



EUROPÄISCHE SENIOREN UNION (ESU)

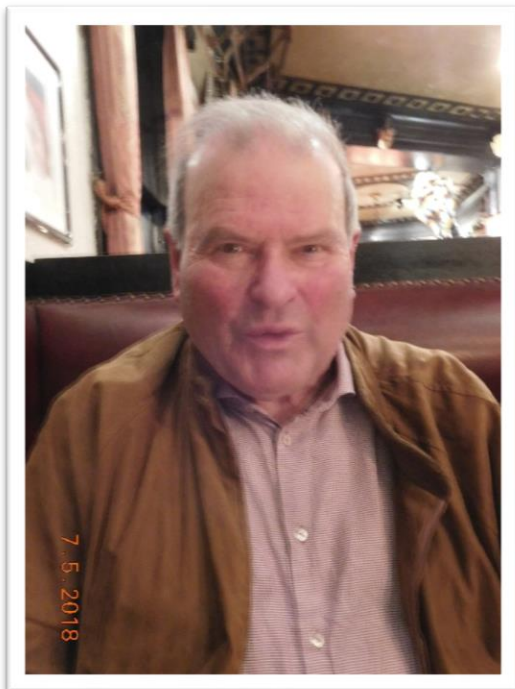
EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)

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“Living life in its diversity”

Impressions from Norway / by the Editor

Oslo. Norway has a good reputation in Europe: stable government, a vibrant democracy, a reliable partner in the Blue Helmets of NATO, a cultural and winter sports centre, high mountains and long fjords, a paradise for anglers. Many citizens from other countries feel themselves attracted by the high standard of living. “Is everything good in your country?” I recently asked **Sverre Mauritzen**, chairman of the Høyre Seniors.

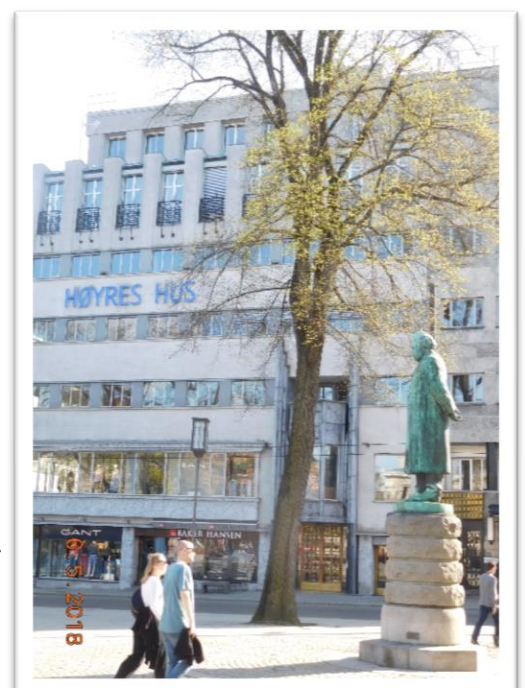


**Sverre
Mauritzen**

*Hoyre
headquarters*

*are "guarded" by
national president of Høyre-Seniors
poet Henrik Ibsen since 2015*

the national



His answer: “a visitor can certainly get that impression, but of course we also have problems.” And it is already the subject of his board meeting the next day, to which I am invited. It is about improvements in the relationship between the generations, to which a separate day – the 29th April – has been dedicated since 10 years. The ESU and its member associations take these concerns seriously.

In the Høyre building in the centre of Oslo, built in 1917, **Jon Gunnar Pedersen**, gave an insight on 8th May into the daily interplay between young and old. The fact that it works everywhere without restrictions is a prerequisite for the sustainable prosperity of society, emphasises the former Secretary of State in the Ministry of Finance.

He speaks with appreciation of the Prime Minister **Erna Solberg** (Høyre), who has been working in this direction since 2013 and is now leading a (minority) government again. According to “Handleblatt”, she announced on behalf of her two coalition partners on 14th January, that she wanted to make “Norway the world’s best country to live in”. However, the economy would have to grow and offer new jobs; a fight against poverty has to be undertaken

Pedersen sees as a key for economic and social success the clever use of natural resources – in Norway these are: shipping, fishing, forestry, the use of water power, the oil industry. The focus shall be put on the worker, with his/her education and experience, which shall be broadened constantly. The fact that a lasting quality of life largely depends on the coexistence of the generations – here and there in need of improvement – emphasises an explanation that was adopted by the Executive Board. She strongly opposes regulations that discriminate against young and old people in the labour market solely because of their age.

Following a lively discussion, the Høyre Seniors’ Board agreed to draft a White Paper” developed by Storting and now being debated in public. The parliamentary Bill is designed as the basis for reforms to be implemented by 2019. They are primarily aimed at improving the living conditions of the citizens of older generations in the municipalities of the large country. In the opinion of Sverre Mauritzen, its title “Live All Your Life” postulates everyone’s claim to life in all its diversity – including offers for participation in society.

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In the parliamentary elections, 78.2 percent of the voters participated. Høyre came in second place. This party was founded in 1884 and is one of the oldest in the country. It is described as conservative-liberal.

The Seniors' Association of the Høyre was founded in 1984. After a disappointing vote the year before, it was the 42-year-old Sverre Mauritzen from Stavanger, who with a “task force”, led in the anniversary year to the unavoidable changes of the party statutes and secured for the seniors a take-off to the national level. Since 2015, the now almost 75-year-old has been at the helm of the Høyre Seniors and represents them on the Executive Committee of the ESU. His organization emerged from pensioner clubs in the various regions of the 5.3 million country. Currently, the association has about 4,000 members. Whether its chairman will stand again for election in Trondheim in February, he left open in our conversation.



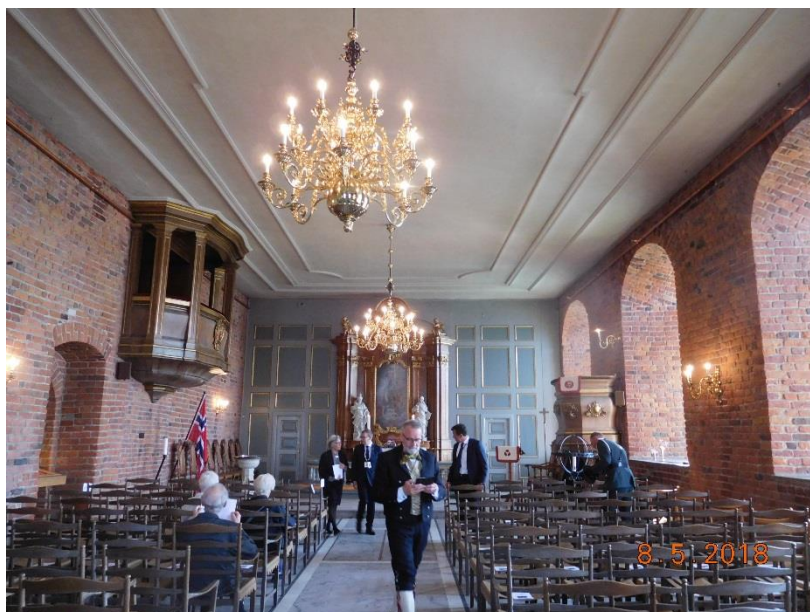
*The Akershus fortress seen from a board an Oslofjord ferry
History has been made here since 1,000 years*

On 8th May, the Norwegians celebrate the “Liberation Day and Veteran’s Day”. Remembered are the victims of the German Nazis and the resistance of many compatriots against the occupiers. In the grounds of the Akershus fortress in Oslo, the Norge Hjemmefrontmuseet documented on three floors the suffering and resistance of the Norwegians between 1940 and 1945. A group of 14-year-old students, accompanied by **Rune Aaboen**, remained silent during my visit to the replica of a prison cell, whose prisoner had made a toilet-paper diary about the horrors he suffered. Its author did not survive the reign of terror, though the diary was discovered under the floor and is of the highest documentary value.



*At the execution site of spring 1945, victims of the Nazi terror are honoured.
In the nearby historic building, once called a double battery, the period of the occupation of
Norway is clearly documented.*

Only a few meters away from the museum, in April 1945, 42 Norwegians had become victims of the Nazi terror. At the same location, wreaths have been laid since years in honour of the victims. This time, King Harald V honoured former soldiers of the Norwegian UN units in Lebanon, Afghanistan and Sudan with medals for their services. Up to now, Norwegians still belong to NATO's limited contingent in Lebanon until 31st August. On the occasion of the Day of Remembrance, a solemn church service took place in the castle church, in which members of the military participated with singing and instrumental performances.



The last guests leave the church on the Akershus fortress.

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