

EPP Congress ROTTERDAM Speech ESU President Hermans

Dear colleagues and friends,

“A sustainable world for all ages.’ That’s the ambition of everyone coping with the challenges of demographic change.

I hope that you all share this ambition, and the conviction that only by the creation of alliances between generations, by joining forces for solidarity, we will succeed. We, the EPP-family, have a role to play in realizing these inclusive societies.

Let us learn lessons from the COVID-19 crisis and answer the call for coordination in health care, for closer cooperation to optimise long-term care facilities and for support for all kinds of innovative practices. I am glad that in the current European Commission, for the first time, demographic change becomes a mainstream topic on the agenda.

Mainstreaming ageing means adapting our strategies on digitalization, on transport, and on public spaces in such a way that older people also benefit from it and find their way in the digital world, in the use of public spaces, in our living environment. Let us create an awareness that our buildings, public spaces, and transport are often painful materialised examples of ageism. And that the much-praised world of Artificial Intelligence seems to confirm this ageism.

However, most of the time statistics don't tell us much about this, because older people are invisible in these statistics. Or have you never noticed that most statistical surveys, only includes men and women aged 16-74? What about people over 75?

Dear colleagues and friends, I challenge you to look at older persons through a different lens. Look at us as generations standing for the values on which Europe is built: Peace, Democracy, Freedom, Human dignity.... and ready to face the future with courage, together with younger generations!

Let's make it happen.

I thank you for your attention.

An Hermans