



EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION

MESSAGE of em. Prof. dr. An Hermans, President of ESU

**At the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons (IDOP)
1 October 2015**

Continuing the road towards a value driven Europe

Every year on 1 October, we globally pay attention to older persons in society. Ageing in dignity and without discrimination are central here.

Celebrating

2015 marks the 25th anniversary of the International Day of Older Persons (IDOP). This year the day will focus on the impact that older people have on the new urban environment as well as the effect it has in turn on them. This year's celebration aims to show that 'an age inclusive agenda is crucial for sustainable environments to promote equity, welfare and shared prosperity for all.'

As president of the European Seniors' Union (ESU) I invite everyone to CELEBRATE the International Day of Older Persons. An increase of life expectancy creates new opportunities and participating in community life gives strength and joy. We want to share our life experience. Also on political policy levels. Also in Europe. I can experience this every day in the ESU. Those are reasons to thank and to celebrate.

As ESU, we call to treat everyone, including all older persons and all persons in need of care and help, with respect and dignity, to eliminate age discrimination and to create opportunities for participation. All political authorities have to play a role to this end.

./...

Openly approaching the future

On the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons, I would also like to call on our member organisations and all seniors for openness to an ever-changing future, openness to tackle new projects and to participate actively in all areas of community life. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION in society is for seniors as vital as breathing for our body. That is my conviction.

Politicians can and must create the framework and the rules to build a viable and humane society. But realizing daily community life in respect, solidarity and connectivity, that is a role of all citizens. Only in interaction between politicians and citizens of all generations and all levels of policy, new challenges can be addressed. This certainly applies to the challenges that dominate current events: the reception and integration of refugees. Obviously, a regulatory framework is needed, which is respected and where each Member State, regional or local authority recognizes and accepts its responsibility. But civil society (associations, volunteers, churches, sports clubs, media ...) plays an irreplaceable role in influencing opinions, support, reinforcement,... Older people can play an important role in this.

Not forgetting history and the road taken by seniors

I do not believe in stereotypical statements as would mostly older persons feel threatened by people seeking refuge in Europe, as would seniors be afraid to receive refugees and would refuse to share the achievements of our society. Most of the older persons today have themselves gone a long way in and to Europe. Hoping that Europe would bring them peace, respect for human rights, freedom and democracy. The life history of seniors is a mirror of the way that people with and for each other in Europe have made possible. Let us not forget this history. On the contrary, let us draw strength from it and openly continue the road. It will be apparent that Europe, with its multi-level governance form and the European values of solidarity and responsibility, is not just a matter of heads of state, senior officials and top politicians, but also of committed citizens.

Europe: putting people in the centre

Let us openly choose a Europe that is people-centred and that encounters each person, regardless of gender or age, ethnicity or religion, with dignity and a warm heart. That is the Europe we want to live in. Let us make it happen.

Contact ESU : ✉ rue de Commerce/Handelsstraat 10, 1000 Brussels

☎ +32 2 309 28 66

@ esu@epp.eu

 <http://esu-epp.eu>

 facebook.com/esu.eu