

Seniors standing up for Europe



EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION

Annual Report 2019

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Foreword

2019 was a year full of challenges, for Europe, for the European People's Party (EPP), for the European Seniors' Union (ESU), for all of us. It was a year with many experiences and activities, in addition to the European Elections, and our statutory Congress. We look back with pride on 2019.

The ESU, as a member association of the EPP, aims to be part of a better future for all generations. In a society of longevity, governments at all levels and actors in all areas have to cope with the gains, strengths and limitations of ageing generations. We encourage a new approach. The time has come to recognize the capabilities and know-how of older persons and value the role they play in all parts of societal life.

We believe in a strong, democratic and united Europe. Despite difficulties and threats, complex challenges, nationalist and populist tendencies worldwide, we look forward to the future with hope and optimism.

We stand up for Europe. We are committed to share our experiences and to participate with openness and resilience in building tomorrow's Europe.

We stand up for Europe's future. A future in which we can find peace and prosperity, feel at home, safe and protected.

An Hermans
President

Guido Dumon
Secretary General

In Memoriam

It has sadly been brought to our attention that former ESU Vice-President, **Nicolas Estgen** passed away on 26 December 2019 at the age of almost 90 (28 February 1930 - 26 December 2019).

Mr. Nicolas Estgen served as a member of the Chrëschtlech Sozial Vollekspartei (CSV), the Christian Social People's Party/ Parti Social Chrétien in Luxembourg. He was active at local and national level, but in particular at European level. He was a Member of the European Parliament from 1979 -1994. In the European Seniors' Union-ESU, he was a member of the Praesidium since 1998; he was Vice-President from 1998-2010. In 2010 he received the title of 'Honorary President'.

We gratefully commemorate our faithful departed ESU friend. He stays with us in our memories and prayers. May his loving memory remain a blessing for ever.



— A Common focus 1

he European Elections 2019

Between 23 and 26 May, 427 million EU citizens had the opportunity to vote for their Members of the European Parliament(s) . This makes the European elections one of the most important events in the EU political cycle. In 2019, with a turnout of 51%, the direct elections reached the highest level of the last 20 years. This participation in elections – as a central element of democratic policy-making and as the strongest instrument for citizens’ involvement – engaged our keenest interest in previous months and even years.

In line with the interest of the EPP, also for the ESU, the past year was the final run-up towards the elections. Our realizations in 2019 relied on the numerous preparations both in the working groups and in the Political Assembly, in which the ESU is also represented. The ESU participated in the preparatory work, often by emphasizing some accents on seniors’ concerns, the importance of social protection, the implementation of the Social Pillar through the cooperation of Member States and the role of the Commission in the European Semester.

Dara Murphy, Vice-President of the EPP and EPP Campaign Director united all EPP associations (EDS, EPP-Women, ESU, EUCDW, SME and YEPP) in developing the road towards these crucial elections, to share thoughts on the way forward. The main challenge was: how to answer citizens’ call for security and prosperity and show them that European and national politics are only two sides of the same coin.

Parallel to the processes developed by the EPP, the ESU also steered course towards the elections.



And although our resources were limited, we tried our best to put forward our interests and make ourselves heard in the run-up to the elections at several levels, this included:

- The editing and distribution of the ESU Memorandum (2018);
- The motivating presence of Dara Murphy, campaign director, during several of our meetings;
- Regional Conferences and other events related to the elections.

The outcome of the elections was far-reaching. Nonetheless, the results of the extreme parties and Eurosceptic parties did not predominate. The EPP also kept together the largest political family. We express our hope that the EPP will shape the future and may affect policy-making as announced in the EPP Manifesto 'Let's open a new chapter for Europe together'.

Member and Observer Associations



MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

Austria

Österreichischer Seniorenbund

Belgium

CD&V-senioren

Les Aînés du cdH

Bulgaria

Seniors of GERB

Croatia

Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica

Cyprus

Senior Citizens Organisation of Cyprus

Czech Republic

Sdružení křesťanských seniorů

Estonia

Seniors' Association of pro Patria

Finland

Kansallinen Senioriliitto ry

Germany

Senioren-Union der CDU Deutschlands

Senioren-Union der CSU

Greece

Seniors of Nea Demokratia

Hungary

Fidesz Hungarian Civic Union, Senior

Department

Italy

SVP-Seniorenbewegung

Lithuania

HU-LCD Senior Citizens Club

Luxembourg

CSV-Senioren

Malta

Assoċjazzjoni Penjsonanti Anzjani

The Netherlands

CDA Senioren

Norway

Senior Høyres Landsforbund

Poland

Polska Unia Seniorów (PUS)

Parlamentarzystow Ruchu Ludowego

Slovakia

Zdruzenie kresťanských seniorov Slovenska

Slovenia

Klub seniorjev in seniork pri SDS

Zveza seniorjev Nova Slovenija

Zveza upokojencev pri SLS

Spain

Comisión Nacional del Mayor del Partido

Popular

Sweden

Moderata Seniorer

Kristendemokraterna Seniorförbundet

OBSERVER ASSOCIATIONS

Armenia

Union of Senior Generation

Belarus

PUBP “Nasha Pakalenne”

Hungary

Kovács K. Zoltán Seniors' Club Association

Serbia

Vajdasagi Magyar Szövetség Nyugdíjas

Ukraine

Ukrainian Association of Retired Persons

Europe

Europäische Zentrum für

Arbeitnehmerfragen

The ESU Bodies 2

2.1 The Congress

The statutory Congress gathers every three years. During the Congress, the basic lines of the organization are determined and statutory changes can be made. It chooses the President, the Vice-Presidents and the Financial Auditors. ‘Seniors standing up for Europe’, the title of our 10th Congress, is the expression of our commitment to the European cooperation and integration process.

The Congress took place in Sandanski on 27 and 28 September, at the suggestion of our member organization GERB-seniors and Vice-President Nikolai Andreev. For the congress we presented a triennial report in four languages which can be found on the ESU website (www.esu-epp.eu).

2.1.1 Sandanski Declaration

Through the Sandanski Declaration: Seniors standing up for Europe. Engaging with citizens and developing a more united and democratic Union, the Congress underlines the role of citizens as active partners in policymaking and also pays tribute to the dynamic power of citizens in the history of Europe and especially 30 years ago in the fight for freedom and democracy and the fall of the Iron Curtain. (This statement is also available in German, French - www.esu-epp.eu)

2.1.2 ‘Demographic change: one of the key challenges facing Europe’

ESU statement on the position of the new European

Commission on demographic change

In a statement, the Congress also expressed its confidence in the new European Commission and welcomes the fact that Dr. Ursula von der Leyen has indicated her willingness to respond to today’s challenges, including demographic change.. We are hopeful when reading the Mission Letter for the new Croatian commissioner Dubravka Šuica (EPP), who was appointed Vice President of the EU Commission for Democracy and Demography. (This statement is also available in German and French - www.esu-epp.eu)

2.1.3 ESU Congress reaffirmed its solidarity with Cyprus

Vice-President Antonios Demetriades and the delegates from Cyprus informed the ESU about the Turkish drilling activities within the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus. He underlined the expectations of the Cypriot population to find a functional, lasting and sustainable solution to the Cyprus problem. The ESU supported the Seniors of Cyprus in their concerns and endorses the sanctions decided by the committee of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs against Turkey for its illegal actions in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Cyprus. The ESU called on the EU’s foreign service to follow the developments very closely, and hopes that the continuation of dialogues and greater international support will bring a final solution for the Cypriot Issue and will address the key concerns of the people of Cyprus.

2.1.4 'Future challenges'

Several speakers analysed the importance of the recent European Elections. For the ESU, too, the European elections were visible throughout the functioning of our organization. Both Jozeph Daul in his video message and Dara Murphy in his esteemed speech underlined the importance of associations in the relationship between policy makers and citizens. We hope, and will work to ensure, that the role of the ESU in the EPP family is confirmed and supported. Many policy areas and questions remain unanswered. Some perspectives have already been opened up by Mr. Rosen Jeliaskov Minister of Transport of the Republic of Bulgaria, Mr. Andrey Kovatchev, Member of the European Parliament EPP/GERB and Mrs. Eva Maydell, President of the European Movement International and Member of the European Parliament EPP/GERB. It was a privilege to be able to engage in conversation with them.

2.1.5 Let's open a new chapter for Europe together.

Let's open a new chapter. That was the title of the EPP Manifesto for the elections of 2019. How to concretize and operationalize the goals? How to include citizens in the processes? How to involve governments at European level but also governments, all political actors and civil society? Answering these questions and putting them into practice will be tackled in the coming years. The discussion was raised and introduced by two ESU vice-presidents and experienced speakers: Astrid Lulling, MEP (1965-1974 & 1989-2014) and Heinz Becker MEP (2011-2019). Looking to the future: the realization of the new programme of the European Commission

has just begun, the implementation of the renewed vision is not finished. There is still much work to be done. Let's stand up for Europe. Let's stand up and share in respect and solidarity our experiences and our hopes for an inclusive Europe in which no one is left behind.

2.2 The Praesidium

During the Congress the attending delegates gave An Hermans as president and the twelve candidate vice-presidents their vote of confidence to lead the ESU family as 'Praesidium' for three years. With the subsequent election of four auditors (Clode Carbon-Frisch, Roland Leek, Edeltraud Paul & Ingeborg Uhlenbrock) and the appointment of Guido Dumon as Secretary General and Etienne Vanderroost as Treasurer, a new team has been assembled for the next three years to give a voice in the EPP and in European society to the expectations and needs of European citizens, especially the senior citizens.

2.2.1. New elected Praesidium

Hereby the composition of a new and motivated Praesidium that will work for the welfare of European seniors in the next three years within the framework offered by the ESU. We thank Svone Zinraj and Roland Leek for their participation in the Praesidium as vice-presidents. Our special thanks also go to Marilies Flemming, who we honoured at the Summer Academy. For years she was one of the driving forces of the ESU.

NEW ELECTED PRAESIDIUM

President
An Hermans (BE)
Secretary general
Guido Dumon (BE)
Treasurer
Etienne Vanderroost (BE)
Vice-presidents
Nikolay Andreev (BG)
Heinz K. Becker (AT)
Antonios Demetriades (CY)
Manfred Hopfengärtner (GE)
Astrid Lulling (LU)
Leena Jääskeläinen (FI)
Lidmila Nemcova (CZ)
Gabriele Peus-Bispinck (DE)
Carmen Quintanilla Barba (ES)
Ann Räämet (EE)
Christine von Stefenelli-Gostner (IT/Südtirol)
Jozé Jurkovic (SL)
Honorary Presidents
Leif Hallberg (SE)
Nicolas Estgen (LU)
Elisabeth Dispaux (BE)
Maria Kanellopoulou
Former President
Bernhard Worms (DE)

One of the more pleasant tasks of the Praesidium is that of welcoming new groups of seniors. The Praesidium discussed the application by the “Kovács K. Zoltan Seniors’ Club Association” for ESU membership and decided to give the Seniors’ Association initial observer status for one year. The still relatively small seniors’ association, chaired by Ivanics Istvan from Szentendre, was founded in 2012 and belongs to the Christian Democratic People’s Party of Hungary, which is a member of the EPP.

After Congress and the election of a new Praesidium, a new period of three years of leadership commences. We were allowed to make this new start in Berlin.

2.2.3. Praesidium meeting in Berlin

In Berlin we had the first meeting of the new elected ESU Praesidium, together with the outgoing members. One of the important points discussed was the proposal to organize an additional congress to revise the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of the ESU. Organizing this kind of congress more frequently than just every three years allows us to examine our Articles of Association more closely.

2.2.2. Praesidium meetings in 2019

In 2019, the Praesidium met to lead the work of the ESU in line with its mission.

28 June 2019	Praesidium	Vienna
27, 28 September 2019	Praesidium	Sandanski
17-18 October	Praesidium	Berlin

We held a joint meeting of the ESU Praesidium and the Executive Board of Senioren-Union CDU. During the introductory speech, our President Prof Dr. An Hermans thanked the CDU for the support in the run-up to this meeting. We were glad that we could hold this Praesidium meeting in the Konrad Adenauer Hause and that the Executive Board of the Senioren-Union was involved in the discussions with us.

Claus Bernhold, Vice-President of CDU Senioren-Union, took the floor and welcomed the ESU Praesidium. In his speech he stressed the importance of the European Project: "The 'human element' returns to politics and Europe has a very important role to play in this. 'People' are extremely important in politics. Thanks to the courage of the founding fathers of the EU project, we stand where we stand and we cannot take this for granted."

During the meeting a video was shown of Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, leader of the CDU; she recorded this video message for our meeting. Please find the video here.

The next interesting speaker was Jan-Peter Luther, National Secretary of the CDU Senioren-Union. The CDU has put together objectives to hear the interests of senior citizens: "It can be a compass that gives opportunities", Luther stated. This initiative started in 2016. The party thus excludes all age discrimination and tries to answer seniors' concerns, for example, a flexible 'route to retire'.

"European integration brought people together, it is our goal for today and tomorrow. Digitalisation and housing are important challenges for the future, new technologies must be explained and no one can be left behind! Needs and questions concerning housing are important for the elderly, people should be able to stay independent for as long as possible. There are many principles on eight pages: This was a challenge, but we know what we stand for! We can use this document to shape the future of our own party. We want to strengthen this by having active elderly people in our party!"

On Saturday we had a discussion on a quote of Ursula von der Leyen: "We need to improve participation in our democracy. We need to ensure that people can make their voice heard and are listened to".

How to respond to this need? By governments, by political parties, by civil society? Which are the challenges for the coming years? What answers does Christian democracy have to populism and extremism? During this discussion we could count on Prof .Dr. Steven Van Hecke for the introduction & moderation of the debate. Many thanks to our experienced speakers:

- Bertil Wenger, Office Manager for Foreign Relations CDU
- Heinz K. Becker, former MEP, Vice-President of ESU

“We need to improve participation in our democracy. We need to ensure that people can make their voice heard and are listened to”.

Prof. Van Hecke brought a very appreciated synopsis of today’s challenges and problems. He pictured how the citizens’ interest and need for Europe has been growing recently but, on the other hand, through a multitude of factors the political space is open for populism and extremism. Both speakers explored the role of people’s parties, with special attention to Germany and Austria, and argued that we also have to continue in our associations to communicate with our fellow citizens and... that only transparency and good governance can convince people that Europe protects and cares for its people. In lively discussions participants brought in their own vision and concluded that the Sandanski Declaration is ‘a compass’ for the years to come. And... that much remains be done.

2.3 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is the strategic political body of the association and is made up as follows: the members of the presidency and two delegates per member association. The Executive Committee met at the beginning of this year in Prague on the 22-24 February, and on 29 June in Vienna and during the Sandanski Congress at the end of September. In line with the statutes several organizational aspects were on the agenda. In addition, the vision and objectives of the ESU are further developed (See further: Conferences).

22-24 February 2019	Executive Committee	Prague
29 June 2019	Executive Committee	Vienna
17-18 October	Praesidium	Berlin



2.3.1 ESU Executive Committee – Ambitions for Europe: the 2019 Elections and Beyond

During the weekend of 22–24 February, the Executive Committee was welcomed in Prague by its Vice-President Ms. Lidmila Nemcova, to gather with the European elections in mind. During this meeting we stressed “the importance of involvement in European elections”.

After a short opening statement by our President, Ms. An Hermans and Ms. Lidmila Nemcova, we were honoured to welcome Mr. Daniel Herman, Vice-President of the Christian Democratic party KDU-ČSL and former Minister of Culture, to share his thoughts on today’s society and tomorrow’s Europe.

As to the formal part of our Executive

Committee, the Members of the Executive Committee unanimously adopted the budget on the proposal of the Praesidium, including a limited increase of the membership fee. In the perspective of the Sandanski Congress, an amendment of the Statutes was also prepared. The Presidency also took the opportunity to present their recent publication ‘United in Solidarity’ and the Annual Report 2018. To close down the first session of our Executive Committee, an excellent women choir gave us the best of Czech and Slovak classical music.

After a refreshing first day of productive discussion we pursued the main theme of our meeting: Ambitions for Europe: the 2019 Elections and Beyond. Firstly, a panel of

three different Czech generations elaborated on how society has changed over the years. From the ferocious Second World War over the brutal invasion of the communists to the harmony of the European Union, several aspects of day-to-day life were discussed during this unique insight in everyday Czech life. We would therefore like to thank our speakers, Ms. Olga Bezděková, Mr. Ivo Mareš and Ms. Lidmila Nemcova, for the moving stories everyone could learn from.

After these perspectives on the future, we welcomed Mr. Peter Van Kemseke, climate expert and former Deputy-Head of Cabinet Herman Van Rompuy, to discuss the impact of climate change and the solutions that could be provided for at all different policy levels. He underlined that the climate is not yet a top priority according to the Eurobarometer, but is moving upwards every year. It was also shown that climate change is causing a wide array of problems in several domains, such as security, energy, health, migration, economics,... Mr. Van Kemseke therefore advocated a thorough and transparent execution of the Paris Agreement in which economic growth does not contradict reduction of greenhouse gases. According to the speaker, the European Union should use its diplomatic leadership to convince other countries to take the right steps. All links in the decision-making chain have a responsibility, so also local governments have a key to success with regard to the climate.

With this excellent discussion on stewardship in mind, we had the opportunity to listen to the insights of Father Miloslav Fiala about the key value in a Christian-democratic European Union, namely solidarity. He enlightened us with some interesting thoughts regarding the religious concept of solidarity and the importance of fraternity in our community.

This enriching discussion was the perfect lead-out to the next esteemed guests: Mr. Tomas Zdechovsky, Member of the European Parliament, and Mr. Dara Murphy, Campaign Director of the EPP. They jointly elaborated on the methods and actions that will be launched in the run-up to the European elections. As the overarching senior association within the EPP, we were invited to give input on the Manifesto that will serve as a programme for our Spitzenkandidat, Mr. Manfred Weber, during this campaign. Subsequently, there was an inspiring discussion on the concrete plans and intentions of our members with a vibrant Q&A, leading to a vivid discussion with both Mr. Murphy and Mr. Zdechovsky.

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. So we took the opportunity to be guided around some historic places in Prague with the splendid knowledge of Ms. Nemcova and her husband as guides for the evening.

On Sunday we organized our meeting succinctly with some tips and tricks on the use of social media in the campaign and with a wrap-up of the previous discussions. With a productive three-days gathering in mind, all participants could leave Prague with good memories and a refreshed engagement to work jointly towards a better Europe.

2.3.2 ESU Executive Committee in association with the Summer Academy

During the Summer Academy, the post-election discussions were on the agenda, as well as the Congress in Sandanski, in particular an introduction and a number of 'first agreements' were made.

- For further information see 3.2 SA -





2.4 The organization of the ESU Secretariat

The General Secretariat is located in the EPP Headquarters (front office, rue du Commerce 10, Brussels). The General Secretariat, in close dialogue with the President, ensures the preparation, management and execution of the operational goals of the association. This term Guido Dumon is in charge of this functioning. Some volunteers, seniors as well as students, support him in this work. A special 'thank you' goes out to Yolande Vandrogenbroeck for processing the reports and reporting on ESU meetings and also to our job student Michelle Vervaeke for social media coverage and preparation of our reports. Several other persons are of great help on a voluntary base: the team of Senior International with our editor Ulrich Winz, Margrit and Sean Hawkes for the translation, Jeroen Teugels is a valuable asset for our ESU-website and, for organizational aspects, we occasionally count on Emmanuel Jacob. We also wish to express our gratitude to the CD&V for the use of their premises and support in our efforts. The financial means of the EPP come from two main sources: the support of the EPP and the membership fees. These two sources represent a yearly budget of around 85 000 Euro.

The ESU budget is mainly used for the organization of meetings, conferences and events. In 2018, the Executive Committee decided that the ESU Secretariat could benefit from a half-time employee in order to support the working of the ESU, especially in this 'election year'. Arne Cools then joined the Secretariat of ESU on 1 September 2018 on a part-time basis until 15 August 2019.

2.5 Stay Informed

2.5.1 SOME DIGITAL INSTRUMENTS

-  www.esu-epp.eu
-  www.facebook.com/esu.eu
-  Flickr account
-  www.twitter.com/esu_epp

Our website is one of the main sources to stay abreast of the latest ESU events. Besides a selection of pictures, you can also find summaries of our conferences and other gatherings.

Social media is used to increase visibility and communications, not only with members, but also with people interested in the ESU. We therefore aim to continue to focus on this medium. And although social media is especially popular among the younger generations, we manage to reach our older audience via our Facebook page by focussing on topics that correspond with their interest.

2.5.2 Senior International

In previous years Ulrich Winz did sterling work editing Senior International and providing a column in 'Souverän'. But Ulrich announced his intention to stop writing the bulletin and the column. We thank him enormously for his work; it was an added value to be able to count on his reports at all times. He proposes to 'rethink' our communication system and is willing to cooperate. We therefore kindly invite our member associations to send us all relevant news from their activities and organization. We wish to express our appreciation for the work and monthly effort of Ulrich and to Margit and Seán Hawkes for their translations in English.



ESU Conferences 3

3.1 Regional Conferences 2019:

21-23 March	Bozen/Bolzano	“Südtirol in Europa - Analyse und Herausforderung“
12-13 April	Ciudad Real	“Con las Personas Mayores Avanza Europa”
6-8 November	Bratislava	“30 years of freedom from point of view of seniors” - “30 rokov slobody očami seniorov”

3.1.1 Regional Conference Bozen

On 21-23 March, for the first time, the European Seniors' Union held an international conference in the Autonomous Province of Bozen/ South Tyrol/ Alto Adige. The ESU co-hosted a Regional Conference with the SVP-Senioren on the challenges our European Union is facing.

We were kindly invited by our Vice-President Christine von Stefenelli and her SVP-Senioren. During these three days, we had a busy schedule with numerous high-level speakers on a broad array of issues. The aim of this conference was also to introduce all participants to the lovely South Tyrol and its special history of the coexistence of different ethnic groups and languages and to experience how, in a small region in the middle of Europe, the great European values and ideals gradually become political and social reality.

Speakers from several stages in life devoted themselves to the situation of minorities in northern Italy and the expectations for the future of an integrated Europe. The meeting took place at various symbolic locations, which gave a favourable impression of the

culture of the region. For example; we had a meeting in parliament, and we also visited a youth centre. The general theme, venues and date were chosen wisely; nine weeks before the European Elections. We could also count on the help of young people to moderate the meetings, making it a mix of intergenerational cooperation, interesting for both age groups.

“Being united in diversity”, the conference made it clear that in times of trouble this assessment is not enough. The much-vaunted “diversity” is also a reality that can be used for divergent policies.

Vice-President Dr. Christine von Stefenelli said she was pleased to have the opportunity to share the experiences of South Tyrol, especially in minority politics, with delegates from abroad. SVP Chairman Philipp Achammer expanded on this: South Tyrol is a prime example of how decisions about repositioning borders (in this case 1919) can be made in the interests of all sections of the population - and decisions must be made!

Three ethnic groups are settled here, have the same rights, live well together. German is spoken by 70 percent of South Tyrol, Italian by 25 percent and Ladin by 5 percent (in 8 districts).

This assessment of the SVP-Obmann (Chairman of the South Tyrolean People's Party) and Landesrats (ministers), is shared by the chairman of the SVP Seniors, Otto von Dellemann, and State Governor Dr. Arno Kompatscher. They are unanimous in agreeing that the Autonomous Province of South Tyrol is a "small Europe in Europe." Achammer said: "controls at the Brenner Pass must not happen again!" and: "A free Europe is the solution to our problems." For this purpose there are other European regulations to guarantee internal and external security, the politician recommended. This was not only the opinion of younger people, among which he (still) counted himself.

All participants were amazed by the marvellous weekend that we experienced. Not only the intellectual debates on the biggest issues facing our society, but also the warm informal contacts among all representatives were most enriching for our hearts and souls.

3.1.2 Regional Conference Ciudad Real

With 40 days until the new elections attention was almost completely focused on the 23-26 of May. Therefore, our Vice-President, Ms. Carmen Quintanilla Barba, seized the moment to dedicate a conference on the impact of the European Union on the day-to-day life of seniors all over our continent. During this two-day gathering, we were presented a broad array of topics in which both a social and political dimension was discussed along interesting informal contacts and activities.

The conference opened with welcoming speeches from Dr. Wilhelm Hofmeister, Director of the KAS office in Spain, followed by some words by our own President, Ms. An Hermans. Mr. Francisco Canizares, President of the PP in Ciudad Real had the honour of closing the first session and introduce us to the following debates.

Campaign Director and Vice-President of the EPP, Mr. Dara Murphy then engaged in a discussion moderated by Mr. Jose Ramon Garcia Hernandez, International Secretary of the EPP, on the upcoming European elections and the importance of voting. He assured us that seniors have a major role to play when it comes to a higher turn-out which might be positive for EPP-related political parties. He also introduced the basic story-lines that our Lead Candidate Manfred Weber will use during his path towards the elections. The starting point of the positive message the EPP would like to send out is 'the Power of WE'.

This slogan was also the basic thread throughout the conference in Ciudad Real. It shows that we can achieve our ambitions only if we work together, across countries and ages. The Power of WE is strong: joining forces will give us a solid and secure place in the world against our enemies and competitors. The Power of WE is smart: we already have all it takes to pursue our most ambitious goals - we only need to join our ideas, energy and resources. The Power of WE is caring: because when everyone engages, no one is left behind. This is what the EPP wants to stand for in Europe: a strong, united family which is ambitious to tackle all challenges ahead. This social and family-based perspective was the theme during the next session with Ms. Rosa Plantagenet, the President of Seniors en Red.

The next day we had a panel debate on intergenerational solidarity with Mr. Eduardo Rodriguez Rovira, Vice-President of CEOMA, Ms. Isabel Aranguez Alonso, defender of the Complutense University in Madrid, Ms. Marta Maroto, President of the New Generations of the PP in Castilla-La Mancha and Mr. Jose Antonio Valdes Gonzalez. This dynamic debate was moderated by Ms. Carolina Agudo, the Secretary-General of the PP in Castilla-La Mancha.

We then discussed the contribution of seniors to the well-being of families and socioeconomic development in our Union with Ms. Monica Ramos Toro, Director of the INGESS. We should keep in mind that our growing older is a dynamic process in which there is no one-way care-relation and that seniors have an important role to play in families and could even be an added value for the welfare and well-being of a society.

It would be impossible to pick a more well-suited title for this conference: 'Con las Personas Mayores Avanza Europa' or 'With Seniors, Europe advances'. With plenty of eminent speakers and enthusiastic participants, today's position of seniors was discussed while providing solutions and measures which create an age-friendly society, where no one is left behind. It was clear that all attendants shared a common belief and joint aim of standing up for Europe and creating a better future for all.

We would like to show our appreciation to the European People's Party, Partido Popular, Populares de Ciudad Real and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. And last but not least, we have to thank our Vice-President, Ms. Carmen

Quintanilla Barba for the warm welcome in her hometown Ciudad Real and for the meticulously well-prepared conference.

3.1.3 Regional Conference in Bratislava

From 6-8 November, the Christian Senior Citizens' Association of Slovakia, together with the ESU, organized a regional conference in Bratislava. The subject of the conference was perfectly chosen: 'Thirty years of freedom'. In Slovakia, November is a special month of commemoration for this captivating freedom. Also, on the 9th of November, in Germany, Europe and the rest of the world people commemorate the fall of the Berlin Wall.

An impressive programme was offered. Highly qualified speakers presented their vision and analysis of what happened thirty years ago and the hopes and achievements that followed. "Not everything that we realized was worth doing so. There are victories and failures. Let us take the responsibility together to work not from the perspective of selfishness, but from the perspective of the common good." Ivan Simko said. Inspiring speeches by Bishop Jozef Halko, Eva Grey, Milan Majerský and Miriam Lexmann gave insights for working towards an inclusive society as a person, as a citizen, as a Christian and as a politician, where the rule of law and respect for human dignity are core values. Jozef Milkosko, Peter Mach and Milos Nemecek typified what that means for their Senior Association.

Delegations from different countries (e.g., Austria, Czechia, Germany, Hungary and Poland) presented examples of good practice from their country, their legislation and their senior organization's programmes. This broad picture provides Europe with a wide range of diversity.

'How governments shape future-oriented policy' was discussed after Jan Kasal's lecture on 'Policy in the Czech Republic'. However, it is not only the Member States that are responsible for an inclusive society in which young and old are given opportunities to develop and live in dignity. Europe also has a part to play in responding to the challenges of demographic change. What can Europe do? What can we expect from Europe? How can policy-making at all levels value the talents of older people, eliminate ageism and provide care and support where necessary? Ivan Stefanec gave a realistic and hopeful answer to these questions. A panel of representatives from different organizations had the honour of concluding the Regional Conference in Bratislava. ESU President An Hermans expressed her gratitude for the inspiring cooperation and therefore departed (again) from what was done 30 years ago:

"Calling for continued commitment to peace, freedom and democracy. The start of a new policy period in Europe should provide answers to the challenges ahead." – An Hermans

3.2 10th edition of the Summer Academy

Already for the 10th time, seniors from all over Europe gathered in Vienna for the yearly Summer Academy at the Politische Akademie der ÖVP. From the very start in the history of the Summer Academy, one could notice the eagerness and enthusiasm of the diverse group of seniors that



participated in the various sessions. From North to South, from West to East, all regions were represented during these 10 years of sharing insights and experiences. And that is the key to the success: the unprejudiced attitude of connecting with others. Thanks to the Politische Akademie der ÖVP, the Martens Centre, the Österreichischer Seniorenbund and the EPP, we were able to build up this tradition and gather in Vienna.

This year's festive edition was also well-received by all participants. During the Praesidium and Executive Committee, we were proud to grant the Kovács K. Zoltán Seniors' Club Association (IKE) observer status in the ESU and welcomed them for the Summer Academy. After these meetings we all celebrated the initiator of the Summer Academy, Ms. Marilies Flemming, for her relentless efforts to inspire and empower seniors throughout the European Union. This was also acknowledged by Ms. Ingrid Korosec, Prof. Dr. Otto Wulff, Dr. Bernard Worms and our President An Hermans who all took the floor to honour Ms. Flemming for all her work. Even EPP President Mr. Joseph Daul addressed his gratitude towards her and underlined the importance of this initiative in a video-message,

which can be found on our website. A wonderful tour at Schönbrunn Castle and a well-deserved dinner rounded off an interesting first day of the Summer Academy.

The second day was dedicated to academic and political insights on the European elections and what is beyond. “Let’s open a new chapter for Europe” was not only the title of this year’s edition, but also the title of the EPP Manifesto. The Strategic Coordinator and Research Officer of the Martens Centre, Mr. Frederico Reho elaborated further on the insights of Prof. Dr. Steven Van Hecke. Both speakers noted that the European Union still has many challenges ahead, but should seize the opportunity to overcome those problems.

One of the opportunities that was subsequently addressed by Ms. Buda was the future trade relations of the European Union with third countries, and notably China. Her interesting view on the EU as global economic actor blended in with the presentation of our Vice-President Heinz K. Becker on the latest developments of a social Europe.

However, one of the main characteristics and strengths of the Summer Academy is the active participation of our own members. The discussion on the National Reports became a tradition and had again an important role during this session. With the recent European elections in mind, these reports have a vital function in analyzing the situation in our member’s countries.

Numerous members filed their input or took the floor during Saturday’s closing session. It again showed how engaged seniors were during the campaign. They organized conferences to voice

their concerns, they encouraged people to go to vote, they reported once more that their active citizenship plays an important role in civil society and politics.

On Sunday, our Vice-President Heinz K. Becker shared his views on the challenges and opportunities of migration. As a former member of the LIBE Committee, he delivered this complex issue with tremendous expertise and clarity.

Two days of inspiring and enriching discussions were closed by our President An Hermans, concluding that the tradition that Marilies has started will continue for at least another 10 years.

The last words of the 10th Summer Academy by Vice-President Carmen Quintanilla perfectly captured the feelings of all participants: “This 10th Summer Academy was again very interesting, but I missed one person: Marilies Flemming. In all the previous years she was our inspiration and our guide. But she will still be with us and inspire us in the future.” In a special book with pictures and loving words participants expressed their thoughts and feeling about the ‘Summer Academy’ in Vienna.



4 — Representation of the ESU

4.1 Participation in the EPP

4.1.1. EPP Congress Zagreb

The EPP held its Statutory Congress on 20 and 21 November in Zagreb, Croatia. Co-hosted by the Prime Minister of Croatia and Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (HDZ) leader, the Congress in Zagreb focused on effective policies to combat climate change, on empowering the younger generations and the Western Balkans. During the Congress EPP Presidency was also elected, the EPP President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and Secretary General. 2000 participants from more than 40 countries were invited to participate in the Congress in Zagreb. Donald Tusk was elected as the new EPP President, and we would like to use this opportunity to reiterate our support for the new president. We hope that in the coming years we may continue a good cooperation as was the case with the previous EPP President Joseph Daul. We also rely strongly on the Secretary General Antonio López-Istúriz and the support of the General Secretariat.

The ESU was invited to participate in the Congress with a delegation with voting rights consisting of President An Hermans and six members with voting rights. This means that the ESU actively participated in the election of the EPP president and the leadership of the EPP. The ESU also had a voice in the discussion and adoption of resolutions. For this Congress it was mainly our Secretary General Guido Dumon and Vice-President Heinz Becker who, during the preparations of the Congress, represented the voice of the seniors.

SPEECH BY OUR PRESIDENT AT THE EPP CONGRESS

At the Congress the ESU president An Hermans gave a speech which can be consulted online:

“An Hermans, ESU President (Zagreb Congress)”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNclflcKLq4&feature=youtu.be>

An Hermans said: “Seniors of today don’t want to be a burden, but cooperative partners in society and in opening a new chapter for the future of Europe. Therefore, I ask you:

- Recognize our talents and experiences and don’t be too quick to say: ‘They live too long’; ‘They cost too much’.
- Don’t forget the older generations in reflections on sustainable economic growth. ‘People’s wellbeing and economic growth are interdependent and mutually reinforcing’.
- Let’s turn the development of the ‘Silver Economy’ and intergenerational cooperation and solidarity into opportunities for the future.”

See more : <https://www.epp.eu/press-releases/epp-congress-in-zagreb->

4.1.2 EPP Political Assembly

The EPP Political Assembly regularly draws together delegates from parties and associations from all over Europe. President An Hermans and Secretary General Guido Dumon attend the meetings as delegates from the European Seniors’ Union. They represent and highlight the active role of seniors in civil societies and call for full involvement of seniors, also in politics.

The EPP Political Assembly meets almost monthly, with this year of course special focus on the European elections, the procedure of the ‘Spitzenkandidat’, the election program, the results and the new challenges for the European Institutions (Commission, Parliament,...). A very special meeting took place on the 20 March 2019. After various informal talks the EPP membership of Hungarian party Fidesz was put on the agenda and discussed. Following a vote, the European People’s Party (EPP) membership of Fidesz was suspended with immediate effect after a decision by the EPP Political Assembly. An evaluation commission was installed and will produce a report in 2020.

4.1.3 EPP - Working Groups

EPP Working Group 1

Co-chaired by EPP President Joseph Daul and EPP Vice-President and MEP David McAllister, Working Group 1 ‘European Policy’ has the task of preparing the EPP’s most vital policy papers and Congress documents on European issues. Dr. Marilies Flemming and An Hermans represented the ESU in this working group. From 2019 Heinz Becker has replaced Marilies Flemming, we thank Marilies for the many years of active participation.

EPP Working Group 2

Working Group 2 ‘Economic and Social Policy’, co-chaired by Irish Minister for European Affairs and Data Protection, EPP Vice-President Dara Murphy and EPP Vice-President Corien Wortmann-Kool, is

focused on responding to the current economic and financial crisis, the Lisbon process, demographic issues, and research and development. ESU Vice-President Heinz K. Becker, MEP, represented the ESU in this Working Group.

EPP Working Group 3

Chaired by EPP Vice-President and MEP Paulo Rangel, Working Group 3 'Membership' is mandated to promote, facilitate and incorporate new EPP members, associate members and observers throughout the continent. When a party is accepted in the EPP, its elected representatives automatically join the EPP Group in the European Parliament and all other EPP Groups and organizations. ESU Vice President Nikolay Andreev (BG) represents the ESU in this Working Group.

4.2 Representation in AGE platform Europe

AGE Platform Europe, set up in Brussels in 2001, is a broad European network with the aim of voicing and promoting the interests of the EU's ageing generations. AGE is a European network of non-profit organizations of and for 190 million citizens aged 50+.

AGE works mainly on older people's rights, socio-economic policies and age-friendly environments. AGE activities involve opinion-building campaigns, involvement in older people-focused EU projects and selection of good practices for the day-to-day application of core senior citizens policies.

Ref website: <https://www.age-platform.eu>





AGE seeks to give a strong and clear voice to older and retired people in the EU policy debates, not only through its involvement in various EU Commission-initiated projects but also through the active participation of its representative organizations in national, regional and local fora. In the European Parliament, AGE has regular contacts with MEPs from various political groups. AGE was a strong supporter of the intergroup on Active Ageing, and could also count on the support of MEP Heinz Becker to give older people a dignified place in the European policy. Through its active participation in the United Nations Open Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG) AGE joins a global network to consider the international

framework of the human rights of older persons and to identify possible needs of further UN instruments and measures.

For some years now the ESU has enjoyed important and stimulating cooperation with AGE Platform Europe. Our representatives in AGE Council of Administration, General Assembly and Annual Conference are Leif Hallberg (SE) and Ghislaine Bosly-Vanhalewyn (BE).

Other activities and events

5

5 January	Pulheim	invitation of Senioren-Union der CDU	Neujahrsempfang der Senioren - Union der CDU
16-17 February	Trondheim	Congress of Høyre Seniors	Statutory items & an intergenerational debate
24-25 April	Minsk	Seniors' association of Belarus supported by Eastern Partnership Civil society Facility	First forum for seniors' associations from Eastern European Partnership and the E.U.
13 May	Nicosia	EC Representation in Cyprus and NGO's	Get involved in the Future of Europe
14 September	Backnang	Seniors-Union Nordwürttemberg	'Senioren-Union Nordwürttemberg: ein alterfreundliches Europa geht uns alle an' / 'Seniors-Union Nordwürttemberg: an age-friendly Europe matters to all of us'.

5.1 Neujahrsempfang der Senioren - Union der CDU

The New Year's celebration in Pulheim brought together a group of senior citizens who, in their communities, have been working for many years for the realization of the values of Christian democracy and are still committed to an inclusive society today. President An Hermans and General Secretary Guido Dumon were invited to enjoy the warm gathering and see how Bernard Worms is appreciated in his hometown. They supported the previous ESU President by calling on everyone to actively participate in the European election campaign.

5.2 Congress of Høyre Seniors: Statutory items & an intergenerational debate

Our President An Hermans and Secretary General Guido Dumon were guests in the Senior Høyre General Meeting in Trondheim, Norway. Margaretha Palsson, President of Moderata Senior, from Sweden was also at the meeting. An Hermans opened the congress with some special words for Sverre Mauritzen: "I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Sverre Mauritzen. As the leader of your organization, he was always one of the most active and diligent delegates in our ESU meetings. And I am already certain that his successor, Mr. Lars Myraune, will fill his shoes with pride and dignity."

During this meeting the leadership of Senior Høyre changed. Sverre Mauritzen passed on the presidency to Lars Myraune. Two new vice presidents were also elected: Grete Horntvedt and Kirsten Huser Leschbrandt. Besides the statutory items, an intergenerational debate was organized with Linda Hofstad Helleland (former minister), Trond Hofstad and Knut Jorgen Kirkeberg, moderated by Marvin Wiseth.

The second day of the general meeting started with an introduction by John-Ragnar Aarset, Secretary General of Høyre. In this session ESU President An Hermans also took the floor to underline the importance of cooperation, also between the EU and Norway; and between senior associations. At the end of her speech she thanked Sverre Mauritzen for the excellent cooperation during the last 4 years. Although Norway is not a member state of the EU, Høyre is a member party of EPP and ESU works closely together with Senior Høyre.

5.3. Keeping up contacts with seniors'

associations from Eastern European Partnership
It is key for the ESU that we keep up the dialogue with citizens all over Europe and also in neighbourhood countries, in particular within the Eastern European Partnership.

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) is a joint initiative of the EU and former Soviet states on the Eastern border of the European Union. It aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the European Union (EU), its Member States and its Eastern neighbours. Delegations of the six eastern European countries involved in the partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) participated in the Forum.

Despite some differences, in civil society associations, we all share the belief that our participation in society is necessary to improve the living standards of all our fellow seniors. Currently we are glad to be in regular contact with our partners in Belarus and in Armenia.

5.3.1. First forum for seniors' associations in Minsk

An ESU delegation attended the first Forum of Senior Organizations of the Eastern Partnership and European Union - EU countries, organized by Tatsiana Zelko and her Сеньоры Беларусі (PUBP "Nasha Pakalenne") in cooperation with the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility on 24-25 April in Hotel Monastyrski in Minsk (Belarus).

During two days seniors associations, human rights initiatives and grassroots' movements presented a variety of good practices. The delegations from the EU brought information on pension systems in EU countries and the possibilities for older persons to participate in social and political life. Both our delegation and the delegated from seniors' organizations from all over our eastern neighbours were amazed by the dynamic environment in which fruitful debates were concluded.

The interaction between all present made the Forum a real success as all participants expressed their satisfaction on mutual learning and the enrichment of exchanges. All participants therefore showed their hope to continue the newly established relations in the future.



5.3.2. Open letter for better living conditions for seniors in Armenia.

In Armenia, the Union of Senior Generation (USG, affiliated with “Heritage” party, an EPP observer member) was established in 2015 by the group of seniors and by support of youth. It stands for consistent protection of democracy and human rights, for the protection of the rights of older persons, and for their integration in social, cultural, political and economic life of Armenia. In November 2019 USB wrote an open letter to the Government and the National Assembly. The letter was signed by 115 seniors and their younger supporters and concerned the hearings in the Parliament on the State Budget 2020. The USG has recently received official responses from the responsible bodies. Unfortunately, the Government refused the seniors’ demand to increase pensions by more than 10%. But USG President Stella Manukyan and her team will continue to advocate this issue.

5.4 EC Representation in Cyprus and NGOs: Get involved in the Future of Europe

A glance at the gathering of Cypriot seniors on the 13th of May:

“Go and vote, let your voice be heard and get involved”

This was the central message of a meeting on 13 May in the Presidential Palace in Nicosia. The Information Office of the European Parliament in Cyprus and several associations put their efforts

together to organize a marvellous event with inspiring speeches, music and time for socialising . The seniors’ association of Cyprus was one of the driving forces in this project. We were pleased to be invited to bring a short message, underlining the importance of a united Europe for peace, security, prosperity and democracy.

“Cyprus needs Europe, no single country can solve today’s challenges. We need to work together. Let’s participate in the European elections and decide on the direction we want to take together. And preserve the cornerstones of our societies: freedom, dignity and solidarity ...”, An Hermans argued. This evening brought forward a strong message to all participants, underlining the role of all generations for the future of Europe. We were proud that Antonios Demetriades received an honorary award for his engagement for a society of longevity.

Also in the meetings with politicians, party leaders and candidates for the European Parliament, we exchanged experiences and ideas concerning participation and active citizenship and people’s need to feel that Europe, and politicians in general, care for their wellbeing.

Problems regarding unemployment and poverty were also highlighted during this event. In particular youth unemployment. Unemployment has a terrible impact on families and on society as a whole. “We need more help from Europe. Solidarity is a fundament of Europa. We expect Europe to preserve a level of prosperity”, says Zeta Emilianides, Minister of Labour and Social Security. Thank you, Antonios Demetriades, Andreas Vitaliotis, Pambos Georghiades and the dynamic seniors association of Dimokratikos Synagermos for hosting us. We had an unforgettable stay in Larnaca and Nicosia.

Your message is a message to all European citizens: “Get involved in the European Elections. Get involved in the future of our society. Stand up for Europe.”

5.5 Seniors–Union Nordwürttemberg: an age-friendly Europe matters to all of us

ESU President An Hermans and General Secretary Guido Dumon were invited on 14 September to attend the members’ meeting of the Senioren–Union der CDU Deutschlands in Nordwürttemberg. Current president Peter Grab was eligible as president for the region during this event. He is an enthusiastic contributor in our ESU and regularly attends the Summer Academies in Vienna. In order to explain to the seniors of his region how the ESU works, the ESU was included in the programme of the senior day in Backnang.

Several speakers had the floor and Peter Grab was re-elected in his presidency. An Hermans was applauded several times in her speech on Europe. Referring to the upcoming Congress in Sandanski she stated that:” We will carry out the message that “Senior citizens stand up for Europe...”. I hope and wish that all of you will include the hopeful European perspective in your daily commitment’.

After the meeting there were many more interesting conversations. Seniors who contributed to the development of European cooperation know forever how important and fragile it is.

An Hermans stated: *“Thank you very much for the appreciation and support that we have had towards the ESU. The presence and participation of your Senioren–Union der CDU is very important to us. You promote the tradition of political, voluntary*

work and active participation in the party and society at European level, to colleagues from countries where this culture and tradition is sometimes less present. Sharing this experience, mutual learning, in openness and respect, is a true enrichment.”

5.6 Meeting with Seniorii National Libertali and Siegfried Muresan

Nothing better than to feel part of Europe, to feel involved in the European integration process by direct contact with MEP’s, seeing and understanding their work and ... seeing that they are really interested in citizens’ life and expectations. And of course it is always interesting for the ESU to receive an invitation to speak about how and why it is important to develop seniors’ associations in –or associated to – political parties as well as at European and national level. In this context we were satisfied meeting Siegfried Muresan and his ‘Seniorii National Libertali’ on 4 December at the EPP headquarters in Brussels. MEP Siegfried Muresan invited our President An Hermans to this meeting. It was a warm meeting and we are grateful for this introduction and meeting. Muresan said: “A united Europe is a Europe where our senior citizens can fully enjoy the benefits of the European Union. To do this, we need to work closer together to find solutions to problems of age.” An Hermans was impressed by the active involvement of Seniorii National Libertali in Romanian political life and congratulated them for the recent results of their party PNL in the European Elections.

29 April & 1 October two days to highlight 6

Every year we pay extra attention to two special days: the European Day of Solidarity between Generations & UN International Day of Older Persons. Our goal is first of all to encourage our member organizations to promote these days in their association, and also to draw attention in public opinion to the role of the elderly and the challenges ahead.

6.1. 29 April: European Day of Solidarity between Generations

This year President An Hermans wrote a letter to all members of the Executive Committee, calling for attention to be paid to the European elections.

Our president wrote:

“The upcoming European elections could be pivotal for the future of our Union as we know it today.(...) Seniors throughout Europe, together with the youngest generations are calling for a strong, smart and caring European Union in which nobody is left behind that tackles these challenges decisively. Therefore, we need a coordinated European strategy for demographic change which takes into account the differences and specific problems of certain regions and cities.”



See also the brochure on this subject: United in solidarity. Exploring international Solidarity (ESU, 2018): http://esu-epp.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/United_in_Solidarity.pdf

6.2. International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP) on 1 October

The theme chosen by the UN for this year's International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP) on 1 October was: “The Journey to Age Equality” and is associated with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The global attention for this International Day, is more relevant than ever.

Our ageing European society as a whole, governments at all levels, and also the European Commission are facing the gains and limitations that comes with demographic change. 'The journey to age equality' is multi-dimensional. It requires a combination of good jobs for all generations, fair taxation systems, adequate social policies, and opportunities to participate in all areas of society.

With this in mind we are pleased to hear that the new European Commission President Dr. Ursula von der Leyen is aware of the challenges

and we are grateful that she has indicated her willingness to respond to these challenges, including all ages. We are hopeful when reading the Mission Letter for the new Croatian Commissioner Dubravka Šuica (EPP), appointed Vice-President of the EU Commission for Democracy and Demography on 10 September. Non-discrimination, a sustainable future, and intergenerational cooperation are critical priorities on which the future European Commission should genuinely focus!





— Looking Ahead 7

During late 2019, on 27 November, after a year in which the European Elections attracted much attention, the EPP Group in the EP unambiguously confirmed the new Commission, its composition, its working method and its priorities by the MEPs. Chairman Manfred Weber welcomed with convincing confirmation in the European Parliament: “Seven months after the European elections, we can start to deliver on our commitments to European citizens. Let’s get to work!”

This Commission, under the leadership of Ursula von der Leyen, is unique and historic. It has more women than any other Commission in the past. The policy priorities of the new Commission are firmly rooted in the EPP’s ambitions for the future. “We are proud that our EPP priorities are a crucial part of the agenda in the years to come. In 2024, Europe will have the most ambitious and inclusive climate policy in the world, a European border and coast guard with at least 10 thousand officers, we will have transformed Europol into a European FBI, launched a master plan to fight cancer, created millions of jobs and decided on the definitive borders of the European Union.” Manfred Weber stated in the EP.

With the nomination and election of Ursula Von der Leyen as President of the new Commission, a new project for the future of Europe is launched. She takes into account the growing voice within public opinion to reconnect with citizens. To mark the 10th anniversary of the Treaty of Lisbon, Von der Leyen, as President of the Commission said: ‘We are the guardians of the Treaties, the custodians of the Lisbon spirit.



I feel this responsibility. It is a responsibility towards our predecessors, our founding fathers and mothers, and all that they have achieved . (...) But Europe is not just a treasure we inherit. Europe is a promise. Europe is our future. Europe is something that we all have to build - brick by brick, day by day.'

The Commission owes it to future generations to provide solutions to complex issues in order to create an environment in which everyone is respected and can have a dignified life. We, as European seniors, are ready to do our part to build Europe together with young people. The ESU, participating in Europe's next chapter From the very beginning, the ESU has been aiming to stimulate an age-friendly society, where there is a zero-tolerance towards ageism & loneliness, 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, to create the conditions for active and healthy ageing and to allow every person to participate in society.

We firmly believe in the important role older citizens, seniors' associations and in particular the ESU can play in the development of a strong, democratic and inclusive Europe. Together with young generations we look ahead and act together for a sustainable European future. In the years to come, the EU, together with its Member States and Regions will have to cope with many problems and challenges. We are convinced that active and engaged citizens are crucial for the development of our societies.

As an association in local, regional and national levels and in the European public space, we make our voices heard and we build bridges between individual citizens and decision makers.

We hope that, in the next European legislative, citizens will feel that Europe is concerned about their security, prosperity and quality of life. Our Europe is a value-driven Europe that protects & creates opportunities to live & work in a peaceful, healthy and democratic continent.



Up to the 25th anniversary of the ESU

Founded in 1995, the ESU is proud to celebrate 25 years of engagement of seniors in political life. More than ever we are aware:

- That a long and healthy life is a gift to which every person and also governments can contribute;
- That active seniors can make solid contributions to living together, and that every person in need of care also has the right to live a dignified life.
- That economic, social and political life at all policy levels will have to address the challenges of demographic change;
- That the view of 'demographic change' differs considerably throughout Europe; it is sometimes rather presented as a problem of rural depopulation or emigration of young people seeking employment;
- That it will be a great challenge to recognise the diversity of problems and to seek solutions throughout Europe with all generations together.

We are ready to play our role and participate in the next chapter of the Europe we are facing, because Seniors are standing up for Europe!

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