



EUROPÄISCHE SENIOREN UNION (ESU) EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)

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Create a future with certainty and confidence !

ESU regional conference confirmed: joint commitment is promising
President Hermans: Service to people remains the main concern

MUNICH. When Vice-president Elle **Garczyk**, together with the CSU fixed the date of the first ESU regional conference in Bavaria, she was guided by two considerations: it should be after the elections to the German parliament, and the foreign guests should have the opportunity to visit the world-famous Munich Oktoberfest as an expression of the Bavarian lifestyle.



Opposite the Conference Room, a plaque recalls Willi Graf, who gave his life in the struggle against National Socialism

Here, relaxed merriment at the festival grounds of “Wies’n”, beer tents, carousels, shows and other attractions for young and old. There - in the rooms of the Catholic Academy in the city district of Schwabing - a serious struggle for the best policy after the disappointing vote for the Union of the CDU and CSU in the elections to the German Bundestag on 24th September.

Despite all the frustration over the loss of 2.5 million first votes and almost 3 million second votes compared with 2013, the top politicians of the Christian Social Union, who were invited as speakers, did not stop by analysing the electoral setback, that now will require a coalition with other parties on the federal level.

All agreed with the fact that the worries of a part of the population, disappointed, had migrated to a far-right party, deserved greater attention in the whole of Germany. And: as a priority, internal and external security must be strengthened if the confidence of all citizens in the state is to be regained!

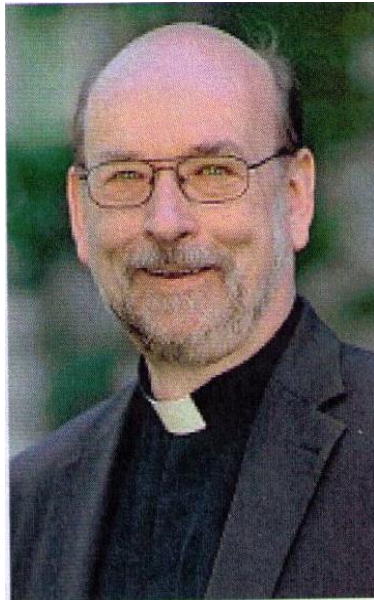
According to the profile of the organiser, the EUROPEAN SENIORS’ UNION, together with the CSU-SENIORS’ UNION, EPP and the conference topic, all lectures and discussions had in view, at the same time, the responsibility for the future of the European Union in peace, freedom and democracy.



Dr. Thomas Goppel, Elke Garczyk, Prof. An Hermans and Prof. Ursula Münch (from left to right) in conversation

ESU President **em. Prof. Dr. An Hermans (BE)** delivered a speech in which she reaffirmed “serving fellow citizens” as a priority task for all political and social action. The ESU and its affiliates are specifically involved in this, according to An Hermans. The spectrum of fields of activity ranges from defence against terrorism, across the shaping of climate change and digitisation to economic and social welfare. The design of Europe also required visions; with “a few measures” it is not done. (for *the full text of the speech*, see *Appendix 1*)

Dr. Thomas Goppel, chairman of the CSU Seniors and former minister of state, sees Europe as a “leader” in the human rights debate. The legacy of Schuman, Adenauer, De Gaulle, de Gasperis, Monet, and other pioneers of European integration is as current as ever; these visionary politicians adopted the common heritage of Europe from the outset: Greek philosophy, Latin law, the Enlightenment and the Christian human image, which sees people as a measure of all action.



Prelate Dr. Lorenz Wolf and CSU deputy General Secretary Markus Blume

Goppel is convinced that joint action can shape the future of Europe, as the French President Macron has in mind.

For **Markus Blume**, member of the Bavarian state parliament and deputy Secretary-General of the CSU, the “three fundamental roots” of open Europe, liberal democracy and social market economy are to be defended against external attacks. A “greater freedom” must be accompanied by the ability of citizens to use new technologies such as digitalisation. Blume, who is also the father of the CSU manifesto, expects a “European order” to regulate a variety of topics. These include, in his opinion, possibilities of resolving the Syrian crisis.

He rejects bringing additional countries into the EU, as the European Commission President, Jean Claude Juncker, has proposed. He could identify with the “European spirit” as expressed by Macron, as he also approved the “telling of success stories”. The protection of the European external borders is “better than that between Austria and Bavaria”. In the context of a common security and defence policy an “effective European intervention force” is necessary. A united Europe “must be in the service of its citizens and not vice versa”. This also applies to the perception of economic interests of Europe. The demand to allow the EU-member states “two speeds” for their development Blume receives with sympathy.

Prof. Dr. Ursula Münch, Director of the Academy for Political Education in Tutzing, sees the EU's capacity to act in the face of global challenges as primarily critical. Her analysis of the

geopolitical interests of NATO and the EU since 1990 concludes that the energy, money and time to integrate other partners into the alliances is “not a success story”. The EU has now gained in importance but has “lost its positive response among the citizens”. The security concerns of the Baltic States are clearly understandable. Regarding the “refugee policy”, the academic advises to focus on the situation in the countries of origin, the establishment of refugee rescue centres in Africa and in the “transit countries”.

As some countries are struggling with losses of sovereignty, cooperation in security and foreign policy is unattainable and the global responsibility of the EU is not being perceived. Prof. Münch pleaded for a discussion of Macron’s proposals to strengthen the EU within countries and “not necessarily through the European Commission”. She advocated "adaptation reforms"; "muddling through" is not something negative “per se”. She does not see a fundamental solution to the problems that are pending.



View of the plenum during Prof. Dr. Münch's speech

Prelate Dr. Lorenz Wolf, head of the Catholic Office in Bavaria, notes that change is now taking place faster than ever before. Examples include storage of knowledge, the revolution in communication and social processes. What bio-medicine will bring remains to be seen.

For the church(s), too, the following applies: whoever is in need - for example, through war, hunger, persecution – can come. The Good Samaritan in the New Testament made it clear that aid (at times) is indispensable despite reservations. “Church asylum” cannot be granted without examination of the individual case. As far as the state-church relationship is concerned, he maintains it with the “voluntary cooperation in the interests of the common good” customary in Germany. This proven form of coexistence should be explained to citizens in order to address concerns, even from their own ranks.

Dr. Wolf, who is also chairman of the Bavarian Broadcasting Board, gave the recommendation “to learn more about what the Muslims are accustomed to”. This is the only way to find out - as an example - why some pre-school children do not open their mouths in front of the nursery school teacher before their parents have allowed them ...

Bernd Posselt, President of the Paneuropa-Union Deutschland (*Pan-European Union of Germany*), emphasized that the “Europeans are more united than divided”. Referring to the “three permanent roots of Europe” (already quoted by Dr. Goppel), and the history of the Pan-European movement, he notes that the traditional cultural community of the Europeans “must be connected with the will to be united”. It remains deplorable that German and French soldiers of the First World War “fought against each other with Goethe and Moliere on their lips”.



Bernd Posselt has been a member of the European Parliament for two decades and remains a consultant in Brussels and Strasbourg. He is active as the federal chairman of the Sudeten German Association for the reconciliation of the Czechs and Germans.

Minister of State **Joachim Herrmann**, spoke as one of the initiators of the CSU Seniors' Union. At the Bundestag election, he was the CSU's top candidate. “The right to security is one of the most important of the state”, he declared, and this “monopoly of force” was consistently implemented in Bavaria. Munich, therefore, differs significantly from the other cities in Germany such as Berlin, Hamburg and Cologne in the number of crimes and their clear-up rates. The Free State of Bavaria is the safest German state. It was worth to adapt the equipment continually to the needs of the police. Thereby they could effectively counter illegal immigration through border controls. The information was received with astonishment that in the first half year on Bavarian borders, “several hundred illegal immigrants were rejected and 1,100 offenders were arrested according to German and European law”. Herrmann was applauded by saying: “The future of the EU will only work if everyone sticks to the rules of the game!” Improvements in the pension system and the fight against poverty in old age can only be expected with a stable government in Germany. He asked the conference participants, and especially the ESU representatives, to continue their social commitment-



Joachim Herrmann, Bavarian Minister of the Interior, Building and Transport as well as Markus Ferber (right), regional chairman of the Europa-Union Bavaria

For **Heinz K. Becker** MEP, ESU Vice president and Secretary-General of the Austrian Seniors' Association, "it is clear that in Germany the fearful citizens have decided the election campaign". Their concerns are to be taken seriously, at the same time rejecting their lies and half-truths. He recalled that Austria, Germany and Sweden have received most of the refugees in recent years. Even before the parliamentary elections in his country on 15th October, the topic of "migration and security" plays as number one in the discussions. For Sebastian Kurz, the Foreign Minister, new chairman of the People's Party and their leading candidate, reforms of the EU are essential. He therefore advocates subsidiarity, according to which only trans-national matters are to be decided in Brussels and / or Strasbourg.



On the fringe of the conference, ESU Vice-presidents Heinz K. Becker (Austria) and Elke Garczyk / DE / Bavaria) enjoy "a measure" of beer

Becker noted with satisfaction that "in Europe, there has been much more progress in the last months as over the last ten years." The plans for a defence union and a common

financial system are on the right track. Further examples: updating the asylum system, supporting Frontex, safeguarding the food and energy needs within Europe... It is largely forgotten that the EU has mastered the banking, financial and monetary crises of the last few years and has thus proved to be stronger than has been accepted by many citizens.

Becker is passionately committed to a type of "Marshall Plan" based on the US model of the first post-war years, with the help of which the causes of flight in Africa could be gradually combated! This includes the promotion of women's rights, the establishment of subsistence farming and the widespread distribution of the internet.

Markus Ferber MEP, Chairman of the South Swabia CSU and regional chairman of the Europa-Union Bavaria, applied himself to dealing with personal data and border protection. In Germany, "we will not make progress with our internal security with our federalism," he said. He sees deficits in the fact that data does not have the required quality, is stored in the wrong place or is not retrieved. The "data sets" would have to be connected within the country and beyond. The reservations of some countries have so far hindered this regulation. A uniform entry and exit system has been discussed with controversy in the European Parliament for a year; according to some states, it is contrary to the right to free movement. A uniform European right of asylum is also required, which is regulated in Germany by Article 16a of the Basic Law.

Ferber pointed out that the Schengen Agreement also includes the protection of the EU's external borders, including the Greek maritime border. The fact that the EU Commission expressly recommends the "stop and search" (controls of suspicious persons in border areas) proposed by the CSU, contrary to previous reservations, would go in the right direction, the so-called "police hot pursuit" (prosecution of offenders also in neighbouring countries) would be "still waiting".

Ferber also sees shortcomings in the analysis of fingerprints, the matching of data from former offenders and, in the case of further steps, against professionally organized people-smugglers. In summary, the deputy emphasised that he continued to place great hope and expectation on a modern security structure that, in accordance with the visions of the EU founding fathers, ensured a life of freedom, peace and security for all citizens.

Organizer and presenter Elke Garczyk, who is also a member of the board of the CSU Seniors', rightly emphasised that the contributions to the speech and discussions (not reproduced here) did justice to the large information requirements of the population across all age groups and are appropriately socially responsible in the sense of security and trust.



*As guest at the CSU's Franz-Josef-Strauß-Haus:
President Hermans with her closing speech*

ESU President Prof. An Hermans confessed to leaving Munich with a multitude of new insights, including the complexity of the challenges and the measures taken. She called on guests from all generations to use the ESU's proclamations, such as on Facebook, the website, and in this newsletter, for their location and political activities in their honorary office.

The *International Day of Older Persons*, celebrated on 1st October, is a good occasion to look over the achievements and to tackle new challenges, as this conference revealed. True to the motto of this year's "Tapping the talents. Promoting inclusion", the President called in a communication to all ESU Associations "...for the promotion of more positive images of older persons, underlining their universal human rights and the gains and strengths of older people for our societies..." (see Annex 2 for the text of this statement)

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The conference followed a tour of the headquarters of the Christian Social Union in the north of Munich, where **Günter Leinfelder**, regional manager of the Seniors' Union, explained the good working conditions of his colleagues. They have an available surface area of 7,000 m². The cost of acquiring the modern office building with the name "Franz-Josef-Strauß-Haus" was raised by selling the former CSU headquarters in the city centre.

Ulrich Winz

Photos: editor; portrait Dr. Wolf: private

Translated by Margit & Seán Hawkes

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