



EUROPÄISCHE SENIOREN UNION(ESU)

EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)

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European Heritage Year 2018

Test of responsibility in difficult times

The European Union is blowing a cold wind in the face. The media are full of examples of deficits in the political dealings of institutions and of the resurgence of nationalism thought to be obsolete. That is precisely why it makes sense to focus on examples of cross-border cooperation, mutual respect, trust and friendship. They flourish despite the problems between the EU and some member states and are testimony to the indomitable will of most citizens to make Europe's integration irreversible on a democratic basis, even in difficult times, through practical action.



Here is the unveiling of a valuable decorated sarcophagus in the castle park of Brady (German: Pforthen), a community not far from the border between Germany and Poland. In the photo (from left to right), Brody's Mayor Ryszard Kowalczyk, Claudius Wecke from the Branitz Park in Cottbus, the restorer Radoslaw Okon, Elisabeth Freifrau von Kettler, (born von Brühl), and Carolin Vogel as representative of the REEMTSMA Foundation in Hamburg, who participate in the project. The restoration of this baroque sculpture from 1785 is a joint effort of personalities from both countries, who are serious about preserving testimony to European culture.



We are witness to a work assignment at the castle of Biecz (German: Beitzsch), not far from Brody. The call for participation in the large-scale cleaning after years of vandalism was followed on the first of the two days “by up to 25 people of you and us,” said the initiator of the action, Pavel Kosicki of the association “Fundacja Monumenta Poloniae” (www.fundacja.monumenta.pl). Here, rescue takes place in greatest need. Shortly before

the operation, part of the roof threatened to collapse and take two valuable sculptures out. At the last minute, professional help arrived and lifted the artwork to safety. On 14th April, the volunteers kept clear of the propped up area in danger of collapsing on the upper floor. Consequently, for the disposal of rubbish in the “classic way” they looked for another window!

It has taken a decade to get the green light for the building: the management of a Polish mining company had chosen it to serve as their head office. Luckily, the danger of a new open-pit mine near the German-Polish border now seems to be banned, thanks to protests from both sides. The brown coal mine would have had a devastating impact around the area of Brody/Pforthen.



Within a few hours, half of the rooms were cleared of rubble and rubbish. Here Anna Dziadek, a citizen of Biecz, discovered an inscription from 1937, with which the family of Count Brühl gave the lords of the castle (Von Wiedebach) the marble floor for three rooms as a gift. It has survived in only one of the rooms. After the end of May, the conservation team hope that anyone interested in the castle will be able to take a look around for the first time. During a break from work, the Editor was briefed about the project by the key players. From left: Pavel Kosicki, Frank Henschel, Michael Max, U. Winz

Weimar is also Albert Schweitzer



It does not require the proclamation of a “European Heritage Year” to bring guests from all over the world to Weimar. The small town in the German state of Thuringia is known for its locations of Goethe, Schiller, Liszt and other personalities of the classical period. Weimar also houses the famous Anna Amalia Library, which suffered badly in a fire in 2004. And it is infamous for the Nazi concentration camp named “Buchenwald”, located on the nearby Ettersberg

Albert Schweitzer founded a hospital in Lambarene (then Equatorial Africa, later Gabon), in 1913 and is known worldwide as the “jungle doctor,” The statue at the Weimarer Kegelpplatz, dedicated to him in 1968 - the first ever - depicts him with inhabitants of the “black continent”, who entrusted themselves to his medical help and advice. (Monument design: Gerhard Geyer, Halle/Saale):



In view of the variety of sights worth seeing, the Albert Schweitzer Memorial and Meeting Center, which is located in Weimar's Kegelpplatz, has difficulty in attracting attention. The theologian, philosopher, doctor, writer, organ expert and virtuoso (1875-1965) did not live in Weimar, but nevertheless held the

commemorative speech on the 100th anniversary of Goethe's death (1932) in Frankfurt/Main. He was born in Kaysersberg, he grew up in Gunsbach. Both Alsatian villages belonged to Germany at that time and are now in France again. Schweitzer's grave is in Lambarene (Gabon), in his long-standing place of work.

His “Reverence for Life” ethic, with a determined rejection of nuclear weapons made him a world-respected humanist, honouring our continent today as in the past. In 1952, he was honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize. To cultivate his legacy means to stand for the dignity of man everywhere, as claimed by the European Seniors’ Union in their “Magna Charta”.

In Weimar, the “Albert Schweitzer Committee e.V.” has its headquarters, in Frankfurt (Main), the aid organisation for the hospital in Lambarene..

In Gunsbach, France, the Schweitzer House invites visitors.

Flowers of the ESU ...



... for the victims of the Berlin terrorist attack in December 2016, and all political acts of violence worldwide. The memorial for the 12 killed in the Christmas market is located at the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church. Meanwhile it is clear: the attack by an already significantly suspicious Tunisian could have been prevented.

“My community loves the elderly”

Bouge-Namur (B). In Belgium, local elections will take place in 2018. The Seniors of the Christian Democrats / Les Aînés du cdH will dedicate their national congress to this event on 21st April. President Pierre Scharff and Secretary-General Etienne Vanderroost have been invited. In their letter, it states correspondingly: the elderly have their definitive place in their location and in the election campaign; their presence would be proof of the commitment of seniors for the benefit of society. Sociologist and gerontologist Myriam Leleu speaks about this topic. The floor will also be taken by A. Gréoli, Vice-President of the Walloon Region and the Walloon-Brussels Community. He calls his lecture: “L'assurance-autonomie: une réponse à l'allongement de la vie”. Also expected is Benoit Lutgen, President national.

On the occasion of the local elections, which are held every six years, a brochure has been produced with eight demands of the Christian Democratic Seniors to the local politicians. They have the motto: “My community loves the elderly”. The authors are concerned about better conditions for civic engagement, about the connection between social affairs and solidarity, about housing conditions, independence, assistance services and care, information and communication, mobility and accessibility, culture and leisure activities as well as, more generally, the quality of life.

Collaboration is taking shape

Oświęcim (PL) / Dortmund (DE). At the German Seniors' Day, which will be held for the 12th time at the end of May - this time in Dortmund -, guests from Poland will also participate, Janusz Marszalek informs us. He is President of the Polish Seniors' Union (PUS) and one of the ESU Vice Presidents since 2013. His contacts to the organising BAGSO (Federal Association of Seniors' Organizations) are bearing fruit: during the Seniors' Day, there should be official talks about cooperation. On the Polish side, they are ready: the PUS with its partner organizations, representatives of the Parliament (Sejm) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Polish Seniors' Union is in partnership with the Association of the University of the Third Age, the Association of Polish Pensioners and Invalids, and the Association of Polish Seniors (Cities and Communities).

The PUS is headquartered in Oświęcim. Branches exist in Warsaw (for the capital and Masovia) and in Katowice (for Upper Silesia).

ESU Diary 2018

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

24th April: **Brussels:** Presidium

Brussels: 14-17 o'clock. Participation of the Presidium in the symposium of IDEA and ESU 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**

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

7th-8th May: **Oslo: Regional Conference is cancelled**

The proposed topic: "Solidarity between the Generations -prerequisites for a sustainable welfare society" will be discussed on 8th May at a meeting of the board of the Seniors' Association.

Speaker: Jon Gunnar Pedersen

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

6th July: **Vienna:** Presidium and Executive Committee

7th-8th July: **Vienna:** Summer Academy for Leaders"

Note: the meeting in Vienna will finish after lunch on 8th July

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

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

23 – 24 Nov: **Leuven (B)**: Presidium

ESU on Facebook

15th April: An Hermans promotes participation in a symposium organized by the ESU with IDEA on April 24 from 14 to 17 o'clock in Brussels. It is dedicated to the European Day of Solidarity between the Generations, which will be celebrated for the 10th time on 29th April. (see also "ESU Diary 2018")

The speaker is Commissioner Marianne Thyssen. Various parties have been invited to speak (Cartuizer Center, 70 Rue des Chartreux).

13th April: Prof. Steven Van Hecke, Catholic University of Leuven (B), meets in Cyprus with leading figures from the Association of Seniors, chaired by Antonios Demetriades, and delivers greetings from ESU President Em. Prof. An Hermans.

13th April: The Robert Schuman Foundation, based in Budapest, has published a "Permanent Atlas of EU". It contains a lot of detailed information, including statistics, as well as over 50 maps. Available at www.atlas-permanent.eu.

9th April ESU President An Hermans is very impressed with statements made by MEP Michal Boni. He had said, among other things: "democracy is not something you remember before elections, but begins with the civic involvement on the ground." An Hermans attaches the hope to his speech that Boni is also open to dialogue between the generations, "that are so significant for society".

Last announcement:

Macron: steadfastly defending democracy!

Strasbourg. In the European Parliament, the French President renewed his autumn proposals for the reform of the EU. He sees the danger of "a kind of civil war" in Europe; The departure of some states from liberal, democratic principles is, for Emmanuel Macron, the "gravest mistake" that could be committed. He said "I want to belong to a generation that has steadfastly decided to defend its democracy."

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The Editor would be pleased to receive articles from ESU member-associations