



EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)

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Bringing Technology and Active Ageing Together!

ESU Regional Conference in Cyprus

To start: Reception by the President

Nicosia / Lefkosia. "Technology and Active Ageing" was the topic of the 8th ESU Regional Conference for the Mediterranean countries on 14th October. As before, the meeting was organised by Antonios C. Demetriades, President of the Seniors' Association in Cyprus. He is also to be thanked for the fact that the delegates were welcomed the evening before by Mr Nikos Anastasiades, President of the Republic. He thanked the voluntary active seniors of Cyprus and the ESU for their indispensable political commitment and emphasised how urgent the matter of "state unity" is for him.



Proclamation of the unity of the country; the famous Ledra Street is still divided

In the brochure “CYPRUS - still occupied still divided 1974 - 2014”, he is quoted as saying: “It is of the utmost importance to return to the continuation of this dialogue with determination to reunite the island and to secure the true interests of the Turkish as well as also the Greek Cypriots. “

ESU President An Hermans, in the presence of the President, emphasised that the ESU is by his side in the struggle to restore the unity of the country. She agrees with the majority of the Cypriots that the ongoing conflict is a problem which will remain on the agenda independently of other current European issues and needs to be stepped up.



The President in his address and in conversation with ESU Honorary President Maria Kanellopoulou from Athens. In the background is Antonios Demetriades, the ESU General Secretary Guido Dumon and President An Hermans

The fact that also the inhabitants of the Turkish-dominated northern part of the divided capital wish for state unity is proved by, among other things, a slogan that supporters have painted on a house wall: “One Cyprus”, as a demand to all visitors of both parts of the city, just behind the passport control on Ledra Street. (see photo above). Tourists are increasingly making use of the possibility of visiting the other side; but this interim solution is not sufficient for the inhabitants.

Conference venue - the University

Before the meeting began with up to 100 participants, the Greek-Orthodox Metropolitan of Kyrenia **Bishop Chrysostomos** (based in Nicosia) held a prayer service and the university director gave a speech. He said he was proud to live in an EU member-state and to participate in an exchange of experiences. The University of Lefkosia / Nicosia is a bridge between science and the population and between the generations. The Director of the Ministry of Labour, Social Welfare and Social Security - he spoke for the Minister and patron, **Zeta Emilianides** - emphasised the opportunities of modern technologies for direct access to information, which could be of particular benefit to solitary, elderly and care-dependent persons. The main speeches were devoted to the important role of older people in society.

Invited as speakers were: **gerontologist Dr. Marios Kyriazis, the sociologist Elisavet Kiourti, as well as the psychologist and gerontologist Marina Polycarpou.**

Seniors can encourage the cooperation of young and old and develop new forms of solidarity, it was agreed unanimously. In this context, the presentation about video games by the lecturer Elisavet Kiourti was of special interest. She said video games are a microcosm and full of problem. The players are asked to “meet challenges, find solutions, develop skills and understanding through complex activity. The video players of the future will be seniors, who today still often see the games of young people as a waste of time,” the scientist concluded.

In the discussion, the growing interest of older citizens in the internet and social media was underlined. Digitization helps to enrich the lives of many citizens and to organize them better - also in cases of necessary help in the event of illness.



The group of ESU representatives (from left): Lidmila Nemcova(CZ), Guido Dumon (BE), Vasiliki Kolivari (GR), Maria Kanellopoulou (GR, Mdma.Vanderroost (BE), Christine v. Stefenelli (South Tirol), Etienne Vanderroost (BE), President An Hermans (BE), Manfred Hopfengärtner (DE), Organiser Antonis Demetriades (CY,) Mr. Bosly (BE), Dr. Gabriele Peus-Bispinck (DE), Mrs. Bosly - Van Haelewijn (BE), Janusz Marszalek and his wife Marta (PL), Ann Räämet (EE)

Photo: J.M.

An Hermans: The large influence of technology

The ESU President, **em. Prof. Dr. An Hermans**, highlighted in her opening speech society's responsibility for dealing with demographic change and recalled the relevant resolutions: the resolution of the ESU Congress of November 2016 and the position paper of the European People's Party EPP in Malta in April 2017

Speaking about the conference theme, she said “this changing technology affects our method of making politics as well as our economy, our workplace, our health care and our daily lifestyle. The evolving technologies are just one of the key drivers of what we call the “silver economy”.

An Hermans sees one of the many opportunities that the new technologies open, in enabling staying independent in case of health impairment. (*see attachment for text of speech*)

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Board Meeting

The conference topic attracted great interest among the population. The conference was combined with a meeting of the ESU Praesidium, so that, beside of of An Hermans, Secretary General Guido Dumon and Treasurer Etienne Vanderroost, also Honorary president, Maria Kanellopoulou (GR), as well as Vice-Presidents, Lidmila Nemcova (CZ) Gabriele Peus-Bispinck (DE), Ann Raämet (Estonia), Dr. Christine von Stefenelli (South Tirol), Antonios D. Demetriades (organiser of the conference) (CY) and Janusz Marszalek (PL) were present.

The Praesidium decided for 2018, a regional conference in Aachen (DE) and in Oslo (NO); also, the (10th!) Summer Academy in Vienna will take place. After the President and the General Secretary had visited Vilnius, it is decided that in May 2018, in the Lithuanian capital, the long-awaited regional conference for Baltic States will take place. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has pledged its support. Speakers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will discuss the main theme “Social life of the elderly in the three Baltic States” and also comment on the cooperation across the generations. ESU representatives from Scandinavia are also to be invited.

According to proposals from the Praesidium, it is foreseen to enrich the event calendar for 2018 by lecture events and round-table discussions in addition to the regional conferences

Last message: a meeting of the ESU Praesidium will take place in Leuven (Belgium) from the 8th to 10th December this year.

The members of the Praesidium presented a draft plan aimed at preparing for the European Parliament elections in 2019. It states that our main objective is to mobilise all members of the national ESU organizations to vote for the candidates of the EPP.

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with participation from Christine v. Stefenelli, Gabriele Peus-Bispinck and Janusz Marszalek

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Please pay attention to the attachment!