



EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)

Newsletter SENIOR INTERNATIONAL No. 148 5th May 2017

Grandfather's and grand-children's common cause

ESU reminds politicians to take an active approach to young and old

Budapest. “Our European societies have numerous problems to overcome: demographic change is only one of them, but it must be possible to address it,” stated ESU President An Hermans in Budapest on the eve of the 9th European Day of Generational Solidarity (29th April). In the course of an ESU seminar with the Robert Schuman Institute (RSI), she pointed



Budapest – as in 2016, a friendly host to the ESU.

out in a lecture that the good coexistence of older and younger people have long been felt necessary for social cohesion and is important for all age groups. It is a pillar of fair and stable societies as well as the welfare of its citizens and by that very fact is an “integrated part of the European social model”.

Use strategic decisions!

With these remarks, An Hermans also referred to shortcomings in the implementation of the principles recognized as the right one. The seminar participants agreed that the EU Member States would have to deal more intensively with this, and urged them to do more for practical, mutually beneficial and satisfying relationships between the generations. In doing so, they can, and indeed should, make use of the decisions of the European People's Party, at their Congress on 29th March in Malta, for a "European strategy for demographic change". This also sees new opportunities for solidarity between the generations in different policy areas. The Member States also find support in the European Commission (EC) statement of 26th March concerning the "European pillar and the social dimension of Europe". Both the ESU President, as well as her deputy, Heinz K. Becker MEP (Austrian Seniors' Association), consider the latest positioning of the EC as the way forward for all EU states.

Women no longer to be discriminated!

There is reason enough to become active in this direction. The ESU stands for the right of all the elderly to adequate old-age pensions and unrestricted health care - prophylaxis, diagnosis, therapy, which is still lacking today in many eastern and southern regions of Europe. Every sixth senior lives in poverty, and older women have to cope with extremely low pensions. The reason for this is mainly due to interrupted career history, for which the affected person is not responsible.

President An Hermans sees in the stated political decisions of recent times "a real opportunity for European society as a whole", and at the same time places hope in an active participation of citizens of all age groups by declaring in Budapest "I hope that the older and younger generations build bridges for a common future."

The next ESU events

Brussels/Vienna. After the board meetings in February and March, the regional conference in Prague, a round-table discussion at a sideline meeting at the EPP congress in Malta (both in March), and the seminar in Budapest (see report above), preparations for the traditional Summer Academy in Vienna from 30th June to 2nd July are now underway, during which the Executive Committee and the Praesidium will meet again. The meeting is organized by the Austrian Seniors' Association in cooperation with the Political Academy of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and the Wilfried Martens Center.

With the choice of the subject "The Future of Europe", it will be referred to as the "Malta document." The in-depth discussion of its concerns will be combined with suggestions for practical political action. ESU member-associations are called upon to submit comments and proposals to the Secretary-General in Brussels by 15th June. This is expected especially for the chapter beginning with the sentence: "The European Union is facing an unprecedented demographic change."

(<http://malta2017.epp.eu/documentation>)

“The European Roadmap”



The blue truck of the European Roadmap makes a stop in Berlin near the Marienkirche, the television tower and (not in the picture) the Nikolaikirche. Hymn writers and pastors Paul Gerhardt and Johann Crüger, active in the Nikolaikirche in the 17th century, are to be thanked for the fact that Berlin has been called officially “City of the Reformation” since 27th April. The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) has sent the bus to 68 places in 19 countries since October last year. The young Christians, who are accompanying it, gather moving stories and documents in conversation with their visitors which relate to the anniversary of “500 years since the Reformation”. At the latest, in the Wittenberg (open air) world Reformation exhibition, “Gates of Freedom”, they will be brought to the attention of all interested parties from 20th May to 10th September.

The Editor went to the bus with photo-memories of his first visit to Wittenberg (1950), the 3rd German Protestant “Kirchentag” in Berlin (1951), under the motto “We are still brothers” and the inauguration of the Gustav-Adolf-Church In Kerkwitz near the German-Polish border (1952), where the truck will be visiting on 11th May. The interview with the bus crew was available in words and pictures on the same day on the Internet.

An absolute highlight of the festivities on the occasion of the Reformation Jubilee will be the Protestant “Kirchentag” in Berlin (from 24th May) and in the Lutheran city of Wittenberg (27-28th May), which also celebrates the feast day with many national and international guests on Exaudi Sunday on 28th May. An ecumenical character is given to the festivals through events from the viewpoint of Catholics on Martin Luther and on the situation of the Evangelical and Catholic Church, as well as through ecumenical worship on the Ascension of Christ. Wittenberg offers a German-Israeli café meeting until September. On the 26th May, at 12 o'clock, in the town of the 1517 theses, a minute's silence will be observed for those refugees drowned in the Mediterranean.

Details on the internet at: <https://r2017.org/en/european-roadmap/>

Seniors' Union welcomes "Pulse of Europe"

Berlin. "The Seniors' Union of the CDU calls on citizens to fight for a common Europe," says a statement of 25th April from its Federal Council. The pro-European "Pulse of Europe" movement, in which tens of thousands of people in many countries join together for the European idea, is considered as "one of the important and necessary steps towards the strengthening of a community spirit among the European public."



The most recent supporters of an integrated Europe in Berlin cannot wait until the festive cake "60 years of the Treaties of Rome" is cut. - Photo of the rally on 26th March at the Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin

The Seniors' Union urges "Zero tolerance" "against offenders and, in particular, repeat offenders". The "Double Citizenship" should be replaced by a return to the option obligation. Prof. Dr. Otto Wulff welcomed Defence Minister Dr. Ursula von der Leyen on behalf of the Federal Board about the situation and challenges of the Bundeswehr. (Information according to Newsletter 4/2017).

Associated with the ESU

In the draft program of the CDU Seniors' Union, the chapter "the EU and European politics" states: "We will continue to support the European Seniors' Union (ESU) as a representative of national seniors' associations and organizations." The Saxony chairman, Klaus Leroff, called on the members to participate in a discussion of the draft and to submit proposed amendments to the Federal Office by 30th June.

Information: <http://www.senioren-union.de/politik/grundsatzprogramm.html>

Peace March with ESU Vice-President Janusz Marszalek

"Political persecution connects the victims of dictatorship"



The logo of the march comes from 15 year old Yazidi boy Azad, who lives in a refugee camp. Accompanied by his uncle, he marched with him for the whole nine days.

Erbil (Iraq). 30 people - Germans, with Janusz Marszalek (ESU Vice-president) and Tomasz Kucka (former international youth centre Oświęcim/Auschwitz), two Polish citizens, an Italian and Dr. Sarah Hills from the Coventry Cathedral (GB) – took part in a peace and reconciliation walk during Holy Week and over Easter, with locals in Kurdish north Iraq. Their goal was to revive and develop the interrupted dialogue between ethnic and religious groups along the 112 km stretch from the Christian part of the capital, Erbil, to the monastery of Rabban Hormizd behind the city of Alqosh. "Christians and Yazidis especially have lost their trust in Muslims because of the crimes committed by IS and because of bad experiences with the Muslim majority society," wrote Sylvia Wähling of the Human Rights Center Cottbus (DE), the organizer of the march. "People have to find trust to one another again."

The many conversations with the population were fulfilled by this desire. On Maundy Thursday, the Chaldean Patriarch, Lous Raffael Soko, celebrated in a village where Muslims and Christian refugees from Mosul have been living peacefully since 2006/2007. Dr. Hills held a prayer service in two places that were recently liberated. In several places, the pilgrims planted young olive trees as a peace message. Among the participants in the march were three former prisoners of the GDR Zuchthaus in Cottbus. Matthias Katze said: "Political persecution connects the victims of all dictatorships across borders." The idea arose to make contact with victims of the Saddam Hussein regime.

European concert in Paphos

Paphos/Cyprus. With their EUROPAKONZERT, the Berlin Philharmonic delighted thousands of guests from near and far on 1st May in the European Capital of Culture 2017. Before the backdrop of the port fortification of Paphos - part of the world cultural heritage - the orchestra performed works by Carl Maria von Weber, Anton Dvorak and Johannes Brahms. On the podium stood Mariss Jansons, whose mother, a Jewish singer, had given birth in Riga in 1943 in a hideaway in the city occupied by Nazi Germany. He currently occupies top positions in Munich and Amsterdam.



In a concert pause, the famous conductor emphasized the people-binding power of the music. Andreas Ottensamer, just 22 years old, born in Austria (“Mother is half-Hungarian”) and engaged in Berlin, was celebrated as the soloist of a clarinet concerto by Weber and a Hungarian dance by Brahms. A more international programme and participants is hardly possible ...

Editor: ulrich.winz@web.de

Translated by Margit and Seán Hawkes

Editorial deadline: 1st May 2017

ESU: Rue de Commerce/Handelsstraat 10, 1000 Brussels; Tel.: +32 23 09 28 66

Internet: www.esu-epp.eu; *E-Mail:* esu@epp.eu; *Facebook.com/esu.eu*;

Twitter: [esu_epp](https://twitter.com/esu_epp).