



EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)

Newsletter SENIOR INTERNATIONAL No. 138 3rd October 2016

Editorial

Where is the outcry from all people of good will?

In Aleppo, dozens of people die every day – young and old. This reminds me of the DISASTERS at Auschwitz (1940 - 1945), Stalingrad (1942 -43), Leningrad (1941 - 44), Warsaw (1944), Halbe (1945), Srebrenica (1995), Darfur (since 2003).

The UN is proving to be feeble and helpless. The Kremlin, as a member of the Security Council, could not care less about the diplomatic efforts and urgent appeals to restore the agreed ceasefire, which would mean bringing bread to the starving and water to the thirsty. Do the Kremlin masters, and their allies in Damascus, really want to accept the death of further people, or is dying even included in their thirst for power? As “collateral damage”, as it were?

Where is the outcry from those living in peace and security in this world?

In the Harvest Thanksgiving Day service in my Protestant church, there was no intercession for those trapped for months. Nor was there a special collection for the oppressed Syrian citizens, for all - regardless of their ethnicity or religious affiliation. No word on the fate of those driven out of their the country. Nothing. And yet the obligatory sermon on the text of the multiplication of loaves by Jesus (2nd Letter of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 2 verses 6-15), is an extremely clear, indeed compelling reference to the current situation! In view of the poverty in the large city of Aleppo - which is named here as an example - the food laid down on the altar steps in gratitude by believers in rich countries must be embarrassing actually, as it is still being denied to those suffering from hunger despite all the honest efforts of politicians. The starvation continues.

Because determined negotiations of the last few months have proven that they can be successful: nuclear agreements with Iran, the unanimously agreed climate-change treaty, the reconciliation between the US and Cuba, the establishment of peace within Colombia... It is to desirable that diplomats of the EU and the world are not discouraged by painful setbacks - in the interests of human dignity for every person, for which the European Seniors' Union has stood for from the outset. Except that: in Aleppo every hour counts! The last hospital still intact in Aleppo was bombed during the

weekend, the German Bundestag President, Prof. Lammert, said in Dresden. (The just reported - on 3rd October - new attempt to supply the hungry will give some little hope at least). UW

Churches, synagogues, mosques, prayer houses

On exactly the same day that the Nobel Peace prize-winner, Simon Peres, was carried to his grave in Jerusalem, remarkable news of Georg Kuroпка from Germany reached the Editor. The reconciliation of the Jewish people with their Palestinian neighbours is of heartfelt concern to the chairman of the CDU in Zscherndorf (Anhalt-Bitterfeld district) and Friend of the Seniors' Union. He pursued this goal since years by travelling to the Holy Land with up to 34 interested participants. "I want to show them on the spot the significance this region has for Christians, Jews and Muslims, and what possibilities there are for peaceful coexistence". The guests visit churches, synagogues, mosques, are guests in families and seek meetings with Baha'is, Mormons, Druze and Maronites.

Kuroпка talks with obvious pleasure about the establishment of Lions Clubs that now exist thanks to his initiative, both in Polish Oświęcim and in Bethlehem - the first club in all of Palestine. In Ramallah, the second Lions Club came into being, and a third should follow soon.



The Pope informs himself about the matter.

The Lions Governor Kuroпка, with his wife next to him. Photo: Vatican

Georg Kuroпка had a meeting with Pope Francis in the middle of this year. In the course of a general audience, he presented the Holy Father with a CD and notes of organ pieces entitled "Reflections - Rupert Mayer". This 1996 composition by Karl Dietrich from Weimar (Thuringia), is about Blessed Rupert Mayer (1876 - 1945). A theologian from Stuttgart, he suffered during the Nazi era, being imprisoned several times – including in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Early on, he had stated that a Catholic could not be a National Socialist. John Paul II pronounced Mayer blessed, and he was revered up to that time as an "apostle of Munich". In a letter, Kuroпка requested that the Pope raise Mayer to the state of sainthood. Barbara Kuroпка and the daughter of the composer, Dr. Marion Baumgarten-Dietrich, were present also during the audience.

Bernhard Worms: “lived the values of faith ...”

On 30th September, the CDU parliamentary group of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia celebrated its 70th anniversary in a ceremony. In a speech that the CDU leader and German Chancellor, Dr. Angela Merkel, made on this occasion, she also acknowledged the work of Dr. Bernhard Worms. According to the participants she declared, to intense applause, that he understood extremely well as a “networker” how to live the fundamental values of the Christian faith in his political work in Germany and Europe .



Bernhard Worms (r.) In conversation with (from left) Elmar Brok (DE), Member of the EP, and the ESU Vice presidents Elke Garczyk (DE) and Janusz Marszalek (PL)

Bernhard Worms, born in 1930 in Stommelen, was CDU chairman in the Rhineland from 1980-85; Private Secretary to the NRW Minister-president, Franz Meyers, for several years; Member of the regional parliament from 1970-90, and was chairman of the parliamentary group from 1983-90. From 1990 to 2002, he was head of the combined CDU Seniors' Union (since then as honorary president), and from 2001-2013, stamped his profile as president of the European Seniors' Union (ESU), whose launch he supported in 1995. This will hold its Election Congress in early November in Leuven (Belgium), under the presidency of Prof. An Hermans.

Austria: Ingrid Korosec now officially National Chairman

Since January, she has been acting leader already of the Seniors' Union (ÖSB): the Viennese Ingrid Korosec. In mid-September, she has now officially taken over as head of the ÖSB organisation and association in Linz. About 90 percent of the delegates gave her their vote. Prof. Dr. Andreas Khol - her predecessor - is now honorary president. Elected Vice-presidents are Gertrude Aubauer, Gregor Hammerl and Herbert Nowohradsky. Finance Officer Franz Karl was confirmed in his office.

Following Ingrid Korosecs proposal, the Federal Board of the ÖSB has again appointed Heinz K. Becker as Secretary-General. Becker, who is also an ESU Vice-president, holds this function since 2001. Five years ago he became a Member of the European Parliament, where he belonged to the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as well as the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs as a member. The ÖSB magazine "SIS" also refers to his activities in the inter-group for carers and for active ageing. In addition, he presides over a group of MEPs which calls itself "Friends of the ESU."

The new ÖSB national chairman, born in 1940, was a deputy in the regional parliament and a local councillor in Vienna, a Member of Parliament, between 1991 and 1995 was Secretary-General of the People's Party (ÖVP), and then served for six years as a public ombudsman. She is currently also the official President of the Austrian Seniors' Council. In all political functions, "SIS" emphasized, Ingrid Korosec was and / or is the first woman. Companions commented on the occasion of her election that she is an experienced, reliable and assertive politician. In an interview with the "Wiener Zeitung", the Chairman called for a reference age instead of a fixed pension-retirement age. She also declared that nurses should make "preventive visits" to all citizens over 75 years old. Leading her well-wishers was ÖVP chairman and Vice- Chancellor, Reinhold Mitterlehner. The ÖSB includes more than 305,000 elderly citizens.

(On the "main motion" of the Seniors' Day in Linz, "With a new impetus in a new Future", we will go into detail in the next issue.)

Latest information

Hungary: The referendum initiated by Victor Orban on upper limits to the admission of refugees has been defeated. Only about one third of citizens voted, but predominantly in favour of the Prime Minister. He believes himself to be strengthened; critics, on the other hand, realise that his position in Europe has been weakened as a result of the vote.

Colombia: With 50.2 percent, the population has rejected the negotiated peace agreement with the FARC rebels in a referendum. These declared, nevertheless, that they would adhere to the peace agreement. Presumably, the mitigation proposed for the former rebels has greatly influenced the will of the citizens.

Belarus: After years of far-reaching restrictions on the use of the Belarussian language now a book by Viktor Martinowitsch (Viktar Marcinovic) could be published in Russian and B e l a r u s i a n. The "rediscovery" of the Belarussian language is currently in vogue. Observers see this as evidence of a certain liberalisation of government policy. The writer, born in 1977, went into exile in Lithuania in 2005. He teaches history at the likewise relocated European Humanities University. His famous book, "Paranoia", about a dangerous love affair, could not be published until now in his homeland.

Germany: parallel to a multi-day street festival and state occasion in Dresden, the 26th birthday of the reunified Germany is celebrated with dignity through appropriate events in many locations. Thus the CDU district association of Dahme-Spreewald (Brandenburg) had invited people to a boat trip around the lake, in which the former governing mayor of Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen, and the CDU regional chairman, Ingo Senftleben, have been honoured during this event. Commendable volunteers – among them Seniors' Union members – were given awards. – The Newsletter- Editor received congratulations

card from the Lithuanian Germanist, translator and tour guide Irena Tumaviciute on the occasion of the national holiday.

Editor: ulrich.winz@web.de

Translated by Margit Hawkes

ESU: Rue de Commerce / Handelsstraat 19; 1000 Brussels; Tel.: +32 23 09 28 66

Website: <http://www.esu-epp.eu>; E-Mail: esu@epp.eu; Facebook.com/esu.eu; Twitter: esu_epp