, with Dr. Bernhard Worms, Chairman of the administrative board, and Prof. An Hermans, ESU President and Chairman of the board of trustees).

26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> May: Regional **Seniors’ meeting in Budapest**. Topic: "Seniors in changing societies/active ageing and the participation of seniors in public and political life". In cooperation with the Robert – Schuman - Institute, based in Budapest.

1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> July: **Summer Leadership Academy** in Vienna. Topic: “Europe must not fail.” In cooperation with the EPP, the Martens Centre, the Austrian Seniors' Association and its Political Academy.

**Praesidium meetings**: 1st July in Vienna; 4<sup>th</sup> November in Leuven (prior to the election congress).

**Executive committee meetings**: 27<sup>th</sup> May in Budapest; 1<sup>st</sup> July in Vienna.

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