

Together towards a 'new normal'.

Dear friends and colleagues,

We have sent you two Newsletters focusing on the Corona crisis and the measures taken to overcome the crisis.

We suggested you to reply on our Newsletters focusing on problems, good practices, opinions of senior generations.

The proposed questions were:

- What are/were some of the main challenges during this crisis, especially for seniors?
- Are there positive solutions that have been put forward which should lead us also in the future?
- Are there particular stories you would like to highlight?

We thank you for responding to our request, and are pleased to tell that several associations/ persons sent us some information.

In this issue we are glad to present you some information and considerations from:

- Claus Bernhold, Rolf Berend, Gabriele Peus-Bispink (Senioren-Union CDU);
- Heinz Becker (Österreichische Senioren Bund) - Austria
- Carmen Quintanilla Barba (Partido Popular)

In a forthcoming issue some more reactions will be presented.

We wish you an interesting reading.

An Hermans



Senioren
Union CDU



“In their desperation many older people feel forgotten.”

The questions are answered by Rolf Berend, Claus Bernhold and Dr. Gabriele-Peus-Bispinck from the “Senioren-Union” of the CDU Germany, based on a report elaborated by Vice-President Dr. Gabriele-Peus-Bispinck :

The main challenges for individual seniors in the pandemic are isolation, loneliness, lack of perspectives, signs of age discrimination. Politics and society have to deal with the challenges of care for the elderly in hospitals, homes and ambulant care and with ethical matters such as the issue of triage. The enforced loneliness and social isolation of older people due to prohibitions on going out and visits is a serious intervention in fundamental rights. In their desperation many older people feel forgotten.

The Federal Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO) appeals to the federal and state governments to ensure a reasonable degree of contact with fellow residents in homes and with family relatives, and to enable them to be accompanied by relatives in the phase of dying.

Virologist Hendrick Streek also considers it inadmissible to just lock away older people while they urgently need contacts.

Doctors and church representatives warn: relatives are anxious their parents and grandparents are more likely to die, but not of Covid-19, but of isolation, because it takes away their courage for living.

Nobody knows how it will go on. Even medical specialists and virologists do not agree.

The lack of perspective demoralizes many. In the long run, uncertainty concerning the end of the measures results in de-motivation and loss of solidarity.

There is much discussion about whether, in case of further easing, older people should be asked - or even obliged - to stay at home.

The age scientist Andreas Kruse warns against an undifferentiated approach to the elderly. He considers it unacceptable to exclude a whole group of people from important areas of public life without checking in each individual case whether a relevant risk profile exists.

Corona does not endanger all seniors in the same way, the biological age is decisive. Deriving restrictions on freedom solely from belonging to the group of older people would be an age stereotype with tendency to discrimination.

In the first phase of the pandemic, the aim was to slow down the spread of the virus to avoid overburdening the health system.

The focus was on acute care in hospitals; the number of intensive care beds was to increase from 20.000 before corona to 40.000.

Today, many intensive care beds - even those with ventilation facilities - are empty.

Patients from the Netherlands, France and Italy, among others, could be cared in Germany. Today the pandemic is affecting the care sector in full force.

As soon as the virus enters hospitals and nursing homes, the risk of death increases dramatically. There is a lack of protective clothing and disinfectants. Doctors, nurses and carers work at the absolute limit of their strength.

The situation is particularly delicate in ambulant care. There are more than 14,000 ambulant care services all over Germany.

The amount of care required is extremely high, and in ambulant care it is much more difficult to enforce hygiene requirements. The virus could stick to every front door. Many seniors and relatives cancel appointments for fear of contamination. If orders fall by a further 20%, ambulant nursing would probably have to introduce short-time employment.

A particularly important ethical question is the issue of triage.

If not enough intensive care resources are available for all patients, it must be decided which patients receive intensive care treatment, ventilation or extracorporeal membrane oxygenation and which are given lower priority. There is much discussion whether age can be decisive here.

The German Ethics Council and other institutions stress that the state must not dictate which life should be saved as a priority in a conflict situation.

Any state regulation on the unequal allocation of survival chances and mortality risks in an acute crisis is unacceptable.

The state must respect the fundamental principles of law even in a crisis situation. The state should not tolerate that the over 80-year-old patient is extubated to save a young mother.

There are many offers of help for older people, e.g. the campaign " Shopping helpers of the Junge Union Deutschlands", numerous student shopping helpers, offers, playing music, singing, dancing in front of old people's homes, broadcasting of small concerts in the social media, masses and church services broadcasts on television, radio and internet, ringing of church bells every evening - for 15 minutes. In many places burning candles are placed in the windows to show solidarity and last but not least thousands of phone calls not only from and to friends, but also to people you know that it does them good.

Rolf Berend Claus Bernhold Gabriele Peus-Bispinck

30 April 2020

(Original version in German)



“Political” assessment of the crisis management practices of the new Austrian coalition government

Heinz K. BECKER - 29.04.2020

- **Very prompt reaction and switch to a consistent crisis mode** as early as mid-March, due to the reports from China since December and then due to the drastic development in Italy
- **Extremely good cooperation between the 2 coalition parties and a united approach to confidence building** (always in agreement, no contradictions)) in daily TV press conferences of the government with great transparency by daily announcement of the facts of infected people, people in hospital, including those in intensive care and number of deaths.
- Primary goal: **No overloading of hospitals, sufficient capacity in intensive care medicine with ventilators, etc.**
- Dramatic storyline : "**Extremely dangerous threat, many people will die, biggest crisis since World War II, etc.**".
- **Usually the same 4 heads of government at all performances:**
Federal Chancellor Kurz / ÖVP and Vice Chancellor Kogler / The Greens as well as Health Minister Anschober / The Greens and Interior Minister Nehammer / ÖVP.
- **Full commitment and co-responsibility** of the population by calling for "saving lives only by working together"
- **Special focus on older people**, i.e. "Protect grandmothers and grandfathers - by not visiting!".

Political achievements: Acceptance of government policy by the population is currently around 85% and the ÖVP (Austrian People's Party) around 48%.

ATTENTION:

This is only a snapshot and will surely change again with the improvement of the situation and less feeling of danger for people!

IMPORTANT:

There has not yet been a discussion about generations in Austria, in other countries there are already accusations against the elderly, pensioners and senior citizens that they are the cause of the strong interventions in society, the damage to economy and the indebtedness of the state budget - we must pay special attention to this and react to it immediately!

Virus control period from 16 March

General restrictions on leaving *) with comprehensive legal regulations:

- Minimum distance 1 metre
- Wearing mouth-nose protection masks
- No visits to relatives and friends
- Closure of schools and universities
- Home learning instead of school visits, etc.
- No events in sports, art, culture
- Closure of all restaurants, hotels and all shops except food, pharmacies, etc.
- „Lock Down" of economy by obligation to home office

In combination with massive support for employees and companies through short-time work, postponement of tax payments, special credits, etc.

*) Always allowed were walks in the surroundings of the residential address and shopping, exclusively with persons living in the same household.

Start of the 2nd phase from 1 May

New legal regulations:

From 1 May

- The initial restrictions in force since 16 March will expire.
Anyone travelling in public places must continue to maintain a **minimum distance of one metre** to all persons not living in the same household. In public transport the minimum distance is only applicable if it can be maintained.
- The **obligation to wear masks** when shopping and on public transport remains, also e.g. at places of interest and tourist facilities in indoor areas - but not in outdoor areas.
- **Public events** with a maximum of ten participants are explicitly allowed (e.g. yoga sessions in parks), at funerals up to 30 people are admitted.

From 2 May

- Shops with more than 400 square metres as well as hairdressers and beauty salons are allowed to open again.

From 4 May

- The approximately 100,000 school-leavers and pupils in final year classes are **the first to return to schools**. All the others stay in improvised "home schooling" for another two weeks. **Visits to senior citizens' homes** should also be possible again under certain conditions.

From 15 May

- The **catering trade**, which is currently limited to delivery and pick-up, will be allowed to receive customers again from 15 May - but under strict conditions:
All guests need a seat, and no more than four adults plus children may sit at each table. The minimum distance does not apply to children, but the personnel must wear mouth and nose protectors
- **Animal zoos** are allowed to reopen their open-air areas in mid-May.
- **Religious church services** can be held again, but only one person per ten square metres of space may attend.
- For **kindergartens** it is considered until 15 May that although the "child density" is reduced, a childcare offer should be guaranteed for all parents.

From 18 May

- **Teaching** at elementary schools, NMS and AHS lower levels starts again. However, the classes are taught in "shifts": half of them are taught from Monday to Wednesday, the other half on Thursdays and Fridays (and vice versa the following week). Gymnastics and music are dropped.

From 29 May

- At present, **hotels** only may accommodate guests in exceptional cases, for example if they are travelling for professional reasons. From 29 May onwards, regular business is to be permitted again, and other tourist businesses and attractions may also open again.
- The **open-air pools** are also scheduled to open at the end of May. Work is still in progress on the corresponding requirements.
- Other "tourist businesses and attractions" can also reopen on 29 May.

From 3 June

- After the Pentecost holidays, pupils in **the upper grades of the AHS, professional schools and technical colleges** will also return to class. Outside the classrooms, masks are obligatory at all schools, there are no afternoon classes.

Overview of new regulations :

<https://kurier.at/politik/inland/coronavirus-sommerplaene-so-geht-es-ab-1-mai-im-tourismus-weiter/400825766>
<https://orf.at/corona/>

(Original version in German)



The challenge of rebuilding a Europe of greater solidarity with our elderly

Carmen Quintanilla Barda
Vice-president of the ESU

Permanent Honorary Member of the Council of Europe

COVID-19 has caused great pain to thousands of families on our continent who have lost their loved ones as a result of this pandemic. But it has also struck a chord in the hearts of the rest of us Europeans, who have felt these deceased as if they were our loved ones.

Europe faces one of the great challenges of our history, but let us not forget that we have already been in crisis on other occasions and on all of them we have emerged stronger.

COVID-19 has led us into a dramatic situation but has also given us the opportunity to reflect on what Europe we want to build when this nightmare ends.

Along this path, we must bear in mind the words spoken by Robert Schuman 70 years ago in the Declaration that initiated the unity of our continent: "Europe will not be done at once, nor in a joint effort, it will be done through concrete achievements. , who create, in the first place, a de facto solidarity ".

We have been asked to stay home and we have done so. And not only because the different governments have imposed it on us, we have done it mainly out of responsibility and solidarity. Aware that if we do not protect each other we will not defeat this virus. That is the spirit of solidarity that Schuman referred to in his speech. And that is the spirit that we have to maintain when all this is over to build a society where young people, adults and the elderly go hand in hand.

Let's build a new Europe founded on the wisdom of those who have seen us grow as a community and as a society, combined with the drive of some young people who during this pandemic are understanding that in life not everything is easy, and that nothing is achieved without sacrifice. Something that our elders already learned when they suffered the shortages and wounds of World War II. Those who, when the war ended, taught us that only from respect and solidarity is it possible to build a lasting and prosperous peace.

Our elders have given us everything and yet we have not been able to protect them against COVID-19 and today we have to regret the death of thousands of older people throughout Europe as a result of this pandemic.

Unfortunately we can no longer go back to correct the mistakes made at the beginning of this pandemic, and thus avoid many of the deaths that have occurred. But we still have time to save one of the best generations in our history.

Let us learn from this terrible experience and take the opportunity to build a better and more supportive Europe, whose central axis is people above any discriminatory stigma.

A Europe where everyone has a place and no one is left behind. Where young and old walk in the same direction, feeding each other and enriching society from generational exchange, which we must see as a natural and logical path.

A Europe that protects the elderly and is committed to an inclusive society where older people can actively participate in all areas of society, treating them with the respect, affection and recognition they so much deserve.

Let us protect our elderly from the coronavirus, because they are the driving force behind Europe's continued growth and stability that has allowed the germination of a European community that is committed to the rights and equality of all people.

(Original version in Spanish)

El reto de reconstruir una Europa más solidaria con nuestros mayores

El COVID-19 ha causado un gran dolor en las miles de familias de nuestro continente que han perdido a sus seres queridos a consecuencia de esta pandemia. Pero también nos ha golpeado en el corazón al resto de europeos que hemos sentido a estos fallecidos como si fueran los nuestros.

Europa afronta uno de los grandes desafíos de nuestra historia, pero no olvidemos que ya hemos estado en crisis en otras ocasiones y en todas ellas hemos salido reforzados. El COVID-19 nos ha llevado a una situación dramática pero también ha puesto ante nosotros la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre qué Europa queremos construir cuando esta pesadilla acabe.

En este camino tenemos que tener muy presentes las palabras pronunciadas hace 70 años por Robert Schuman en la Declaración que inició la unidad de nuestro continente: “Europa no se hará de golpe, ni en una obra de conjunto, se hará por medio de realizaciones concretas, que creen, en primer lugar, una solidaridad de hecho”.

Nos han pedido que nos quedemos en casa y así lo hemos hecho. Y no solo porque nos lo hayan impuesto los diferentes gobiernos, lo hemos hecho principalmente por responsabilidad y solidaridad. Conscientes de que si no nos protegemos los unos a los otros no venceremos a este virus. Ese es el espíritu solidario al que hacía referencia Schuman en su discurso. Y ese es el espíritu que tenemos que mantener cuando todo esto acabe para construir una sociedad donde jóvenes, adultos y ancianos vayan de la mano.

Construyamos una nueva Europa cimentada con la sabiduría de quienes nos han visto crecer como comunidad y como sociedad, combinada con el ímpetu de unos jóvenes que durante esta pandemia están entendiendo que en la vida no todo es fácil, y que nada se consigue sin sacrificio. Algo que ya aprendieron nuestros mayores cuando sufrieron las carencias y heridas de la II Guerra Mundial. Aquellos que cuando la guerra acabó, nos enseñaron que sólo desde el respeto y la solidaridad es posible construir una paz duradera y próspera.

Nuestros mayores nos lo han dado todo y sin embargo, no hemos podido protegerlos frente al COVID-19 y hoy tenemos que lamentar el fallecimiento de miles de personas de edad en toda Europa a consecuencia de esta pandemia.

Lamentablemente ya no podemos volver a atrás para enmendar los errores cometidos al inicio de esta pandemia, y evitar así muchas de las muertes que se han producido. Pero aún estamos a tiempo de salvar a una de las mejores generaciones de nuestra historia.

Aprendamos de esta terrible experiencia y aprovechemos la oportunidad de construir una Europa mejor y más solidaria, cuyo eje central sean las personas por encima de cualquier estigma discriminatorio

Una Europa donde todos tengan cabida y no se deje a nadie atrás. Donde jóvenes y mayores caminen en una misma dirección, alimentándose mutuamente y enriqueciendo a la sociedad desde el intercambio generacional, que debemos ver como un camino natural y lógico.

Una Europa que proteja a los mayores y apueste por una sociedad inclusiva donde las personas de edad puedan participar de forma activa en todos los ámbitos de la sociedad, tratándoles con el respeto, el cariño y el reconocimiento que tanto merecen.

Protejamos a nuestros mayores ante el coronavirus, pues ellos son el motor para que Europa siga creciendo y se mantenga la estabilidad que ha posibilitado el germinar de una comunidad europea que apuesta por los derechos y la igualdad de todas las personas.

*Carmen Quintanilla Barba
Vicepresidenta de la Unión Europea de Mayores del Partido Popular Europeo (ESU)
Parlamentaria de Honor Permanente en el Consejo de Europa*

PS : The translations of this Newsletter into English are not checked.