



EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)

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"Europe secures our future"

ESU adopts the EPP resolution for Malta

"Europe secures our future" is the title of a resolution that will be presented to the EPP Congress in Malta in March for a decision. The European Seniors' Union has participated in its development and has achieved amendments to several paragraphs. Now it has adopted the statements itself.

If the motto of the ESU Congress in November had still acclaimed "For a secure and social Europe", so now would be the existence of a Europe integrated and acting unanimously is self-confidently stressed as a prerequisite for the shaping of the future. The participation of civil society is regarded not only as desirable, but as indispensable. As in no comparable document, Europe's citizens should be as actors in the centre.

After an explanation of particularly relevant passages, on 8th February, President An Hermans addressed the Executive Committee and the Praesidium to discuss the implementation of the objectives in practical political action during the Summer Academy in Vienna.

Note: In the next issue, "SI" will return to the lectures and reports of both ESU bodies. Representatives of the ESU who spoke were: Vice-President Heinz K. Becker MEP on current topics of the European Parliament and about the "Friends of ESU" group, ESU Honorary President Elisabeth Dispaux-Cornil about the activities of the AGE Platform, as well as An Hermans, Marilies Flemming and Nikolay Andreev about their activities in the EPP working groups, which An Hermans described as "bridges to the EPP". The two guest speakers also received a great deal of attention: State Minister Marc Eyskens, with some spectacular observations on the situation and future of Europe, as well as a former president of the EU Parliament, Jose Maria Gil-Robles on "Challenges of the Social Market Economy".

Atis Homka at one hundred

Born in the Latvian village of Asume on 2nd February 1917, Atis Homka became, in view of his changeable life and hardship through studies, war service, severe injury and his constant commitment to the liberation of his homeland, an outstanding representative of the years and decades from the end of the First World War up to today's crisis of the EU.

Just how close Europe is to his heart he summed up in 2015 in an interview with the chairman of the Latvian Christian Democrats, Prof. Maria Zilgalve, with the words: "I would wish for stronger co-operation between the peoples of Europe". He pursued this goal among other ways as a member of the ESU Executive Committee. At an international conference in Riga, Dr. Bernhard Worms honoured him in 2012 as a commendable and reliable politician. Dr. Guna Putnina, chairman of the Latvian ESU members-association, said: "Atis Homka is a model for seniors and for young people."

On the occasion of his 100th birthday, the qualified civil engineer celebrates at his home in Frankfurt (Main).

“SI” sends warmest congratulations



2010: Atis Homka received the Viersturs-Orden from Valdis Zatlers, President of Latvia

Leonard Kuckart and the (voting) rights of the elderly

Congratulations and comment

He was a member of the state parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia (DE) for 20 years and has been at the head of his Seniors' Union of his federal state for many years. For his 85th birthday, which he celebrates in the coming days, many greetings and wishes reach him from near and far. The senders know and treasure his commitment and reliability - also as deputy federal chairman. The Editor thanks him for the trust over almost two decades and the award of the “Europamedaille” (European Medal) in 2005.



That no one member of the Seniors' Union was admitted to the election of the German Federal President was challenged by him, and by many of his comrades-in-arms in protest. The low opinion of the Seniors' Union in North Rhine-Westphalia continues since a long time. With his demand for top places on the lists of candidates for election to the state parliament, Kuckart has mostly failed. That the CDU now has invited into its electoral body, the “Federal Assembly”, even the chairs of its organisations but left out its Seniors' Union president, Prof. Dr. Otto Wulff, encounters intense criticism in seniors' circles. The stubbornly persistent Leonard Kuckart has truly deserved a more pleasant birthday gift! As we know him, he will also in future not ease up his effort to achieve that the politically active seniors will receive the necessary respect. In the ESU he will find sympathisers and collaborators. With the said decision of the CDU headquarters, the discussion about a direct election of the head of state in Germany should gain strength. The “free voters” have already positioned themselves. The new Federal President is Frank Walter Steinmeier, the joint candidate of the CDU/CSU and the SPD.

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Commemoration of deserving personalities

President Prof. An Hermans paid tribute to

Prof. Dr. med. Constantin Fatu

from Romania as an advocate for elderly citizens, who died on 10th November 2016. With his regular participation at the Summer Academy he remains in good memory. Fatu was a gynaecologist and professor at several universities. He represented the Christian-Democratic National Peasants' Party (PNTCD) in the Executive Committee.

"SI" had dedicated an obituary to Prof. Fatu in Issue 141 in November last year.

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With retired Senator

Dr. Karl Mitterdorfer



from Italy/South Tyrol, the ESU loses one of its earliest fellow campaigners, the President explained. Before he inspired the present Vice-President, Dr. Christine von Stefenelli, for the ESU in 2006, he was a member of the Italian Parliament and Senate, where he worked for the interests of minorities in South Tyrol. His biography includes membership of the European Parliament (1969-1976) and the Council of Europe (1983-1989), as well as presidency of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN). "We will remember him with gratitude and prayer," wrote Christine von Stefenelli in her obituary, from which An Hermans quoted. Karl Mitterdorfer passed away on 27th January, one day before his 97th birthday.

Awards from SGERB (Bulgaria)

In recognition of their contributions to the integration of Bulgaria into the EU and the Bulgarian seniors into the ESU, Prof. Nikolay Andreev honoured five personalities with an award from SGERB on 8th February in Brussels: Prof. An Hermans, Guido Dumon and Etienne Vanderroost (Belgium), Dr. Marilies Flemming (Austria) and - in his absence - Dr. Bernhard Worms (Germany). Andreev is president of the Sofia-based seniors' organization SGERB and an ESU Vice-President.

"Well done"

This was the verdict of the internal auditors about the balance sheet for 2016, so that treasurer Vanderroost could be granted discharge in Brussels. Through the volunteer work of the President and the Secretary-General, personnel costs were substantially avoided. This year, the contributions are the same as in 2016. The Executive Committee confirmed the budget for 2017.

Forthcoming ESU events

10-12th March in Prague: Regional Conference East, on the subject of: Political action for the well-being of the older generation in the Czech Republic and across Europe

29-30th March in St Julian's (Malta): EPP Congress "Securing Europe's Future!" ESU: Praesidium on 28.3 at 18:00; Conference with the Maltese member-association, APAN on 29.3 at 11:00

28th April in Budapest: Round-Table dialogue in cooperation with the Robert-Schuman-Institute: Dialogue between the Generations (on the occasion of the European Day of Intergenerational Solidarity on 29th April).

30th June-2nd July in Vienna: Summer Academy (with Executive Committee meeting on 30.6 in the evening)

28 - 30th September in Munich: first Regional Conference of the CSU-Seniors' Union

13th - 15th October in Lefkosia/Nicosia (Cyprus): 9th Regional Conference of countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Theme: Technology and Active Ageing.

Planned for 2018:

- . 20 - 21st April: Regional Conference in Aachen (DE) with the CDU-Seniors' Union
- . 16 - 17th May: Regional Conference in Oslo (NO) with Hoyre Seniors
- . Senior's Conference in the Baltic region

"Where a We is, is also a WAY"

In the Dutch-Flemish original one says: "Waar een Wij is, is een weg". This programmatic slogan decorates the hall of the "Christen Democratisch en Vlaams"/CD&V in Brussels, where the ESU, with its praesidium, was a guest for the first time on 7th February. The party is the strongest in the Flemish part of Belgium (membership in 2014, according to WIKIPEDIA: about 57,000). In the parliament, it is present with 18 out of 150 deputies; in the European Parliament with two representatives. The chairman is Wouter Beke, who has spoken several times at ESU events. The CD&V has its roots in a Catholic party founded in 1869, which since the end of the war has been called CVP and which changed to the current name in 2001. The chairman of its Seniors' Association is An Hermans, President of ESU, the Secretary General is Ms Noëlla Jacobs.



For the meeting of the Executive Committee on 8th February, the ESU had rented the Kartuijzcenter in the heart of Brussels and invited guests from both the CD&V Seniors and also from the organization "Les Aînés du cdH/Seniors of the cdH". "CdH" stands for "Centre démocrate humaniste".

At the head of "Les Aînés du cdH" is Pierre Scharff, the Secretary-General is Etienne Vanderroost, ESU Treasurer. Elisabeth Dispaux-Cornil, an Honorary President of the ESU, is a member of its board. According to its website, at its AGM in the Rue des Deux Eglises on 21st February, Yves Dario will speak about an initiative of the King-Baudoin-Foundation concerning the situation of older citizens.

Editor: ulrich.winz@web.de

Translated by Margit & Seán Hawkes

ESU: Rue de Commerce /Handelsstraat 10, 1000 Brussels, Tel.: +32 2309 2866; [Facebook.com/esu.eu](https://www.facebook.com/esu.eu);

Internet: esu@epp.eu; Twitter: [esu_epp](https://twitter.com/esu_epp)