

EUROPÄISCHE SENIOREN UNION (ESU)
EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)
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In the beginning there was love
Kidnapped king's daughter gave his name to Europe – right?

Greece/Europe. On the Greek island of Crete, where mythology and history are intertwined, the king's daughter, Europa, has received manifold reverence - after all, she is supposed to have been adulterously abducted by the father of the gods Zeus transformed into a bull, as his mistress from Sidon (Asia Minor) and brought here. Transformed back into human form, Zeus then had three sons with her. Minos, the first-born, is credited with founding the “Minoan culture,” the oldest on European soil (2,000 BC), of which impressive traces still bear witness and astonish in Knossos, Phaestos and Malia.



In the port of the Cretan city of Aghios Nikolaos, Europa rides on her lover transformed into a bull - father of the gods, Zeus. With this sculpture the popular port city, like all of Crete, is committed to the myth of being the nucleus of our continent. Pride in Europe is noticeable everywhere in Crete.



In the Flemish provincial and university city of Leuven, Europa is approaching her beloved with affection. No surprise then, that he set off with her across the Mediterranean to his native Crete.

The versatile Flemish sculptor Rik Poot (1924-2006) is to be thanked for this bronze statue. It was his last creation. It stands at the end of an esplanade that leads from Leuven railway station to the Provincial House and has been repeatedly walked by participants of events of the European Seniors' Union.

Details about the artist: <https://www.pinterest.de/jefdepagie/rik-poot/>

Signs of hope from Alt-Berlin The "House of One" has a harbinger

Berlin. At the place of origin of the former twin city of Berlin-Coelln, a “prayer and teaching centre for the peaceful coexistence of Judaism, Christianity and Islam” will arise. The initiators call it the “House of One”, in which believers from the three monotheistic religions can meet and get in touch with members of other churches, as well as those with non-religious backgrounds. The start of construction is 2019. Until then, an information pavilion will take the leading role. It was recently inaugurated on the site.

That the pavilion comes from Luther's city of Wittenberg is no coincidence. During the Reformation anniversary last year, visitors from all over the world met there. That they felt so invited and even began their journey to Luther's primary domain was what the organisers had wanted, hoped for and welcomed. Margot Käßmann, Reformation Special Envoy of the Evangelical Church, pronounced the distinctly cosmopolitan, ecumenical character as the most notable of the months of celebration! This gives hope for further rapprochement within Christianity, according to the theologian. In a sermon at the beginning of Lent, she expressed her appreciation for the change of heart in the face of nationalistic Lutheran anniversaries of

earlier centuries, which barely considered Luther's weaknesses, especially his hatred of the Jews.



Model, precursor (left) and planned location in Old Coelln. The oldest settlement in the twin city is located between the Spree (top right) and the Spree Canal (bottom left). Part of the area in the lower third of the picture is reserved for the House of One (marked by a dot). (Aerial photo: City of Berlin)

The “House of One”, as well as its interim predecessor, is on the historic “Coellnische Fischmarkt” in Berlin (documented since 123, now Petrikirchplatz) already comes through its location high symbolic power: here is the cradle of that city, the source of two dictatorships with devastating consequences. It is also the site where a church dedicated to the apostle Peter stood, heavily damaged during the Second World War and demolished on the orders of the GDR government. It stood in the way of prominent politicians making an unhindered journey to the building of the SED Central Committee. Archaeologists unearthed remnants of foundation walls and an early burial ground several years ago.

EU Commissioner Oettinger:

More money for the ERASMUS + program / concerns about Poland articulated



Prof. Norbert Lammert, President of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, in conversation with his guest Günther Oettinger, EU Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources.

Brussels. The EU Commission intends to present, at the beginning of May, a concrete proposal for the so-called Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) which will be the EU's budget from 2021 onwards for seven years.

This has to take into account the forthcoming EU exit and other new challenges. Budget Commissioner Günther Oettinger told the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Berlin how the funds should be used primarily. These are the strengthening of the economic power of the EU, solidarity between the member states and sustainability, which means the responsible use of the environment. Neither the successful “Erasmus +” programme, nor the research and development sector need be worried about cuts in their financial framework that could not be ruled out altogether – in contrast to the agricultural economy, for example. Erasmus + is the EU's education, youth and sports programme. It promotes learning mobility and transnational cooperation. Included is the distribution of “European values” in accordance with Article 2 of the EU Treaty.

More spending is likely to be needed for the common defence efforts of the EU countries, Oettinger said.

In response to a question from the audience on the situation in Poland, he gave its economy a good report, which includes the export of Polish goods to the European market. He was concerned about its government's actions in the field of the “rule of law” (judicial reform, restriction of press freedom). The EU can only take effective action against this by a unanimous decision of its member states, said Oettinger. In the course of a lively discussion, he remarked: “for exports to African countries, which they can produce themselves, we should withdraw ourselves” and received strong applause. With the announcement to increase the Erasmus + programme funding by up to 10 percent from 2021, he made (not only) a worried Georgian scientist happy, who greatly appreciated this programme. “We also want to promote vocational education strongly,” said the Commissioner. Proportional EU responses to US protectionist actions were not ruled out by Oettinger, but he would like to avoid them.

“The Hand of the Seniors' Federation”

Ingrid Korosec, President of ÖSB, writes to the Editor

Vienna. “In the course of coalition negotiations of the ÖVP and the FPÖ, it has been possible in the government programme 'Together. For our Austria' to accommodate long-term demands of the Austrian Seniors' Federation,” writes Ingrid Korosec to the Editor.

“When the social insurance system was created in Austria, the difference between retirement age and life expectancy was seven years, today it is 22 years. To secure this system also in the future, the average retirement age must be brought into line with the legal requirement (women with 60, men with 65).”

The President of the ÖSB is pleased that individuals who remain employed after reaching the statutory retirement age will no longer have to pay contributions into the pension system. She had fought for a long time for that.



ÖSB President Ingrid Korosec with Federal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz

Further demands of the Seniors' Federation, according to the words of Mrs. Korosec, are:

- Clear commitment to tax financing from a single source for care.
- Overall consideration for the funding of health, pensions and care.
- Stronger support for the caring of relatives.
- An increase in care allowances from care level 4.
- Strengthening the family doctors and local health care services.
- Safeguarding of the cash by its anchoring in the Constitution.
- Minimum pension of 1,200 euros for over 40 years of contributions, whereby:
 - married couples should receive at least 1,500 euros for 40 contribution years of a partner.
- Steps to integrate the actual facts into to the statutory retirement age (see above!)
- Better framework conditions for volunteering.
- Family bonus of 1,500 euros per child per year.
- Promoting access to digital media, especially for seniors.

In addition to these concerns, ÖSB is also working to improve other areas of social and consumer protection and internal security, notes Ingrid Korosec, writing: “Federal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz has carried out a courageous selection of his government team: the proportion of women in the Federal Government is 50 percent, which is higher than ever. The government team brings with it a wide range of expertise that will have a positive effect on government work!“In the first few months, there has been “close co-operation” between the Seniors' Federation and the government, which would make “seniors’ politics one step ahead”.

Editor’s note: The Austrian Seniors’ Federation has over 300 000 members and is active in all federal states with strong local groups. It is one of the most active member organizations in the European Seniors’ Union, and for ten years, together with the Political Academy of the People’s Party, has hosted their Summer Academies in Vienna.

“We have achieved the essentials”

Claus Bernhold sums up the coalition agreement Union / SPD

Berlin. Claus Bernhold is Deputy Chairman of the CDU Seniors’ Union, its press spokesman and a member of the Executive Committee of the European Seniors’ Union. He sees in the coalition agreement of the future German governing parties, essential demands pushed through, which are in the interest of the older generation.



ESU Executive Committee member Claus Bernhold in 2017 as a speaker during discussions at the Summer Academy in Vienna

There was also the input of Prof. Dr. med. Otto Wulff, the chairman of the Seniors' Union, which was involved in the negotiations.

Bernhold emphasised, in a letter to the senior men and women: "in the case of pensions we have adhered to the three-pillar model", the private pension provision will be further developed and therefore fairer. The pension Commission demanded by the Union is set up. Its goal must be a "reliable generation contract" that rewards life's performance and "guarantees a regular retirement income above the assured basic income".

For Bernhold, the announced "immediate programme to create 800 new qualified workers in care facilities" is "a first step in the right direction". The demands for a better staffing ratio and higher pay for the nursing staff were taken up. In his summing up, he also says: "in view of the threat to the healthcare crisis, we remain with our plea (...) to launch a master plan for care in the amount of 10 billion euros".

He noted with satisfaction that the importance of families and children is emphasised and that children's rights are included in the Basic Law. The CDU Seniors' Union, with its 57,000 members, continues to demand that Article 3, Paragraph 3 of the Basic Law should be extended to prohibit discrimination due to age, stressed Claus Bernhold.

Regarding the disappointment of many CDU voters in relation to the "allocation of responsibilities in the future Cabinet", he does not hide his critical view also. Nevertheless, he is convinced that the CDU under Angela Merkel "the state-forming, a party that is characterised by its awareness of responsibility", which makes "good politics for our country!"

Doc. Lidmila Nemcova:

The international festival Mene Tekel 2018

Prague. As in the previous years the MENE TEKEL festival was in the focus of the Czech SKS activities starting at the end of February. The festival has been regularly organised after 1990 all over the country to illustrate the fight against the totalitarian regimes of both Nazi and communist periods. The main idea of the 2018 festival was to compare the situation in Poland and in Czechoslovakia. In spite of the fact that in both countries the socialist system was based on the Marx-Lenin ideology and later on a common cooperation against socialist regime and some specific differences have been disclosed.

The festival proposed to the Czech civic society movies, theatres, exhibitions, round tables, discussions in the schools, meetings, concerts etc. A special conference took part in the building of the Czech Senate in Prague on the heritage of Czech and Polish people during the common fight against the totalitarian systems.

Historical remembrances are very important for the Czech seniors. The role of seniors still remembering the life during World War II and socialist period is to give personal objective testimony and warning to younger generations.

The present situation in many post-communist countries is discovering new serious dangers for their really democratic development.

Mrs. Nemcova is President of SKS and a Vice President of ESU.



ΟΡΓΑΝΩΣΗ ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΩΝ ΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ
SENIOR CITIZENS ORGANIZATION OF CYPRUS



Μέλος της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης
Πρεσβυτέρων Πολιτών ESU
Member of European
Senior Citizens Union ESU

Anniversary for Senior Citizens Organisation of Cyprus

On the 14th of January 2018 and in the presence of the President of Cyprus Mr Nicos Anastasiades, and also High Patron of Cyprus Senior citizens, celebrate their 15th Anniversary, the banqueting hall of the Miramare Hotel in Limassol considered to be too small to accommodate the seniors who attended the celebrations and also to pay their contribution and respect towards President Anastasiades candidacy for the next Presidential Elections.

Avgerinos Papares, Chairman of the Limassol Committee welcomed President Anastasiades and all seniors who attended the celebrations and also express the wish for a successful election victory.

Antonios Demetriades, the President of the Senior Citizens of Cyprus and Vice President of ESU in his speech to the audience mentioned the historic details and how President Anastasiades took the initiative in 2001 to establish the Senior Citizens Organization. He continued saying that:

“The founding General Meeting took place in 2002 approved the constitution and the establishment of the Senior citizens Organization. Senior Citizens have experienced immense hardships throughout their lives, and they struggle for their country’s freedom and independence. Is because of them and their hard work that we living today in this independent island, and is sad that with the younger generations we had to experience the disaster and the economic crisis. We strongly believe that Senior Citizens should live a comfortable decent and functional life.

Thank you Mr President for giving us the opportunity and guidance needed for the creation and establishment of our organization. You should be proud of your Organization. I would like to express my personal joy over the fact that I continue to be part of this wonderful effort to upgrade the way of living of the elderly”.

President Nicos Anastasiades congratulate the Organisation for their great work and addressing the audience, said among other things:



Nicos Anastasiades – in the meantime re-elected as the President of the Republic of Cyprus – (“SI” already reported) with leading persons of the Cyprian Seniors´ organisation which celebrated its Anniversary in the coast city of Limassol.

Congress of the CSV-Seniors in Luxemburg

Luxemburg. Wie berichtet, hielten die CSV-Senioren aus Luxemburg, Mitglieder der ESU, im Januar ihren Kongress ab. Präsident Marcel Glesener hieß neben zahlreichen Mitgliedern die drei CSV-Europa-Abgeordneten und als weitere führende luxemburgische Persönlichkeiten willkommen: den Ehren-Staatsminister Jacques Santer, den Ehrenpräsidenten der Abgeordnetenkammer, Jean Spautz, und Marc Spautz, den Vorsitzenden der gegenwärtig oppositionellen Christlich-Sozialen Volkspartei (CSV).

Einige Gäste nahmen das Wort. Claude Wiseler, Spitzenkandidat der CSV für die Parlamentswahlen am 14. Oktober, lenkte die Aufmerksamkeit auf große Herausforderungen der nächsten Legislatur. Dazu rechnet er Reformen im Interesse des wirtschaftlichen Wachstums und der Staatsfinanzen. Änderungsbedarf sieht er auch in den Bereichen Mobilität, Zuwanderung und Integration, Familienpolitik, Wohnraum, Sicherheit und Umwelt.

Die frühere EU-Kommissarin und derzeitige Abgeordnete des EU-Parlaments Vivian Reding bezeichnete die Senioren als Bereicherung für die Partei. Von hier kämen positive Anregungen für die Mandatsträger auf nationaler und europäischer Ebene. Sie schilderte anschaulich, wie sich die drei aus der CSV kommenden Mitglieder des Europaparlaments - neben ihr Georges Bach und Frank Engel - regelmäßig abstimmen und im Dok-Kanal über ihre Tätigkeit berichten. Bedauert hat sie Defizite im Demokratie-Verständnis einiger EU-Mitgliedsstaaten in Osteuropa, was sich in der Blockade von Vorhaben auf einigen Themenfeldern äußere.

Dem Europaparlamentarier Georges Bach ist das Vorankommen im sozialen Bereich besonders wichtig. Dazu sei die Festlegung eines Mindesteinkommens in einigen Ländern ebenso erforderlich wie der Schutz von Arbeitnehmern gegen krebserregende Stoffe und Dieselabgase und schließlich gleicher Lohn für gleiche Arbeit – unabhängig von der nationalen Herkunft des Beschäftigten. Mit Genugtuung sprach er vom Verbot des Düngemittels Glyphosat durch Luxemburg und acht weitere Länder. Aufgaben sieht der Abgeordnete in den Bereichen Agrarpolitik und Verkehrssicherheit. Er fordert Null Toleranz bei Alkohol am Steuer.

Zu Beginn des Kongresses war Präsident Glesener auf das 20jährige Bestehen der CSV-Senioren eingegangen. Bei der Gründung war der damalige CSV-Kammerpräsident Léon Bollendorff zugegen und übernahm den Vorsitz. Sein Nachfolger wurde im Jahre 2001 der Ehren-Vizepräsident des Europaparlaments, Prof. Dr. Nicolas Estgen, der dieses Amt nach über zehnjähriger Tätigkeit aus gesundheitlichen Gründen abgeben musste. Es wird seit dieser Zeit von Marcel Glesener wahrgenommen.

(Nach Informationen von Clode Carbon-Frisch, der Vizevorsitzenden der CSV-Senioren)

- Sorry: For personal reasons the English translation could not be finished in time -

Waste is recyclable - yes and?

This recognition is not new. Now the EU Parliament has set fixed deadlines and binding goals for responsible management

Brussels. Many raw materials classified as “waste” are of lasting value and suitable for reuse. They also will be used by future generations to shape their lives. MEP Karl-Heinz Lorenz referred to this when introducing four new legislative acts. The Environment Committee had agreed them at the end of February. They take into account the recognition and challenges described at the beginning. The EU member states are now required to set binding goals and fixed deadlines for dealing with this “waste”. These should ensure that as much as possible is recycled and as little as possible ends up in landfill sites. The decisions support the declared intention of the European Union to use resources responsibly, that means using materials as long as possible and to ensure the reuse of serviceable parts at the end of their useable life. This is a task for consumers, governments and industry alike. The MEP said that companies would also be spared purchasing from countries with dictatorial rulers as a consequence.

ESU on Facebook

9th March: Carmen Quintanilla Barba (ES) announced that, on the occasion of the International Women's Day, she has been nominated for an award, together with four women from South Africa, Kenya, Trinidad and Tobago and Syria, for a United Nations Distinguished Service award. This is to recognise their commitment to the rights of women, especially in rural areas. Carmen is chair of the National Commission of the Elderly of the Partido Popular / People's Party in Spain and a Vice-President of the ESU. An Hermans congratulated her.

6th March: Prof. An Hermans (B) and Dr. Marilies Flemming (AT) participated in a discussion on preparing documents for the EPP Congress in Helsinki (November

2018). The working group “European Politics”, led by Christian Kremer, dealt with the topics of security and prosperity.

26th February: Guido Dumon and Noella Jacobs (B) met at the headquarters of the Flemish Christian Democrats, CD & V, with a group of visitors from the Stockholm area for a discussion.

22nd February: Lenny Geluk Poortvliet (NL) has developed an action plan to suppress loneliness in old age.

<https://www.cda.nl/actueel/nieuws/actieplan-tegen-eenzamheid/>

ESU Diary 2018

19-20 April: Stockholm (S): 20th anniversary of the Christian-Democratic Seniors' Association

20th April: Berlin (D): Official celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Seniors-Union of the CDU

Please note the changes:

24th April: **Brussels:** Presidium 10-13 o'clock (EPP-headquarters) with the President of the European Peoples Party (EPP), Joseph Daul and the Young EPP (YEPP)

24th April: **Brussels:** Presidium 14-17 o'clock Participation at the conference of IDEA and ESU for International Solidarity, with the EU Commissioner Marianne Thyssen, on the occasion of the European Day of Solidarity between the Generations (held on 29th April)

25th April **Brussels: Meeting of the Executive Committee is cancelled**

X

27th 28th April: **Aachen (DE):** Regional Conference. Topic: "Growing Old in the Euro-region"

7th - 8th May: **Oslo (NO):** Regional Conference. Topic: "Solidarity between the Generations"

17th -19th May: **Vilnius (LT):** Regional Conference. Topic: "Bridges to Solidarity and Cohesion in the Baltic States"

6th July: **Vienna (AT)** Presidium
Executive Committee
Anniversary "10th Summer Academy for Leaders"

7th - 9th July: **Vienna:** 10th Summer Academy

6th - 8th September: **Bozen (Italy/ South Tirol):** Regional Conference

7th - 8th November: **Helsinki (FIN):** EPP Congress with ESU participation

23rd - 24th November: **Leuven (B):** Presidium

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