

Also in 2022: Keep up the good work!

Dear colleagues,
Dear friends,

It is our pleasure to share with you our hopes and enthusiasm for 2022 and our strong belief that by working together we can build a better future for all generations.

2021 was a year of constant adaptation to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Since the outbreak in 2020, progress has been made to better protect everyone, especially the elderly, thanks to the widespread introduction of vaccines. Yet our societies are still under great pressure to find ways out of this crisis, to reconnect with our loved ones, colleagues, and fellow citizens. Digital tools have helped a great deal in staying in touch, but online life will never be a suitable substitute for real human contact. Still, they can prevent us from becoming isolated and locked in our homes. For ESU, 2021 has been a busy year, and despite the many constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are pleased to present a variety of activities in our 'Annual Report 2021': ranging from video conferences to the Summer Academy and the celebration of ESU's 25th anniversary. Digital inclusion for all has become one of the major topics of our political concern. In the ongoing digital transformation of our societies, it will certainly remain one of the priorities on our agenda. It is in the Member States, and often at local level, that we must support older people and create the opportunities for 'digital equality' and digital inclusion. Let's use social media not only for conferences to learn more about European politics, but also for inspiring exchanges, critical communication, and mutual learning about the use of digital tools as consumers, tourists, patients ... Let's turn the actual limitations into an opportunity to participate and progress in the digital age.

It is not easy yet to present a comprehensive ESU roadmap for 2022. In the coming days, we will organize our first 2022 Presidium meeting and then we will launch our planning for the coming months.

In the meantime, we are exploring new policy initiatives at the European level and ensuring that in the new directions towards active and healthy ageing, the strengthening of a European health union and the discussion on a European care strategy, the well-being of older people is a permanent concern in European policy making.

We look forward to continuing our cooperation in 2022 and hope to meet face to face again soon and to see you at one of our events

An Hermans , President

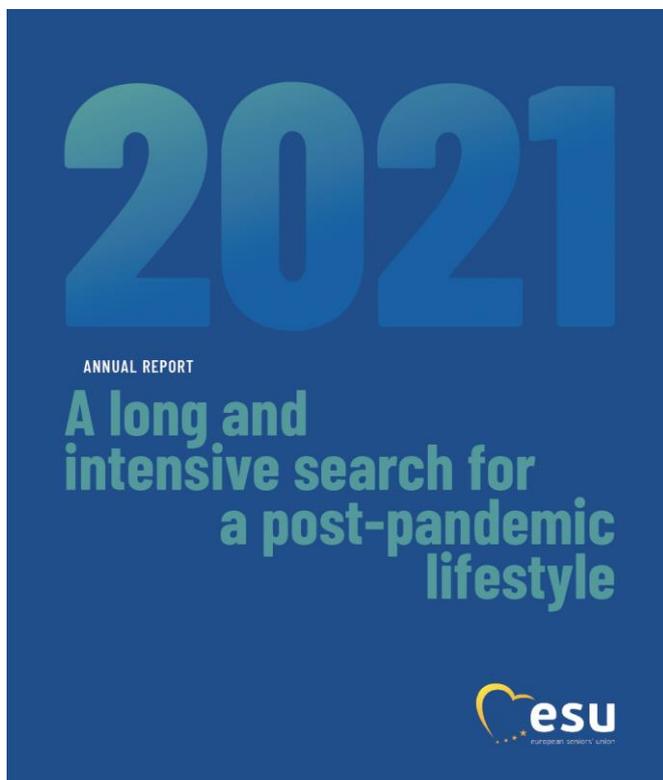
In memoriam: Mrs Stella Manukyan (1940-1921)

On Christmas Eve 2021, we received the sad news that Mrs. Stella Manukyan, President of the Union of Senior Citizens in Armenia, passed away. She was born on 1st September 1940 and died on the 23rd December 2021 due to a heart attack.



She was very interested in building a seniors' association in her country and participated several times in our Summer Academy in Vienna. We express our condolences to her family. Our thoughts and prayers are with them, and we will preserve her memory and show our gratitude for her commitment and friendship.

ESU-Annual Report 2021



As is our custom each year, we have prepared an Annual Report for the past year, which provides an overview of our involvement in various areas. Although this year was still very much a trial of what can and cannot be done given the COVID-19 measures, we made the most of it. Read all about it at our [ESU website](#).

Shaping Europe's digital future

On 12 November 2021, the EU Commission published the results of the 2021 [Digital Economy and Society Index](#) (DESI), which tracks the progress made in EU Member States in digital competitiveness in the areas of human capital, broadband connectivity, the integration of digital technologies by businesses and digital public services.

The annual Digital Economy and Society Index measures the progress of EU Member States towards a digital economy and society, based on both Eurostat data and specialized studies and collection methods. The index helps EU Member States identify priority areas where targeted investments and actions are needed. The DESI is also the key tool when it comes to analyzing digital aspects in the European Semester. Read more [here](#).



Promoting digital inclusion for all - Call for 'good practices'

During the year 2021, ESU welcomed the EU's political agenda for the 'digital age', but also expressed concern about the risks and threats of the digital transformation of our societies. It is important that we, as seniors' organizations, not only use digital tools, but that we are also involved in the whole strategy aimed at digital inclusion of all. And... that we exchange 'good practices' and learn from each other.

Soon, we want to focus on the digital inclusion of older people and, in particular, on digital literacy. Currently, there are already many initiatives. Digital equality for all requires a shared responsibility of governments, stakeholders, and civil society. [Here you will find a general overview and some good practices.](#)

May we ask for your help. In a presentation for the Council of Europe, we would like to emphasize the importance of different types of learning-coaching-empowering initiatives close to the people, respecting their life experience and practical needs **and the strengthening impact of the involvement of seniors in the implementation of objectives and strategies.**

We are sure you know some good examples, in your country, your local community, your association... Please tell us. Send us a short description 5-10 sentences:

Name of the Project(of initiative):	
<i>Short description: localization, target-group, goals, results: (5-10 sentences)</i>	
Organizer:	
<i>Do you know if older persons are involved in the planning, the implementation, the evaluation of the project?</i>	
<i>Person to contact, to get more information:</i>	

Upcoming events

- Meeting of the ESU Presidency (25 January 2022) – online
- Vide Conference (March 2022) – online
- Meeting of the ESU Executive Committee (19 April 2022)
- Video Conference: "Towards an European Care Strategy" (announced by EU - Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. (tbc)
- ESU Northern and Baltic Countries Regional Conference (19-21 May 2022) in Tallinn (initiative and local organization: ESU-vice-president Ann Räämet)
- EPP Congress Rotterdam, with ESU side-event (initiative and local organization: ESU-delegates Monique Vogelaar and Lenny Geluk, CDAS): 31 Mai-1 June 2022.
- Preparatory video-conference ESU-Summer Academy (tbc)
- Summer Academy, Vienna (30 June – 2 July 2022)