



The European Day of Solidarity between Generations (29 April)

Letter from Prof. Em. An Hermans, President of the European Seniors' Union

Dear Colleagues,
Dear Friends,

It is now already some years that, every year in April, in view of the 29 April, you received a communication from us. Since 2008, this 29 April is highlighted as the European Day of Solidarity between Generations¹ and all over Europe seniors' associations and also youth associations are underlining the importance of cooperation and solidarity between generations in families and neighbourhoods, in enterprises and voluntary work and of course in a true democracy.

Solidarity: one of the cornerstones of an inclusive, sustainable society. Solidarity: in these recent months of worldwide, painful pandemic, the watchword is to open doors for medical and economic solutions, to open doors towards 'the day after' of this unforeseen and unforeseeable crisis that will come sometime soon.

Solidarity: we have experienced and seen brilliant examples in recent days. But it is also sad, very sad and unforgivable that again in our Europe we have had to witness a lack of solidarity. 'Please, don't let us die', that was the cry of our fellow citizens from southern European countries, but in vain they hoped that they could count on European solidarity. It seems that until today we didn't learn what it means that solidarity is the bedrock of Europe, what it means to build step by step 'an ever closer Union', a union between nations and peoples, expressed in decision-making mechanisms, by economic integration, by budgetary transfers, financial aid, supporting programs... We hoped that in this Covid-19 crisis, European solidarity and mutual aid could and should be expressed in a clear and coordinated way. But Europe was not ready. The Member States were not ready... It was only after long and difficult discussions that coordinated European solutions were found: necessary signs of European solidarity, like European citizens expect and deserve.

Dear friends, all persons have the same rights, regardless of age. These must be protected, also during the pandemic. When it comes to medical care, age alone should never be a

¹An Hermans e.a. United in solidarity (2018): http://esu-epp.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/United_in_Solidarity.pdf

criterium for medical triage². We all have a responsibility to protect these rights in the private and public sphere. Every single one of us has a role to play in this fight for respect and human dignity.

We are thankful and proud that competent medical and caring personnel, all professional groups, governments, families... saw it as their utmost duty and priority to save the lives of men and women in our countries. Now we hope to create the recovery. We hope that we will be able to continue to work together, all over Europe, healthy and well, resilient and creative and above all...convinced that solidarity between generations and across borders is a necessity to create a sustainable European Union, based upon the fundamental values of human dignity, respect and solidarity.

We wish you a healthy and joyful European Day of Solidarity between Generations. Let small acts of kindness, compassion and solidarity spread hope through all Europe.

Kind regards.

An Hermans

² <https://www.age-platform.eu/policy-work/news/covid-19-older-persons'-rights-must-be-equally-protected-during-the-pandemic>