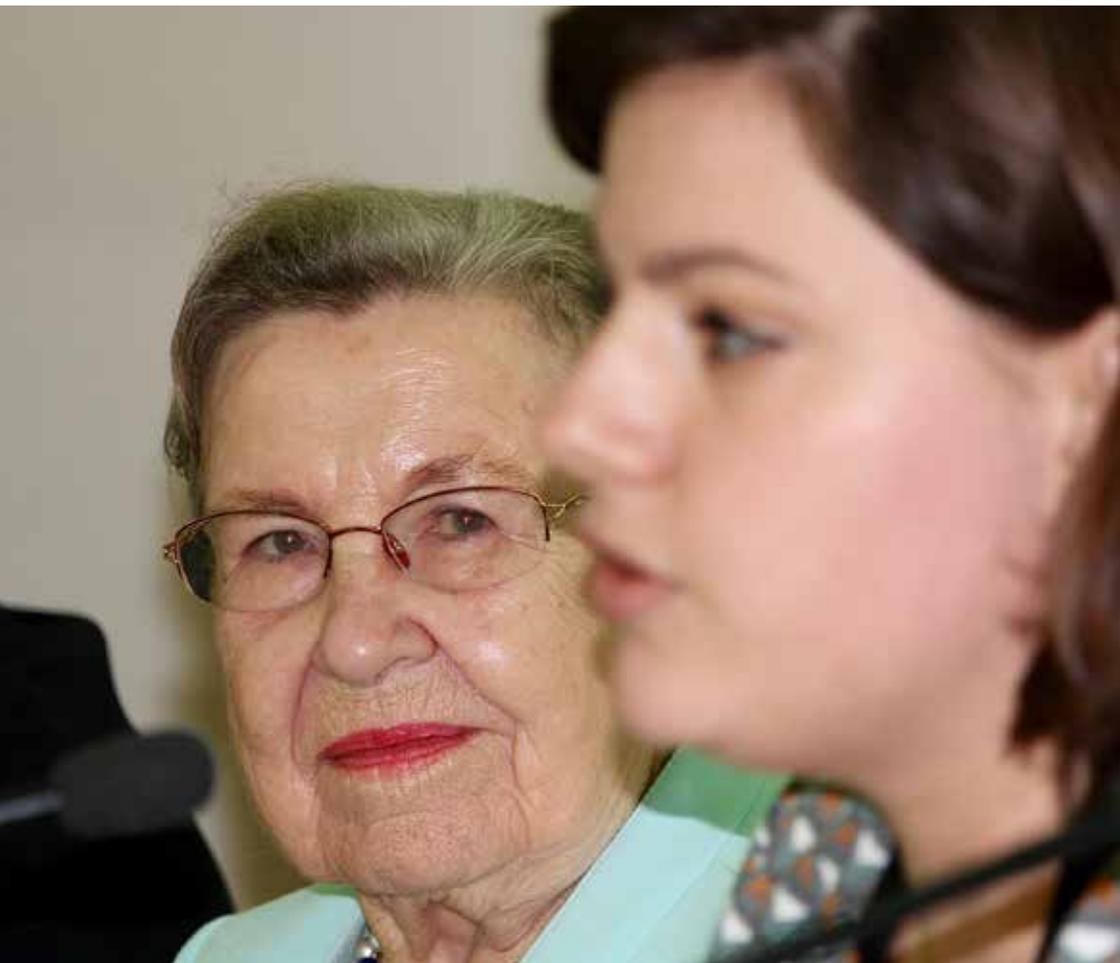


United in solidarity



Exploring
intergenerational solidarity



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Bridging the Gap: A Common Vision for Europe Across Generations

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Exploring intergenerational perspectives

For several years now, the European Seniors' Union has taken initiatives or cooperated with external organisations to promote dialogue between generations. Intergenerational solidarity is an indispensable cornerstone in the European house of solidarity and prosperity, with structural, formal and informal relations on the level of families, friends and neighbourhoods at the forefront thereof. No model of democratic governance can be inclusive and sustainable without ensuring dialogue and solidarity between generations.

The need for intergenerational solidarity has been highlighted for some years now. Several studies and policy analyses are urging the safeguarding of our social protection systems, to create an inclusive living environment for all and to maintain the highest standards for a sustainable democracy. It is the ESU's aim to build bridges with all generations in order to secure them from the current threats of populism, indifference and misinformation.

We hope to give you some insights in our day-to-day work. We would therefore like to highlight certain initiatives that we have been pursuing, hoping that our drive for an inclusive and warm society will receive more attention and that our actions will contribute to an ever-increasing cooperation and solidarity between the generations. Intergenerational solidarity has a long way to go in the history of Europe and is still not – unfortunately – a matter of course today.

We would like to thank the people and organisations that have worked with us in recent years towards greater solidarity between young people and seniors.

An Hermans, President ESU
Guido Dumon, Secretary-General ESU



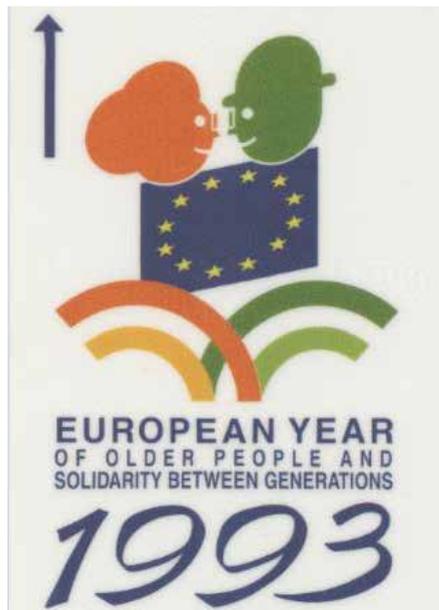
Intergenerational solidarity: a cornerstone in the European social model

An Hermans

Demographic change: an overall European challenge

Demographic change due to increased life expectancy and low birth rates has affected our societies and lifestyle. All governments, from local to international level, are challenged by the 'ageing societies' or, if you will, 'societies of longevity'. It is to be understood as a mainstream issue that must be considered not only in the areas of pension and employment policies, but also in urban and regional planning, family policies, housing, transport and education policies as well as in immigration and integration policies.

Already at the end of the 20th century awareness of the need for new perspectives on the position of older persons, ageing policies and solidarity between generations was rising in international forums. This led to the launch of the **European Year of Older People and Solidarity Between Generations** (1993). At the end of 1993 the EU Council and Ministers of Social Affairs declared that Member States (then 12) wished to pursue policies based on the essential principles of solidarity between and within generations in order to promote the social integration of older persons to engage in society in the spheres of family, social, political, cultural, recreational and educational life.¹



¹ Declaration of principles of the Council of the European Union and the Ministers for Social Affairs, meeting within the Council of 6 December 1993 to mark the end of the European Year of the elderly and of solidarity between generations (1993). Official Journal C 343/01, 21/12/1993 p. 0001 – 0003.

Intergenerational solidarity: a pillar of fair and sustainable societies

Pursuant to the **2009 Lisbon Treaty on European Union** (Article 3), one of the Union's principal aims is to safeguard the well-being of its people, and in this regard, the Union, among others, shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, promote social justice and protection, and solidarity between generations.² The Commission, the Council, the Parliament, and the Committee of the Regions also regularly highlighted the importance of solidarity between generations. It concerns us all: governments and civil society. The Member States agreed overall frameworks and strategies in line with the Action Plans for 'active and healthy ageing' developed by the World Health Organisation. It was repeatedly stated that the responsibility for addressing issues arising from an ageing population would need to be shared between the generations.

One of the prime examples was the EU Presidency event in **Brdo** (Slovenia - 28-29 April 2008), entitled "Intergenerational Solidarity for Cohesive and Sustainable Societies". During the event 29 April was designated European Day of Intergenerational Solidarity and Cooperation. To that extent, moreover, the organisation of a European Year for Intergenerational Solidarity was launched

The event in Brdo made clear that there was a need for a new Intergenerational Pact based on three fundamental principles:

- Actions should be integrated and cover **all spheres of life**, including work, housing, mobility, social action, care, local and national politics and the voluntary sector;
- Actions should be universal and integrate the **various generations**, from childhood to old age, via the young and intermediate age groups;
- Actions should not be exclusively for the benefit of one particular group, but must be based on an **exchange** between the generations.³



² The Treaty of Lisbon, which was signed on 13 December 2007 and entered into force on 1 December 2009, in its article 3.3, mentions solidarity between generations as one of the key areas to promote the well-being of European citizens. See 3.3. "It (the Union) shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child".

³ Intergenerational Solidarity for Cohesive and Sustainable Societies. Outcomes of the Slovenian Presidency Conference. Brdo, Slovenia 28 - 29 April 2008,

A war between generations?

The orientation towards a broad common intergenerational horizon and many projects - supported by local and regional governments - could not avoid "a gap between generations" in the public sphere and in the media. As never before a generation - the baby boomers, born between 1945 and 1965 - was subject to mythologization. It seemed that they had it all: a guaranteed job, a good salary, a steady career, and pensions. At the same time, the baby boomers were criticized for not being proactive enough on climate change and sustainability of the welfare state. Did the post-war generation get more than its fair share?⁴ To the older generation it seemed that the relation between generations was perceived only in one direction: young workers paying taxes to support older persons' benefits. It was forgotten that the older generation had also gone through difficult periods, did not enjoy equal opportunities for schooling and had worked hard to deliver the welfare state that young generation are used to.

A gap between the generations could and cannot be denied. The stereotypes and segregation hinder direct encounters, openness and respect. These differences are of a particular weight when it comes to politics and public decision-making.

We have experienced it at the European level; let me give you three examples:

- While speaking with young politicians, I try to convince them that older persons also have the right to participate in our society and that 'lifelong learning' could be an instrument to improve their skills. But we are sometimes still seen as the 'lost generations' whereas today's focus is on 'young potentials'.

- The average turnout for the European elections in 2014 throughout the whole Union was 42.5%. Turnout had never been so low. Data have shown that the turnout is higher among senior voters aged 55 and older.⁵

- One of the striking facts about the **Brexit** referendum is the significant difference in voting behaviour between age-groups. While 71% of the 18-24 aged voted 'remain', only 36% in the 65+ category did so. Young people felt betrayed. "You stole my future!", they told their grandparents and parents. But, at the same time, they called for young people to be resilient and continue promoting the attitudes of cooperation and collaboration of the Union into which they were born.

⁴ David Willetts, *The Pinch: How the baby boomers stole their children's future and how they can give it back*. London, 2010.

⁵ Lawrence Cappelle, Gilles Pittoors, and Steven Van Hecke, *Seniors in the 2014 European Parliament Elections: Turnout, Voting Intentions and Representation* (Brussels: Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies and the European Seniors' Union, 2015), <http://www.martenscentre.eu/publications/seniors-2014-european-parliament-elections-turnout-voting-intentions-and-representation>. (With a foreword by ESU President Hermans).

Calling for a general European strategy on demographic change

With a view to an effective and coordinated response to the challenges of demographic change, taking into account the differences and specific problems of certain regions and cities, a coordinated European strategy for demographic change is needed. Through our continuous efforts towards intergenerational solidarity, it was adopted at the Malta Congress 2017 in the EPP's vision "Secure Europe's Future"⁶. Member States, regions and local authorities can count on the support of the Institutions' tools, from legislation to programmes, to strengthen solidarity between generations as it is embedded in the social dimension of our Union.

How to address the democracy challenges for all generations?

Democracy is the key to take part in the decision-making process, to respond to the needs and challenges of the society in which we live, to deliver welfare and quality of life for everyone.⁷ In many countries, however, democracies are under pressure. Likewise for Europe. Lack of interest, mistrust, populism, changing attitudes towards political parties, poor political education, new styles of communication, ... Those are just a few of the challenges to overcome.

It is my sincere conviction that older persons have their children's and grandchildren's interests at heart. But, nevertheless, we seem to be missing the opportunity of mutually sharing competences, creativity and experiences. Let us break down the walls of segregation between the generations and address the democracy deficit between generations and go forward together.

How can we, starting from the conviction that young and older persons have the right and the responsibility to participate and to be represented in governance, enhance our democracies? How can we strengthen the participation of young people in politics? How can we understand and respond to each other's needs and use our competences to create a better future?



⁶ See: *Secure Europe's Future*: <http://www.epp.eu/press-releases/epp-congress-in-malta-highlights-of-the-final-day/>

⁷ Tomaz Dezelan, *Intergenerational Dialogue for Democracy*. International IDEA Discussion Paper 21/2017, International IDEA, Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance; www.idea.int.

Focus on Intergenerational Solidarity in ESU events over the years

Arne Cools & Michelle Vervaeke



Since the foundation of the European Seniors' Union (ESU) in Madrid in 1995, the ESU has been a growing network of associations, which give a voice to the seniors in Europe. Our values and goals are based on a Judeo-Christian and humanist tradition, and correspond with the vision on humanity and society of the European People's Party (EPP).

From the early beginning, the ESU has been aiming for an age-friendly society, where there is no place for discrimination, nor isolation, and where citizens can expect social protection. The ESU has been calling on the EU, Member States and regions to involve seniors in policy decisions, to recognize the different impacts of demographic change, and to create the conditions for active and healthy ageing and allow every person to participate in society.

At the forefront of these efforts is the belief that youth, adults and the elderly should care for each other. Through different levels of interpersonal connections, the ESU firmly considers that this intergenerational solidarity stands as one of the cornerstones of the European Union.

Old and young together - guaranteeing the future of Europe

During our Sixth Congress, in 2007, of the ESU in Pulheim, the hometown of our former President Bernhard

Worms, we addressed the challenges of demographic change and the need for intergenerational solidarity with a large number of participants. It was therefore not surprising that even the President of the Youth of the EPP (YEPP), Yannis Smyrlis, should be among the speakers at this congress. The name of the congress was thus well-chosen: "Old and young together - guaranteeing the future of Europe".

Fired with that positive spirit our Pulheim Declaration urged for a strengthened mutual understanding between the various generations as a precondition for genuine intergenerational justice. A strong social policy to overcome the huge challenges for the -present and future - elderly was also highlighted in the declaration. If we are to succeed in these aims, it is the imperative that the youth of yesterday and before works closely together with the senior citizens of tomorrow and beyond!

Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the ESU (2015)

Since 2013, An Hermans took over the legacy of her predecessor and intensified the actions for intergenerational dialogue and solidarity. Immediately after the 2014 European Elections, where young and older voters showed different attitudes towards Europe, we started a project 'Tell us your story'. The aim was that older Europeans could tell their life history and their vision to be confronted with today's young people's hopes and expectations. The results were presented in a festive gathering at the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of ESU.

My story, our Europe. This catchphrase encompasses all the stories that were captured. Despite their diversity, they show how an older generation suffered from war and oppression, and fought for freedom and democracy. This project also breathed the general feeling that intergenerational dialogues are indispensable to build a place of warmth and dignity in Europe. As our President An Hermans put it at the time: "In respectful conversations between the generations, we want to develop common perspectives and, beyond generations, to continue building a Europe that is united in solidarity and responsibility".

Youth and Seniors for Europe

On 29-30 April 2016 we were pleased to participate in a study weekend in the former Benedictine Abbey of Brauweiler-Pulheim to mark the European Day of Solidarity Between Generations.

Committed speakers, interesting discussions, and an excellent organization was provided by Dr. Worms and his team. It would later become clear that this event was only a step in the development of the 'Helmut Kohl Golden Badge of Honour' Foundation towards the 'Youth and Seniors for Europe' Foundation, its advisory board now integrated in the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS, Sankt Augustin, 6 July 2018). This initiative is intended to give young people the opportunity to work on ways to strengthen the integration of Europe. For 2019 two seminars are already planned: in Aachen (March 2019) and Sarajevo (September 2019).

Political responsibility between generations

As an association, representing seniors throughout Europe, we also engage in debates with other organizations. In 2017, for example, the ESU joined forces with the Robert Schuman Institute (RSI) in Budapest to organize on 24-25 April an Intergenerational Dialogue Seminar. Central to this seminar was the promotion of political responsibility of youth and seniors, with a particular focus on the relation between those generations.

For all the tensions that might arise on the surface, young people and older adults alike are still convinced that they have a common future where each and every member shares a responsibility. Nobody stands to benefit from envy or negativity if we want to take the way forward. Consequently, the participants of the European Seniors' Union call on the members of the European People's Party (EPP) to intensify their actions in enabling practical, mutually beneficial and satisfying relations between the generations.

Building bridges towards solidarity and social cohesion in the Baltic countries

In recent years the dimension of solidarity between generations has become a 'mainstream' subject. This was noticeable in the regional conference on 19-20 May 2018 in Vilnius, initiated by Mr. Zibartus Jackunas and Mr. Jonas Volungevičius, co-chairing the seniors' associations of the political parties, Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats, and co-hosted by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

On the occasion of the celebration of the Hundredth Anniversary of the Restoration of the Independence of the Baltic states, with keynote speeches from Mr. Wolfgang Frhr. Von Stetten and Mr. Vytautas Landsbergis, we considered the future and compared notes on intergenerational cooperation in several countries. Mr. Claus Bernhold, Vice-President of the CDU Senioren Union, cited the example of many years of intergenerational talks between youth and seniors in Germany; Mrs. Lina Kalibataite gave an overview of the activities of Kolping Lithuania; and Mr. Mantas Benkuskas from the Young Conservatives League. They focused on the role of youth organizations against the anti-social tendencies, fake news and populism.





Supporting inclusive governance for sustainable democracy

Intergenerational solidarity spans many aspects of everyday life. One of the crucial aspects is the representation of all generations in our political system and procedures. As a basic principle within the rule of law, we must secure our model of democracy. In cooperation with International IDEA, the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, we organized on 24 April 2018 a Symposium on "Supporting Inclusive Governance for Sustainable Democracy". Our common goal of this symposium was to connect with and learn from different generations, with the joint aim of enhancing solidarity among citizens of all ages in the support of inclusive governance for sustainable development. The IDEA office and ESU worked together on various occasions to raise the importance of this topic.

One of the interesting 'good practices' on the agenda was 'DUO for a Job'. It brings together talented young people and senior professionals for inter-generational and inter-cultural coaching. Creating and maintaining networks seems to be essential for participation and inclusion at all levels for all ages.

Ms. Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary-General of AGE Platform Europe, pioneering for intergenerational solidarity over more than ten years, pointed at the barriers that still hamper the promotion of intergenerational solidarity such as policies based on age limits, gender-related obstacles and youth unemployment.

In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the global objective of leaving "no one behind", the EU Institutions and other stakeholders must find ways to combine the resources and skills of all generations to create better opportunities.

Our keynote speaker at this event was Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility. During this passionate, inspirational and encouraging talk, she gave us new insights on several aspects where the EU can support all of its citizens to strengthen the intergenerational solidarity:

"(...) We must stand together, because this is not just about age. But because we are all in the same boat. If we want this boat to go forward in the new economy, we will all have to pull at the oars. If we try to do it alone, we will just be going round in circles. So together, let's rise to the challenge. Let's put the 'solid' in 'solidarity'! After the war, our parents and grandparents and some of you here today rebuilt Europe. After the Cold War, we reunited Europe. Our joint challenge is now to reshape Europe. To build on its success, and prepare it for the future. That future will inevitably be shaped by technology. By flexibility. Let's make sure that our generation shapes it with solidarity (...)"⁸

Meeting with EPP President Daul (24 April 2018)

During the Presidium meeting of 24 April 2018 we had the opportunity to meet EPP President Daul. Our President An Hermans and YEPP President, Andrianos Giannou, gave a joint statement on Intergenerational Solidarity. With this 'practice what you preach'-attitude, both ESU and YEPP clearly displayed their willingness to tackle the current societal challenges with a combined strategy.

This landmark for both organizations was firmly backed by our EPP President Joseph Daul: "Young people and older people have different abilities, expectations and needs, but this diversity is a wealth from which we must benefit, by multiplying initiatives which, like yours, contribute to creating greater solidarity between the different generations. "United in diversity" is also our motto."

"We need both to stick to our roots, learn from our seniors and to innovate by involving our youth. Seniors and young people face different problems but only by working together can we address them and build a stronger and more inclusive Europe to the benefit of all our citizens."⁹

⁸ Extract from the speech by Marianne Thyssen at the ESU-IDEA Symposium: Supporting inclusive governance for sustainable democracy on 24 April 2018. The full text can be found at www.esu-epp.eu

⁹ Extract from the speech by Joseph Daul at the Presidium meeting of ESU on 24 April 2018



Bridging the Gap: A Common Vision for Europe Across Generations

Joint ESU-YEPP Statement
24 April 2018

Bridging the gap. The way forward.

Older and young generations have different problems but common interests. We need to develop common perspectives for the future of our societies. The active participation of young and older generations is essential to ensure an inclusive, democratic and sustainable development.

- To respond to the challenges of demographic change, the EU needs a coordinated strategy, at the same time finetuned and taking into account the differences and disparities in Member States and regions, in particular concerning youth unemployment.

- Political will is needed to update social protection systems that do not penalize young people. The concept of intergenerational fairness must be understood as a mainstream concept to promote intergenerational awareness in law-making. It is time to think about a society in which age differences do not matter anymore.

- The role of older people in society should be more recognized, and more needs to be done to prevent poverty, loneliness and social exclusion of the elderly;

- Voluntary actions, governmental initiatives establishing structures and facilities where generations can talk and exchange views to understand each other's challenges are needed so as to find solutions that are fair for all.

Let's promote dialogue to break down existing barriers. Let's encourage encounters between young and older generations to exchange experiences and stimulate the transfer of knowledge and skills. Let's look at the future and establish a new solidarity between generations.

29 April marks the European Day of Solidarity between Generations. The objective of this annual celebration is to promote solidarity between the generations as a cornerstone in transforming the challenges of demographic change into opportunities and to invite authorities and civil societies at all levels to place solidarity between generations high on their agenda.

For more than 30 years, international and European institutions have been highlighting the importance of intergenerational solidarity, which is understood as "social cohesion between generations", forming an "inclusive society for all ages". It refers to interpersonal relations between the younger and older generations, including child-parent-grandparent relations, social participation in communities, and structural societal solidarity guaranteeing social protection and pensions, health care and long-time care. It is a pillar of fair and sustainable societies, informal and formal welfare and it is an integral part of the European social model.

Ten years ago, in an event entitled "Intergenerational Solidarity for Cohesive and Sustainable Societies" in Brdo (Slovenia) on 28-29 April 2008, hosted by the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU, 29 April was designated European Day of Intergenerational Solidarity and Cooperation to remind us, every year, of the importance of intergenerational solidarity.¹⁰ To mark the 10th anniversary of this event and to highlight their common interest in solidarity between generations, both the President of the European Seniors' Union - ESU and the President of the Youth of the European People's Party - YEPP present a joint declaration and invite governments and officials at all levels, as well as civil society, on this day, to embrace and promote our call for a fair, solidary, and inclusive society for all age groups.



¹⁰ Intergenerational Solidarity for Cohesive and Sustainable Societies. Outcomes of the Slovenian Presidency Conference. Brdo, Slovenia 28 - 29 April 2008.

Solidarity between generations and the challenges of demographic change

1. Recalling that, pursuant to the 2009 Lisbon Treaty on European Union (Article 3), one of the Union's principal aims is to safeguard the well-being of its people, and in this regard, the Union, among others, shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, promote social justice and protection, and solidarity between generations.¹¹

2. Recalling that solidarity between generations is instrumental in tackling the problem of demographic change. In the "Reflection Paper on the Social Dimension of Europe"¹², following the Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe (1 March 2017) several challenges of demographic change are examined. The Paper highlights the question of intergenerational fairness, stating: "There is today a real risk of a generational divide between younger and older people in terms of decision-making, wealth, material security and access to housing, as well as in terms of sharing the financial and fiscal burden of an ageing society."

3. Noting that the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, and the Committee of the Regions regularly highlight the importance of solidarity between generations. The Member States have agreed on overall frameworks and strategies in line with the Action Plans for 'active and healthy ageing' developed by the World Health Organisation. The European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations (2012) contributed to creating a political momentum for policy-makers at all levels and a wide range of stakeholders.

From challenges to opportunities

4. Noting that in recent decades, instead of a common perspective, common opinions and shared values, differences between young and older generations have been growing; in opinions, in attitudes, in participation. A gap between generations should not and cannot be denied. Stereotypes and segregation between generations hinder direct encounters, openness and respect as a base for new bridges; stereotypes and segregation hinder the chance to look ahead towards achieving common goals. These differences, of course, play a significant role when it comes to politics and public decision-making (see falling turnout in European Parliament elections, results of the 'Brexit' referendum and subsequent reactions such as young people protesting the results carrying banners reading 'You stole my future').

5. Recalling that the promotion of solidarity between generation goes beyond public awareness. It is also a call to deliver concrete results, respecting the potential of persons of all age, ensuring social cohesion and prosperity and contributing to the well-being of generations.

6. Supporting several calls for a more innovative, coordinated and integrated response to demographic change.

7. Underlining that, in view of an effective response to the challenges of demographic change, and by taking into account the differences and specific problems of certain regions and cities, the EPP in the Malta Congress last year, in its paper on "Securing Europe's Future"¹³, advanced the idea of a coordinated European strategy. That vision must be promoted by a wider range of institutions at European Union level, in support of Member States, regional and local authorities seeking to strengthen solidarity between generations as a part of the social dimension of Europe.

¹¹ The Treaty of Lisbon, which was signed on 13 December 2007 and entered into force on 1 December 2009, in its Article 3.3, mentions solidarity between generations as one of the key areas to promote the well-being of European citizens. "3.3. It (the Union) shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child".

¹² (COM(2017) 206, 26 April 2017): https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-paper-social-dimension-europe_en.pdf.

¹³ The European Union is facing unprecedented demographic changes (an ageing population, low birth rates, changing family structures and migration). In the light of these challenges, it is important, both at EU and at national level, to review and adapt existing policies. We recognize that strong families are a precondition for positive demographic developments, and we advocate pro-family values and policies. We need a more creative and coordinated response from the EU and its Member States, and we call for a European strategy on demographic change and for more family- and child-friendly environments. This strategy should aim to integrate the economic, social and scientific challenges and increase the potential of the working-age population. It should also stimulate active and healthy ageing and create new opportunities for intergenerational solidarity. It should also take into account the major disparities between and within Member States, both in terms of life expectancy and in living and working conditions. See: Secure Europe's Future: <http://www.epp.eu/press-releases/epp-congress-in-malta-highlights-of-the-final-day/>

The way forward

8. The ESU and YEPP strongly value the cooperation of young and older generations. We want young people to receive the best education and training, making them competent to look to the future with hope and confidence. We want older persons to be respected for their potential and want them to be proud for what they have attained. As demographic ageing is strongly affecting European societies, we should try to find a way to accommodate it.

9. Living longer is a sign of progress, offering new opportunities and inviting us to cope with the challenges of ageing societies. The ESU and YEPP want to work together in mutual respect between generations, learn from each other and exchange ideas. Only through developing a common perspective towards prosperous and fair European societies can we meet the challenges of ageing societies and the needs of all generations.

10. YEPP and the ESU experience the segregation of people based on age differences in social life and employment, the obstacles of age prejudices, stigmatizing both old and young with negative stereotypes, the limited interactions between individuals of different generations and the increasing differences and inequalities across generations in economic, social and political domains. We cannot fail to highlight the importance of intergenerational dialogue and exchange to bridge the gap between generations and prevent growing differences and conflicts.

11. Most measures to respond to demographic change and intergenerational solidarity are the responsibility of the Member States: national, regional and local authorities. Good community relations, mutual understanding, reciprocity, the ability to connect between various social groups used to be established at grass-root level. Since these relations do not develop spontaneously in an informal sphere, authorities and civil society should encourage the creation of new and stimulating environments to fight against social exclusion and improve social integration and cohesion. This bottom-up approach also requires vertical cooperation between several levels of government supporting and backing up actions taken at local level.

12. YEPP and ESU believe that the EU has a crucial role in the development of strategies on managing demographic changes, as it is expressed in the EPP document 'Europe secures our future' (Malta, 2017) This strategy will bring together several policies - innovation (digitalisation, silver economy), employment, cohesion, transport, health, rural development - and have a firm basis in common European values as anchored in the Treaties on the European Union.

13. YEPP and ESU welcome the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (17 November 2017) designed to create a framework in which to update the Social Market Economy for the 21st century: a dynamic economy and prosperous and fair societies with social protection systems that are 'future-proof'. The Pillar's principles range from wages to social protection systems, from minimum income to gender equality, from childcare to old age income, and from health care to access to housing. A generous implementation of the principles is needed. The first steps have been made. The European Semester will play a key role in following the framework of the Pillar as a reference for Country-Specific Recommendations.

14. Figures show that senior poverty has been the point of reference for overall poverty reduction: between 2006 and 2012, pension expenditure has risen by almost 12%, despite the fact that that segment of the population has increased by only 3%. No such rise has been aimed at young people. It is vital that we look after the older generation - the generation that helped to build the Europe we know today, but this focus must not detract from our investment in its future. We are certainly not arguing for an intergenerational battle over public spending - it is intergenerational solidarity that should be the guiding principle. What is needed is a more balanced approach to prevent the entire system from collapsing. Help those who could provide for all to be included in the social security system once and for all.

15. The functioning of our democracy and the participation of all in the political decision-making is grounded in a fair, sustainable and inclusive society for all ages. In many countries, democracies are under pressure. YEPP and ESU are convinced that young and older persons have the right and the responsibility to participate and to be represented in governance. We must therefore improve the participation of all in the political functioning of our societies, address the democracy deficit between the generations and find mechanisms to bring young and older persons within the processes of decision-making, in advisory boards and in governments.

YEPP and the ESU call upon the EPP to respond to our request on the importance of communication and solidarity between the generations, starting with the promotion and celebration of the European Day of Solidarity Between Generations on 29 April each year.

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