



EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)

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"Youth and Seniors for Europe"

Foundation of this name wants to promote integration / ceremony in Brauweiler

Brauweiler/Köln. Not by coincidence, the ceremony fell on 29th April. On this day, solidarity between the generations will be discussed across Europe. The European Seniors' Union is serious about it. In the future, among its partners and allies can be counted also those who bear responsibility in the new Foundation "Youth and Seniors for Europe". Furthermore: the ESU is prepared to participate in this project. The former Benedictine abbey in Brauweiler, near Cologne, offered a worthy setting for the birthday celebration of the Foundation.



Dr. Bernhard Worms welcomed the ESU President Prof. An Hermans

The newcomer has emerged from the "Helmut Kohl Golden Badge of Honour" Foundation under Luxembourg law, Dr. Bernhard Worms emphasized at the introduction. The conversion was carried out at the express request of the former Chancellor Dr. Kohl, whose work was honoured with his appointment as an honorary citizen of the EU. "Like its predecessor, the

Foundation pursues the goal of serving Europe,” Worms stressed. That Joseph Daul, chairman of the European People's Party, has taken over the patronage of the Foundation, has pleased and encourage him to get through the difficult, eight-year-long procedure.

He was also thankful for the willingness of the ESU President, Prof. em. Dr. An Hermans, to lead the board of trustees in the first phase. It would be placed later in younger hands. And finally – according to Worms – it is the new beginning as stated by Pope Francis, whose reminder was written on the invitation: “We must do everything possible to give strength and inspiration to the EU to move forward again.”

Under Luxembourg law, the charity is based at: 36, rue Michael Rodange, 7248 Bereldange, Luxembourg. It is intended to give students a grant for working on ways to strengthen the integration of Europe. Beforehand, the Foundation will introduce itself to the universities in our continent. The sponsored studies shall be made available to governments, parliaments and universities. The administrative Board, chaired by Dr. Worms, is to comprise of two representatives of each group: the Martens Foundation of the European People's Party (EPP), the European Parliament as well as the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation.



Participants at the ceremony in animated conversation.

From left: Rolf Berend, Erika Reinhardt, Elke Garczyk, Dr. Bernhard Worms, Claus Bernhold, Prof. Dr. Ursula Lehr, Dr. Gabriele Peus-Bispinck (all from Germany), Dr. Christine von Stefenelli, Italy/South Tiro), Janusz Marszalek (Poland)

Prominent politicians and academics...

gathered at the commemorative event; they spoke about the successes of European integration, of possible risks and about ways to overcome them. Among the list of speakers of the first day of the congress were: the ESU President Prof. An Hermans, Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation; Prof. Dr. Jürgen Rüttgers, former Federal Minister and Prime Minister of North Rhine-Westphalia, as well as Professor Steven Van Hecke, Catholic University of Leuven. Dr. Stefan Gehrold, from the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation in Brussels, chaired a discussion forum.

An Hermans call to Bernhard Worms: “This is your day!” turned to applause. With that, she paid tribute to the persistent activity of her predecessor for establishing the new Foundation. For the ESU President, the requirement that “Europe speaks with one voice” is the highest priority. She sees the Foundation as a platform to help to cope with the enormous challenges of our day. “Hope and confidence must come back to Europe”, she stressed. The European Seniors' Union is working with its member organizations to that effect. This is confirmed also by the participation of seniors' representatives from Belgium, Belarus, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania and Sweden at the ceremony.



In the Gierden-Hall, in the grounds of the former Benedictine Abbey in Brauweiler (district of Pulheim, near Cologne), the founding congress of the Foundation “Youth and Seniors for Europe” took place.

Pöttering expects from the Foundation that it sees the “dignity of every person as the core of its activities.” When it comes to the future of Europe, Ukraine and Russia belong to it, “but one can not remain silent about the violation of human rights.”

In several examples of failed political processes, he showed that "there is always a way out, because we must achieve it and we want it". The same applies to the “refugee crisis”, that it is no reason to despair of Europe. Well-organised immigration must replace people- smuggling activities. He appealed to approach the task with humility – also in his own country (Germany) - to provide self-confidence and “to teach history as a lesson for the future” to the young. It was necessary “to deal harmoniously” with “home, fatherland and Europe.”

Rüttgers described Brauweiler as a European cultural centre with many centuries of European history. Konrad Adenauer was held here by the Nazis and witnessed their torture. Nowadays, Brauweiler is the venue of a festival of contemporary church music with international participation.



The St. Nicholas and St. Medardus consecrated former abbey of Brauweiler is one of the most important in the Rhineland. A generous donation by the Polish queen Richeza, who was a daughter of the founding couple, Ezzo and Mathilde, allowed the laying of the foundation stone of this unique building, with its rich interiors, in 1048.

Although a resurgence of the nationalism of 1989/90 was not conceivable, however “Europe is not built to the end yet”. The financial crisis had its cause “in greed and other sins.” He talked about one of the “dissolution of boundaries” of our time. Rüttgers sees other examples in the new role of digital media, by means of which it is known within minutes what has happened worldwide, influencing how people live together and allowing new forms of democracy to arise.

Van Hecke answered his own question, whether leading figures in the EU can give the desired new direction, with a “YES”. So “the four forefathers of the EU”, Schuman, de Gasperi, Adenauer and Monet, would have “met secretly and got to know each other”, which was important for further development. Henri Spaak (BE) had “brought his homeland to Europe”. The “second generation” of leaders: Kohl, Mitterrand, Delors, Martens, has “built Europe”. At an EPP summit, they had prepared themselves together intensively for the forthcoming decisions in Maastricht in 1992 to establish the EU.

The current political leaders, primarily President Tusk, have to deal with 28 member-states and five crises: the Euro, refugees, external security, international terrorism, the risk of a Brexit. Tusk's predecessor, Van Rumpoy, would have been spared them all, except for the financial crisis. Commission-President Juncker is more political than his predecessor in office, Borroso, and because of that he would “faces more trouble” than him.

Europe thrives on a lively “civil society” and requires an honest and upright management team that devote themselves to the integration it prescribed itself. Reliability would create new trust.



Tatjana Zelko – here accompanied by her son and assistant, Alexander – presents a craft dish from her native Belarus to Dr. Worms.

On the second day, the statements of the speakers were developed and supplemented. **Elmar Brok**, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the European Parliament, opened the session..

He spoke about the burdens of our day and explained that the EU agreements with Turkey are indispensable despite concerns about the deficit in human rights. More than 1 million refugees have been received by Turkey. The Agreement was needed to defuse the refugee crisis. Brok encouraged all people of good will to work towards further European integration in the EU.

Taking part in a panel discussion led by An Hermans were the former German Federal Minister Prof. Dr. Ursula Lehr, Eva Majewski from the Young CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag, the young Euro-parliamentarian Tom Vandenkendelaere from Belgium, the former state secretary, Dr. Marion Gierden-Jülich from North Rhine-Westphalia, and Prof. Dr. Lothar Theodor Lemper from the Otto-Benecke Foundation in Bonn.

Tatjana Zelko from Minsk (Belarus), the chairman of the seniors' organization "Our Generation", had the opportunity to introduce to the European public the "Eastern Partnership/EaP", whose subgroup "Contacts between seniors" is led by her, and promoted its cooperation with the ESU.

Adam Stadnik, Szczecin (Poland), explained in conversation with guests his project for a residential development in the spa quarter of Polcyn Zdrój/Bad Polzin in Pomerania (Poland), in which once young and older citizens could be at home. A hotel and sanatorium complex is planned as a priority, additionally a retirement village and a care home. They are looking for investors and managers.

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Success for the Polish Seniors' Union

Kraków. Janusz Marszalek, Oświęcim, chairman of the Polish Seniors' Union (PUS) and ESU-Vice-President, informed the Editor about the first all-Polish Congress of Seniors' Councils in Kraków on 25th April. It has raised several proposals of the PUS for decision there. These concern the appointment of a government spokesman for seniors' issues, the establishment of seniors' councils in the municipalities and a legislative initiative to build age-friendly apartments. Marszalek was elected to the board. The PUS belonged to the founders of the Polish Seniors' Council in summer last year.

Appreciation for Prof. Andreas Khol

Vienna. The expectation that Prof. Dr. Andreas Khol, candidate of the People's Party ÖVP, became President has not been fulfilled unfortunately. Even entering the second-round ballot was not granted to him. As is well-known, the candidate of the right-wing populist Freedom Party (FPÖ) received the most votes, which fulfilled national and international concern. Political observers see in the election result primarily a sharp criticism of the ruling grand

coalition in the country, led by the Social Democrats, who have accomplished too little in the opinion of many citizens.

Our friend Andreas Khol, the long-time chairman (Federal Chairman) of the Austrian Seniors, deserves respect and gratitude for his dedication to the recovery of broad social circles for further parliamentary democratic development in Austria. The ESU remains – not least because of his membership of the Executive Committee – closely linked to him.

Train travel on the Oder and Neisse made easier

Berlin/Wrocław (Breslau). On the last weekend in April, a “cultural train” ran between Berlin and the Silesian metropolis of Wrocław/Breslau (PL) for the first time. After prolonged efforts by Deutsche Bahn and the German states of Berlin and Brandenburg, the project came about. From now until 25th September, there is an opportunity on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays to arrive in one of the two “European Capitals of Culture” without changing trains (the other is San Sebastian in Spain). Citizens on both sides of the border benefit from this direct connection. It stops twice on German territory (Cottbus, Forst) and three times in Poland (Zary, Zagan, Legnica). The train takes 3:45 hours for the c. 330 km route; a section of the line is single-track on German and Polish territory since the end of the war.



Built 1912/1913, the “Centennial Hall” in the European Capital of Culture Wrocław/Breslau, named after an exhibition that was organized in 1913 to commemorate the liberation of Germany from Napoleon 100 years ago. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

On both sides of the border, there is a desire to make this temporary connection into a permanent solution. In Wrocław, guests of the inaugural journey were welcomed by the state President, Dr. Rafal Dutkiewicz. There was an opportunity to visit the Japanese

Garden, the new “Afrykarium” at the zoo, and a concert in the “Centennial Hall”, built by Max Berg in 1912/1913 as an exhibition hall for the occasion of the centenary of the Battle of the Nations near Leipzig – it was later declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was the first building of this magnitude to be made of reinforced concrete.

In the last four weeks, two further through-train connections between Poland and Germany were opened: from Krzyż (pronounced “Kschisch”) via Gorzów, Kostrzyn and Frankfurt/Oder to Berlin as well as from Zielona Góra via Rzepin, Slubice and Frankfurt/Oder to Berlin.

Leif Hallberg again at the top

Stockholm. After a three year break, ESU Honorary-President Leif Hallberg has been re-elected as the head of the Christian Democrat Seniors’ organisation. On 14th April he succeeded Prof. Dr. Sture Eriksson, one of the ESU Vice-Presidents. Hallberg was already Chairman between the years 2007 – 2013. He will submit proposals to the new board at its first session for active engagement of the Seniors Association in favour of its Swedish citizens in old age.

Discussion about the starting date of retirement

Berlin. The Seniors' Union of the CDU welcomes observations in government circles on the financing of the amount of retirement income of future generations. Its chairman, Prof. Dr. Otto Wulff, is very aware of the importance of preventing age poverty, however, he argues against fixed-rate regulations – even for retirement age. “If we are getting ever healthier when older, there is much evidence to put this vitality and productivity to be available also to society,” he says in a statement. But this must be thought through carefully and not be regimented.

In this connection, it may be of interest that of the 256 CDU members of the German Bundestag, 63 of them are older than 60 years.

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Dresden. There has been a change at the head of the **regional Seniors' Union in Saxony.** Klaus Leroff has replaced Friederike de Haas. Born in 1953, he was in the regional parliament from 1990 to 2004. He owns an engineering company for civil engineering and business consulting.

Mrs. de Haas had led the association for many years, collaborated with BAGSO and participated in events organized by the ESU. Since 2012, she holds the Saxon Order of Merit for her work on behalf of people with an immigrant background.

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