

Dear ESU friends,

In this edition of our Newsletter, we pay tribute to the late Elisabeth Dispaux-Cornil and reflect on the impactful Leuven 2024 Election Congress. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to this momentous event and acknowledge the dedication of those who have been instrumental in the ESU's journey over the years. Join us as we celebrate our collective achievements and look ahead to the exciting opportunities that lie ahead!

Enjoy reading and warm regards,

The outgoing President and Secretary-General

An Hermans & Guido Dumon

## In Memoriam - Elisabeth Dispaux-Cornil (29.05.1936 - 10.01.2024)



It is with heavy hearts that we bid farewell to a remarkable woman, Elisabeth Dispaux-Cornil, whose indomitable spirit left an indelible mark on the ESU. A fervent advocate for the rights of the vulnerable, Elisabeth's dedication to public service began at a time when such endeavours were not commonplace for women. Her unwavering commitment to her family, community, and political activism defined her character.

Elisabeth played a pivotal role in the inception of the ESU, championing its cause since its early days. Her influential connections, notably with Herman Van Rompuy during his presidency of CVP (now CD&V), were instrumental in establishing a seniors' group within the organization. Serving as the ESU vice-president and a member of the presidency, she remained a steadfast defender of our mission until her last breath.

The ESU honors Elisabeth's memory, cherishing her contributions, critical insights, openness, and warm hospitality. Our deepest condolences go out to her family. Elisabeth's legacy lives on in the enduring spirit of the ESU.

## Reflecting on the Success of the Leuven 2024 Election Congress: *For a Better Tomorrow*



The Leuven 2024 Election Congress was an unforgettable gathering that brought together ESU members from across Europe to shape the future of our organization. Over the course of several days filled with engaging discussions and inspiring speeches, delegates participated in a series of roundtable debates, keynote addresses, and networking sessions.

The Congress kicked off with a warm welcome from outgoing President An Hermans, setting the stage for the exciting events to come. Throughout the Congress, delegates had the opportunity to hear from distinguished speakers such as European Commission Vice-President Dubravka Šuica, who shared valuable insights on democracy and demography.

Highlights included thought-provoking debates on topics such as the role of citizens in driving change and the key themes for the upcoming EU elections. Moderated by renowned figures like Heinz K. Becker and Professor Steven van Hecke, these discussions sparked lively exchanges and deepened our understanding of the issues at hand.

As the Congress drew to a close, Stefaan Vercaemer was elected as the new ESU President, marking a new chapter in our organization's history. With a renewed sense of purpose and unity, we look forward to building on the momentum generated during the Leuven 2024 Election Congress as we work towards a brighter future for the ESU and Europe as a whole.

A heartfelt word of thanks goes out to all those who have dedicated their time and efforts to the ESU over the years, particularly Secretary General Guido Dumon, whose tireless commitment has been instrumental in the success of this Congress and the organization as a whole. Your contributions are truly appreciated and have made a lasting impact on our community.

A full report of the event will be available on our website soon.

## ESU Conference in Bratislava: A Resounding Success



The ESU Conference in Bratislava on February 8-9, organized by ZKS and ESU, gathered nearly 50 participants for discussions on seniors' active participation in society. Notable speakers, including ESU President An Hermans and MEPs, addressed topics such as Slovakia's EU membership anniversary, European challenges, and citizen involvement. The conference highlighted KDH's role, EU support for Ukraine, and principles guiding EU policies. Ján Figel' shared insights into Slovakia's journey to EU membership. Strategic dialogues covered the EPP Memorandum for June 2024 elections and ESU's future, strengthening the resolve to contribute to seniors' dialogue in Europe. The complete report and conference program can be found on our [website](#).



# EPP Congress in Bucharest 6-7 March



We participated in the 2024 EPP Congress in Bucharest. The event holds particular importance as it revolves around the election of the EPP lead candidate and the unveiling of the electoral manifesto for the European Parliament elections slated for June 6-9, 2024.

It serves as a platform for unity, reflection, and inspiration. In the face of Russia's war in Ukraine, the escalating cost of living, and the looming threats of populism and extremism, the EPP Congress aspires to be a beacon of hope and resilience: *"As the EPP stays*

*true to its values, we emphasize empowering the people of Europe, preserving our deep-rooted values, and protecting the Union against internal and external threats."*

Our presence at the 2024 EPP Congress is a reflection to the diverse voices shaping European democracy. We voice the rights and well-being of senior citizens across the continent. We aim to enrich the dialogue, strengthen our commitment to building a better tomorrow for all generations, and ensure that the concerns of seniors are heard and addressed in the political landscape.

## **President An Hermans addresses Intergenerational Solidarity at EPP Congress**

On March 6, 2024, our President An Hermans delivered an intervention at the EPP Congress in Bucharest. The debate, which focused on 'intergenerational solidarity,' featured key figures such as Beppe Galea, President of EDS; Lidia Pereira, President of YEPP; and Mikuláš Dzurinda, Wilfried Martens Centre President.



An Hermans began her intervention by expressing gratitude and humility for the opportunity to meet numerous persons of her generation from all over Europe. She acknowledged their shared commitment to standing for Europe and fighting for the foundational values upon which the continent is built: freedom, human dignity, democracy, and solidarity.

In her address, An Hermans emphasized that while young people today experience a different environment compared to their grandparents, they still share the same core values. The acknowledgment of this common ground becomes crucial in fostering intergenerational solidarity within the European context.

As President of the ESU, she underscored the importance of bridging the gap between generations and creating a united front to tackle the challenges facing Europe.

Further information will be shared closer to the event and practical details made available on the dedicated website <https://www.epp2024.eu/>

## ESU Annual Report for 2023



We're thrilled to announce that our ESU Annual Report for 2023 is now on [our website!](#)

Take a journey with us as we reflect on the milestones, achievements, and impactful moments that defined our year. Your continued support and engagement have played a vital role in shaping the success of our initiatives.

We are pleased to announce that the year report has already been distributed in paper format during the congress in Bratislava on 8-9 February. Paper copies can be requested by contacting us via email.

## ESU welcomes new member from Romania: Organization of National Liberal Seniors (O.S.N.L.)



The European Seniors Union is delighted to announce the addition of a new member, the Organization of National Liberal Seniors - O.S.N.L. (ORGANIZAȚIA SENIORILOR NAȚIONAL LIBERALI), based in Romania. The ESU Presidency, during its meeting in Bratislava, received and approved the membership application from OSNL, a well-established organization founded in 1990 with a current membership of 5000.

The Presidency, after careful consideration, reached a positive conclusion and extended congratulations to Mr. Victor Paul Dobre, the current president of OSNL. As a part of their integration into the ESU, a delegation from OSNL, led by Mr. Dobre, had the opportunity to visit the European Parliament in Brussels on February 13th. Invited by Siegfried Muresan (MEP), they also convened at the EPP Headquarters. The OSNL delegation, along with ESU President An Hermans and Secretary General Guido Dumon, found the experience enlightening and inspiring.



During the EPP congress in Bucharest where 2000 delegates from all over Europe gathered, the members of the ESU presidency were glad to have the opportunity to meet their PNL Romanian partners. Another meeting on March 5th was on the agenda and provided an excellent opportunity for further collaboration and strengthening ties within the ESU community. The ESU warmly welcomes OSNL and anticipates a fruitful partnership in advocating for the interests of seniors in Europe.