



EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)

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Overcoming the migration crisis is the most urgent task for the ESU at this time.

At the Praesidium meeting in mid-March in Leuven (BE), Siegfried Muresan MEP (RO), expressed the expectation that the agreement between the EU and Turkey on the return of refugees will be implemented shortly, and that the situation in the home countries of the asylum seekers with international support will be changed sustainably. Muresan, who is the spokesman for the EPP, spoke in favour of humanitarian aid and solidarity as well as for a consideration of the security interests in the receiving countries. In the discussion, the intolerable situation at the Greek-Macedonian border was denounced, which cries out for a short-term solution in accordance with human dignity.



Dr. Gabriele Peus-Bispinck and Dr. Christine v. Stefenelli in conversation with the speaker.

The meaning of the "European Pillar of Social Rights", an initiative of the EU Commission President Juncker in September last year, was explained to the members of ESU Praesidium by Jonathan Stabenow, a member of staff of Commissioner Marianne Thyssen (BE). A first draft of the "Pillar", dated 8th March, was published on 15th March in the newsletter EMPL-SOCIAL-NEWSLETTER@ec.europa.eu.

The three chapters bear the titles

- . equal opportunities and access to employment
- . fair working conditions
- . adequate and sustainable social protection.

In the presence of Stabenow, the ESU followed the suggestion to discuss the proposals and to submit amendments to the Commission ...



President em. Prof. Dr. An Hermans with Jonathan Stabenow

The “Youth and Seniors Europe Foundation” has commenced its activities. As part of a festive event, it will be presented to the European public on 29th and 30th April. Dr. Bernhard Worms, as Chairman of the Board, and the ESU President em. Prof. Dr. An Hermans, as the designated Chairman of the Board of Trustees, have invited to Pulheim-Brauweiler (near Cologne). The former Dominican abbey should ensure the appropriate atmosphere. The new Foundation, which has arisen from the “Helmut Kohl Golden Badge of Honour” Foundation, maintains its original objective of serving Europe consistently and firmly.

The patron will be the chairman of the European People's Party (EPP), Joseph Daul (FR). The decision to hold the inaugural event on 29th April will underline the meaning of the “European Day of Solidarity between Generations” that falls on this date. Registration can be made at the following e-mail address a.staschewski@karl-arnold-Stiftung.de.

To Prof. Dr. Andreas Khol, Vienna, the candidate of the People's Party for election to the Austrian presidency in April, the Praesidium addressed greetings on 11th March, wishing him a successful achievement. Quoting, it reads: "We are... convinced that you will be a president who will take over his responsibility with an extraordinary ability,



Candidate for the Austrian presidency: Univ .Prof. Dr. Andreas Khol

much success and great devotion." Khol was ten years as Chairman (Federal Chairman) of the Austrian Seniors' Federation. This function has now been taken over - as reported - by its elected First Deputy, Ingrid Korosec.

"INSIDE-NEWS" is the title of a bulletin recently published by the European People's Party (EPP). It can be ordered under connect@epp.eu for continued delivery. In accordance with its name, this Newsletter is addressed to all members of the EPP family, including our European Seniors' Union (ESU). In the first issue, the visit of An Hermans and Guido Dumon to Budapest and Ljubljana is reported, about which "SENIOR INTERNATIONAL" has already reported on in the last issue.

The annual review of the EPP for 2015 ("Together Keeping Europe strong") is available as a brochure. It recalls - unfortunately only in English – the Congress in Madrid and other highlights. For all political activists, the overview "who is who" will be of special interest. It presents the leading personalities of the Commission, the European Council, the EPP and its working groups, as well as their affiliated heads of states or governments. Among the member organizations of the EPP, our ESU is also naturally given a place. At the end of the booklet, there is a four-page list of EPP member parties - separated into EU and non-EU countries - and a map of Europe. Thus an instructive "Handbook". The EPP website: www.epp.eu

The draft of the annual report was presented to the ESU Praesidium for discussion. The final version – according to Secretary-General Dumon – will contain some corrections and will be available shortly.

The “Friends of the ESU” will discuss the relationship between employment and social performance in a changing society in Brussels on 5th April. The suggestion comes from the EU Commission and its “European Pillar of Social Rights”. The “Friends” have invited a group of deputies, under the chairmanship of Heinz K. Becker (AT), together with An Hermans and also the Praesidium of the ESU. The event will take place from 12:00 to 14:00 in the Members’ Salon of the EP Parliament in Brussels.

The Praesidium members of the ESU could assure themselves about Vice-president Heinz K. Becker's extensive activities in the European Parliament through a video-presentation by Marina Wittner on 11th March. He is a member of three Parliamentary committees and further belongs to, among others, an inter-parliamentary group “Growing old and solidarity between generations”. In his native Austria, Becker is the Secretary-General of the Federal Seniors Association.

On the occasion of European or world-wide dedicated “days”, the ESU President An Hermans has called on its member associations to individual action. In particular, she named 29th April, dedicated to the relationship between the generations, additionally 15th June, on which the unfortunate continuing neglect and discrimination of older people should be addressed internationally as a theme, and finally the “International Day of Older Persons”, celebrated annually on 1st October.

Also deserving of attention is 9th May as “Europe Day”, which for example, is traditionally celebrated imaginatively on both sides of the German-Polish border. Polish soldiers have participated in the liberation of Germany (also Berlin) from the Nazi regime in spring 1945; in the night of 8th to 9th May, the surrender of the Wehrmacht was signed in Berlin-Karlshorst.

With the election Congress on 4th and 5th November in Leuven (BE), the activities of the ESU will culminate and finish for this year. Prior to that, regional conferences in Budapest (26/27 May) and Ljubljana (21/22 October) will take place. At the traditional “Summer Academy”, the leaders of the ESU will meet from 1st to 3rd July in Vienna. The Praesidium decided on 11/12 March in Leuven that it will meet again in Vienna on 1st July (12:30-14:00), and in Leuven on 4th November (11-12:30). The Executive Committee, which represents the member associations, will hold meetings in Budapest on 27th May (8:30 am to 10 am), and in Vienna on 1st July (17-19 pm).

The Praesidium approved the (preliminary) slogan of the (electoral) congress. “The Future of Europe: tradition, change, challenge. The role of the older citizen”. As a congress city, Leuven, the capital of the Belgian province of Flemish Brabant and a university town, has favourable conditions for the use of premises. From Brussels Airport, Leuven can be reached by train in about half an hour. The prospective hotel is located near the train station. Delegates will have a choice of four conference languages.

The work priorities of AGE was reported by ESU Honorary President Leif Hallberg (SE) to the Praesidium in Leuven. AGE (AGE Platform Europe), founded in 2001, is a network of over 150 organisations *of* citizens and *for* citizens over 50 years old, and represents over 40 million older Europeans. AGE participates in various EU projects and advises the European Commission. AGE has its headquarters in Brussels. The Secretary-General is Anne-Sophie Parent. Requests

may be made in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Dutch/Flemish, Greek and Polish. Contact: info@age-platform.eu; Tel *32 2280 14 70.

The ESU is a full member and has a seat on the two governing bodies: Board of Directors and General Assembly. The mandate is exercised by Hallberg and, in the case of substitution, by the ESU Honorary Chairman, Elisabeth Dispoux (BE). Since 2014, the ESU Vice-presidents Anton Bogataj (SL) and Professor Sture Eriksson (SE), as well as Honorary President Hallberg are integrated into the AGE Task Force. AGE is financed from EU funds, membership fees and donations.

In the coming weeks, conferences will take place on topics such as the social participation of older persons from rural areas, and the role of family policy.

The acquisition of seniors' organisations by the ESU has an increased priority. Secretary-General Guido Dumon gave the Praesidium members an overview of his efforts - even to the restoration of contacts (Croatia, Ukraine). Currently, 32 associations from 24 countries belong to the ESU as full members, including Norway, which is not an EU member state; in addition, observers come from Belarus, Ukraine and the Netherlands, as well as the European European Centre for Workers' Questions in Königswinter and Brussels. The Secretary-General intends to use the event of the 40th anniversary of the EPP in Luxembourg (May 2016) for contact talks. It is expected to lead also to increased contacts with groups from the countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

Capable ESU women

Carmen Quintanilla Barba, ESU Vice-president from Ciudad Real (ES) and member of parliament, is currently participating at the United Nations headquarters at the 60th annual meeting of the UN Committee for the position of women. This time it is about the economic independence of women and gender equality in economic life. The conference is held under the patronage of the UN Secretary-General.

Dr. Gabriele Peus-Bispinck, ESU Vice-president from Münster (DE), reports regularly to the Federal Executive Board of the CDU - Seniors' Union (DE) about the activities of the ESU. In autumn last year, she has – as was reported at the time in No. 121 - hosted a regional conference, to which interested parties came from eight countries. She is district chair of the Seniors' Union in Münster. Currently, she plans two trips for seniors, in the Baltic states and to the Kaliningrad (RU) region.

Elke Garzyk, ESU Vice-president from Bavaria, is preparing the second, revised edition of the booklet "The Seniors' Union of the CSU. Portrait. Topics. History", that she had published for the first time in 2014. The book attracts great interest on her lecture tours. In recognition of her exemplary commitment, Elke was recently re-elected as deputy regional chair of the CSU Seniors' Union.

Dr. Christine von Stefenelli, Vice-president from Kaltern (IT, South Tyrol), feels responsible for the “values” chapter in the preparation of the programme of the South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP). Her initiative is thanks to her seniors' association being actively involved in the planned South Tyrolean “Autonomy Conference”. She works closely together with the EU parliamentarian, Dorfmann.

Dr. Marilies Flemming, Vienna, Federal Minister (retired), declared her willingness to participate again in the EPP Working Group 1, which deals with fundamental questions of European politics. She represents her Seniors' Association in the Executive Committee of the ESU. As one of her next activities, she will explain the position of the ESU in the panel discussion in Pulheim-Brauweiler on 30th April.

Doz. Lidmila Nemcová, Vice-president from Prague, has initiated seminars for older citizens on social and religious topics this year. Together with her friends from the SKS, she is involved with the annual event to remember the resistance against Nazism and Communism (“Mene-Tekel- Festival”). In February, it concerned the youth in the socialist period. (more details in No. 131 !)

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