European Seniors' Union

Designing the Future

Annual Report 2025

epp
european people's party

30 years
esu

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FOREWORD

Designing the Future

Dear Members, Friends and Supporters of the European Seniors' Union (ESU),

It is with great pride, enthusiasm and a profound sense of purpose that we – the President and Secretary General of ESU – present the 2025 Annual Report. This year has been nothing short of transformational for our organisation, as we not only celebrated three decades of dedicated work but also charted bold new directions for the future of senior citizens in Europe.

In 2025, ESU leadership committed to two landmark policy documents that will guide our work for years to come. First, the Bratislava Presidency Principles, adopted during our Spring Conference in Bratislava, set out clearly the responsibilities and expectations of ESU leadership: to be proactive, accountable, representative and responsive to the needs of older citizens across Europe. This document reaffirms our resolve to lead with integrity, transparency and a strong voice for seniors. Secondly, we launched the Ciudad Real Strategic Action Plan 2030, adopted at our 30th-anniversary celebrations in Ciudad Real. This Strategic Action Plan will serve as the compass for ESU's leadership in the years ahead and focuses on three interlinked pillars: deepening our engagement with senior citizens' realities, broadening our reach across Europe and representing the rights and interests of seniors at all levels of governance.

Our 2025 calendar was rich and full of milestone events.

The Bratislava Spring Conference (19-20 March) marked the official launch of our 30th-anniversary year and framed the theme "Lifelong Active Ageing: An Asset for our Societies".

The Summer Academy in Bruges (12-14 September) brought together experts, senior organisations and policy-makers to examine "Demographic changes in Europe – Consequences for seniors and challenges for European governance".

And in early November, the 30th Anniversary Celebrations of ESU in Ciudad Real (5-7 November) provided a memorable and joyful gathering of our membership, reflecting on past achievements and looking ahead to our Strategic Action Plan 2030.

2025 was also a year of renewed leadership. We were delighted to elect three new Vice-Presidents, and to welcome Gnanam Seminck as our new Treasurer, whose fresh energy and expertise will strengthen our financial stewardship and governance. It is especially worth noting that our Leadership Team now holds a majority of women, who play a very active and dynamic role in guiding the Organisation forward — a real source of strength and inspiration. We also wish to express our deepest gratitude to the fine team collaboration of the many volunteers of ESU, whose dedication ensures our operations run smoothly, efficiently and with heart.

To all member organisations, to the members of the Presidency and the Executive Committee: thank you. Your positive attitude, unwavering determination and passionate stand for the rights of senior citizens in Europe fuels our collective mission. Because of your commitment, ESU has not only grown stronger — we have deepened our impact, broadened our reach and elevated the voice of seniors in Europe.

As we turn the page on 2025 and look ahead to 2026 and beyond, our gaze remains firmly fixed on the horizon defined by the Strategic Action Plan 2030. Together we will advance age-friendly societies, promote active ageing, strengthen inter-generational solidarity and defend human dignity for all seniors in Europe. Let us carry this momentum into the next chapter, united, optimistic and ready to build the Europe we believe in—a Europe that values every age.

With warmest regards and renewed commitment,

Stefaan Vercamer — ESU President &
Patrick Penninckx — Secretary General

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Words of Thanks

Gratitude to Heinz A. Becker

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Vice-President Heinz K. Becker (AT) for his invaluable contribution over the past years as member of the ESU Presidency.

His dedication, insight, and steadfast representation of his organisation has played a vital role in shaping and strengthening the European Seniors' Union. Through his work, his has upheld our shared values and advanced the interests of seniors across Europe.

We thank him for his service and commitment and wish him all the best in his future endeavors, trusting he will continue to champion the causes that unite us.

Gratitude to Leif Hallberg

The European Seniors' Union extends its heartfelt gratitude to Leif Hallberg, Honorary President of the ESU, for his many years of dedicated service. As Vice-President of the ESU and our esteemed representative at AGE Platform Europe, Leif has played a crucial role in strengthening our voice and advancing the interests of older citizens across Europe. We warmly thank him for his unwavering commitment, his diligent follow-up, and his always pertinent and thoughtful contributions during the meetings of the ESU Presidency. His experience, integrity, and steady guidance have been invaluable to our organization.

With sincere appreciation, we acknowledge Leif's remarkable contribution and lasting impact on the ESU.

Treasurer for many years: Tribute to Etienne Vanderroost:

For many years, Etienne Vanderroost has served as Treasurer of the ESU. We would like to express our sincere thanks to Etienne for his financial services and assistance until December 2024. Together with An Hermans and Guido Dumon, he formed an inseparable team, managing the ESU's financial matters with great care and precision.

Stronghold of the ESU backoffice: Yolande Van Droogenbroeck

We would like to celebrate the hard work 'behind the scenes' of the ESU, for which we have counted for so many years on the never ending enthusiasm of Yolande Van Droogenbroeck, our volunteer administrative assistant. She deserves a place in the spotlights!

The ESU: Statutory Bodies

The Congress

The Congress of the European Seniors' Union is the organisation's highest decision-making body. It elects the President, sets the long-term political orientation, adopts statutes and resolutions, and brings together all member organisations to define the ESU's overall direction and priorities.

The ESU Congress is held every five years. It acts as a forum for statutory revisions, providing an opportunity for structural updates that reflect the evolving needs of our organisation.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the European Seniors' Union is the general leading body, responsible for implementing the organisation's decisions, coordinating activities, and ensuring that the strategic priorities set by the Congress are carried out. It oversees working groups, prepares policies and programmes, and supports cooperation among the ESU's member organisations.

The ESU-team

The ESU statutory bodies are supported by a team within ESU, composed by the President, the Honorary President, the Secretary-General, the Treasurer, the Counsellor and the Administrative Assistant.

In January 2025, Günter De Schepper took up his role as Counsellor to the ESU.

The Presidency

The Presidency of the European Seniors' Union provides overall political leadership, sets strategic priorities, and represents the organisation at European and international levels. It also coordinates the Executive Committee, ensures good governance, and strengthens cooperation among the member organisations. Finally, it elects the Secretary-General and the Treasurer.

Hereby the composition of the Presidency, as elected during and following our Leuven Congress (2024) and Bratislava Executive Committee (2025).

President
Stefaan Vercamer (BE)

Secretary General
Patrick Penninckx (BE)

Vice-Presidents
Andea Eder-Gitschthaler (AT)
Antonios Demetriades (CY)
Manfred Hopfengärtner (GE)
Peter Mach (SK)
Georg Männik (EE)
Gabriele Peus-Bispinck (DE)
Carmen Quintanilla Barba (ES)
Kalliopi Marangaki (GR
Mojca Skrinjar (SI)
Cor Spreeuwenberg (NL)
Christine von Stefenelli-Gostner (IT/Südtirol)
Noëlla Jacobs (B)

Treasurer
Gnanam Seminck (BE)

Honorary President
An Hermans (BE)

ESU Associations

Since its creation in 1995, the ESU has been the recognised Seniors' association and member of the EPP.

Member Associations:

Austria
Österreichischer Seniorenbund

Belgium
CD&V-senioren

Bulgaria
Seniors of GERB

Cyprus
Senior Citizens Organisation of Cyprus - OPREPO

Czech Republic
Sdružení křesťanských seniorů

Estonia
Seniors' association ISAMAA

Finland
Kansallinen Seniorilliitto ry

Germany
Senioren-Union der CDU Deutschlands
Senioren-Union der CSU

Greece
Seniors of Nea Demokratia

Italy
SVP Generation 60+ (Südtirol)

Lithuania
Vaterlandsunion

Luxembourg
CSV-Senioren

Malta
Assoċċjazzjoni Penjsonanti Anzjani Nazzjonalisti

The Netherlands
CDA Senioren

Norway
Senior Høyres Landsforbund

Poland
Polska Unia Seniorów (PUS)

Slovakia
Zdruzenie kresťanských seniorov Slovenska

Slovenia
Klub seniorjev in seniork pri SDS
Zveza seniorjev Nova Slovenija
Zveza upokojencev pri SLS

Spain
Comision Nacional del Mayor del Partido Popular

Sweden
Moderata Seniorer
Kristendemokraterna Seniorförbundet

Observer Associations:

Armenia
Union of Senior Generation

Belarus
PUBP 'Nasha Pakalenne'

Europe
Europäische Zentrum für Arbeitnehmerfragen

Ukraine
Ukrainian Association of Retired Persons

Representation and Cooperation

Strengthening the ESU representation in European Organisations and Institutions

The European Seniors' Union (ESU) stands to gain significantly from deepening its cooperation with European institutions and partner organisations, such as the European Peoples' Party (EPP). Stronger ties with bodies such as the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, and civil-society networks enhance ESU's ability to represent the interests of older citizens across Europe.

Closer cooperation increases the ESU's visibility and political influence, ensuring that seniors' concerns are heard in key policy discussions on ageing, social protection, digital inclusion and human rights. It also opens the door to valuable expertise, joint initiatives and access to European programmes and funding opportunities.

By working more closely with like-minded organisations, the ESU can strengthen advocacy efforts, share best practices, and build broader support for active and dignified ageing. In turn, this reinforces seniors' engagement in European democracy and gives the ESU a stronger voice in shaping societal debates.

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One of the key priorities set by the ESU Congress in 2024 was to enhance the Organisation's representation at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the European Parliament. To achieve this, President Vercamer and Secretary-General Penninckx have been actively engaging with these institutions.

As the ESU's representative to the Conference of INGOs, we also work to ensure civil society's voice is heard and international standards are upheld. This platform strengthens the ESU's role in advocating for seniors' rights and priorities.

Strengthening these partnerships ultimately helps the ESU fulfil its core mission: promoting the well-being, participation and rights of Europe's senior citizens. Through his active involvement, the ESU remains a dynamic and influential player in European policymaking and civil society initiatives.

Partnerships

Partnerships are essential in creating opportunities and achieving mutual goals; Throughout the years, the ESU has invested massively in creating partnerships with private and public organisations and associations, some with very close ties.

The European People's Party (EPP)

The ESU and the EPP have a long-standing and structured partnership. As an official association of the EPP, the ESU is part of the wider Christian-democratic and centre-right political family in Europe. This connection allows the ESU to bring the voice and experience of older citizens directly into the EPP's political work. Within this framework, the ESU regularly contributes to EPP congresses, meetings and policy discussions. In doing so, it helps shape the EPP's positions on issues like ageing, social protection, health, demographic change and digital inclusion.

The EPP, in turn, provides the ESU with institutional support and visibility at European level. This strengthens the ESU's capacity to advocate for senior citizens and to work closely with EPP member parties across Europe. The partnership also encourages cooperation with other EPP associations, such as YEPP and EPP Women, fostering a broad and constructive dialogue.

AGE Platform Europe (AGE)

ESU was a founding partner of AGE platform Europe and is currently represented – by the Secretary general in the AGE congress and in the administrative Council of AGE.

The Wilfried Martens Centre of European Studies (WMCES)

The ESU and the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (WMCES) cooperate within the EPP family. The WMCES, as the EPP's official think tank, provides research, policy analysis and expert input, while the ESU brings the practical experience and perspectives of older Europeans. Through joint events, dialogue and shared initiatives, they complement each other's work and strengthen EPP policy discussions on ageing and social issues. Due to its extensive experience, the ESU strives to keep up with the WMCES, and include it in order to develop new ideas. This year, the WMCES helped the ESU in providing the 30th anniversary celebration book "Generations Together".

The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS)

The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung KAS, works on democracy, civic participation, European integration and social policy. These themes coincide with the ESU's priorities.

As a result, both organisations regularly cooperate through seminars, conferences, training sessions and policy discussions, especially on issues such as demographic change, active ageing, digital inclusion and social cohesion. The KAS supported the organisation of our celebration of the 30th anniversary.

The Robert Schuman Institute (RSI)

The ESU and the Robert Schuman Institute (RSI) cooperate mainly through training and political education. The RSI, which provides capacity-building and leadership training for organisations linked to the EPP, supports the ESU by offering seminars, workshops and expertise on European politics and civic engagement.

In return, the ESU contributes the perspectives and experience of senior citizens, helping enrich the RSI programmes. Their relationship is therefore practical and educational, aimed at strengthening skills, knowledge and engagement within the wider EPP community.

The ESU: Statutory Activities

The Presidency

Overview Presidency meetings in 2025

19.03.2025 — Bratislava (Slovakia)

- Annual Report 2024
- Financial report by the interim Treasurer and the auditor
- Information on upcoming events
- Adoption of the Presidency Principles

- 12.09.2025 — Bruges (Belgium)

- Nomination of the new ESU Treasurer
- Financial Update: receipt from EPP, and payments by member Organisations
- ESU engagements towards other Organisations (EPP; AGE Platform Europe)
- EZA seminar in Tallin (1-2 Oct 2025);
- 30th Anniversary & Conference (Ciudad Real, 5-7 Nov 2025): agenda
- Seminar on Intergenerational Dialogue (Budapest, Apr 2026)
- Membership: An application was received from the Greek Pensioners' Movement
- ESU website and communication strategy

05.11.2025 — Ciudad Real (Spain)

- Adoption of the ESU Strategy 2030
- Discussion of the appointment of an Internal Auditor

Online meetings in 2025

- The ESU's participation in the Political Assembly of the EPP
- Preparatory meeting for the appointment of 3 new Vice-presidents
- Review of the budget in the light of the 2025 events
- Proposal Summer Academy 2025 & draft ideas for celebration of 30 years of ESU
- Exchange of ideas on the cooperation with members of PACE and MEP's in Strasbourg
- Financial and Statutory reporting
- Preparation of the 2025 Summer Academy in Bruges
- International Day of Older People - 1 October 2025
- Follow up to the Report on Seniors' representation in EPP Partner Parties
- Proposal on cooperation of the Vice-Presidents in ESU initiatives

The Executive Committee

Overview Executive Committee meetings in 2025.

19.03.2025 — Bratislava (Slovakia)

- ESU Annual Report 2024
- Election of 3 Vice-presidents
- Membership: information
- Oversight of the 2025 annual budget
- Meeting calendar 2025
- Adoption of the Bratislava Presidency Principles

05.11.2025 — Ciudad Real (Spain)

- Confirmation of the new elected Treasurer of ESU;
- Information by the President and Secretary-General, on current and upcoming events:
  - Political Assemblies EPP (8&9 December 2025 – Brussels; 23&24 February 2026 – Brussels; 23&23 June 2026 – Vienna);
  - AGE Spring Council meeting (20 March 2026 – online)
  - Contacts with Martens Centre, Konrad Adenauer Foundation;
  - the cooperation with members of PACE and MEPs in Strasbourg
  - Finances and statutes of ESU;
  - International Day of Older People – 1 October;
  - ESU Strategic Action Plan
- Adoption of the ESU Strategy 2030
- Preparation of the 2026 Spring Conference
- Proposal Summer Academy 2026
- Financial contributions 2025 – follow up given by national organisations
- Cooperation with EZA.

1995 – 2025

The ESU marks its 30th anniversary

The 7th November 1995, Spain was the place where the ESU officially saw the daylight, during the European People's Party (EPP) congress in Madrid, as the political voice of older citizens within the center-right political family of Europe. Its creation reflected a growing awareness that senior citizens – an ever-larger share of Europe's population – deserved representation in European political life and policymaking.

From the beginning, the ESU's mission was clear: to defend the dignity, rights, and participation of older people, and to promote active ageing and intergenerational solidarity across Europe.

As the seniors' organisation of the EPP, the ESU quickly evolved into a pan-European network bringing together national associations, experts and individuals concerned with ageing policy and social inclusion. Its activities have ranged from policy advocacy to educational projects, ensuring that the voices of senior citizens are heard in debates on issues such as social protection, digital access, health care, and long-term care.

Over the years, the ESU has become a vital platform for dialogue between generations, stressing that ageing should be seen not as a burden, but as an opportunity for society to draw on the experience and civic engagement of its older members.

Over three decades, the ESU has remained committed to a set of core themes: defending the dignity and social rights of older people, supporting active citizenship, addressing demographic change, encouraging digital literacy, and fostering solidarity between generations.

Today, the European Seniors' Union stands as a testament to the power of long-term civic engagement. Its thirty years of activity have shown that ageing populations can be an engine for wisdom, solidarity and democratic participation.

Ciudad Real Conference

Celebrating 30 years of the ESU

The European Seniors' Union (ESU) marked its 30th anniversary with a major commemorative conference held in Ciudad Real, Spain, from 5 to 7 November 2025. The event gathered senior representatives, delegates from national organisations, policy experts and political partners from across Europe to celebrate three decades of commitment to the rights and participation of older citizens.

Throughout the three days, participants discussed the main challenges and opportunities facing older people in today's Europe. Central themes included the "silver economy", which recognises the economic and social contributions of seniors; digital inclusion, ensuring that no older citizen is left behind in an increasingly digital society; and the fight against ageism, social isolation and loneliness, particularly in rural and less densely populated regions. The ESU also underlined the need for policies that value the experience and civic engagement of older generations, promoting a Europe that is inclusive of all ages.

The city of Ciudad Real was symbolically named the "European Capital of Seniors" during the celebrations, recognising its warm welcome and active partnership in hosting the event. The choice of location also carried historical significance: it was in Spain, three decades earlier, that the ESU had first been established during the EPP Congress of 1995.

Speakers, including high-level representatives from the EPP, national senior organisations, and civil society, emphasised a shared message: ageing is not a burden but a source of strength and wisdom for Europe's future. The conference thus served not only as a commemoration of past achievements, but also as a commitment to renewed action;

As the ESU moves forward toward 2030, it aims to continue empowering older Europeans as active citizens and partners in building a fair, inclusive, and democratic society. The Ciudad Real conference reaffirmed that the experiences and voices of older generations are essential to shaping a Europe that truly values every age.

Ciudad Real
Designing the Future: Horizon 2030

Designing the Future is not a one-day job. It requires deep discussion and mure reflexion on what the future of the European Seniors' Union could look like, consulting its stakeholders and apply their advice.

The Presidency and Executive Committee of the European Seniors' Union – ESU held widely attended online consultations on our Vision and Mission Strategic Plan for 2030. President Stefaan Vercamer and Secretary General Patrick Penninckx provided the initial paper to guide our discussions.

The result, based on the analysis of megatrends in Europe, as well as our 'Strengths and Weaknesses', gives clear guidance as to where we want to head by 2030. Three key words stick out: *broaden* our base, *deepen* our insights in key issues and *represent* our interests at all levels, including through formal representation.

The Vision document was formally adopted at our Presidency and Executive Committee meetings in Ciudad Real, Spain on 5 November and proclaimed during the 30th Anniversary Celebration on 7th November.

As the ESU moves into its fourth decade, it aims to deepen cooperation with European institutions and civil society to ensure that seniors remain active participants in shaping Europe's democratic future. The Ciudad Real Congress reaffirmed that building a Europe "for all ages" requires shared responsibility, solidarity, and respect for the experience of older generations, now and in the future. the Strategic Action Plan 2030, will help to accomplish the ESU's activities accordingly.

Ciudad Real:
Strategic Action Plan 2030

To date, Europe faces many challenges which reflect directly on older adults. The ESU has to be harnessed to face these challenges and to provide adequate responses.

In the course of 2025, the Presidency and Executive Committee of ESU held several discussions on where and how the ESU should evolve in the coming years. As a result of these very interesting talks, the Executive Committee developed an overarching Strategic Document for ESU for the coming years, based on five strategic objectives:

Strategic Objectives '2030'

1. **Visibility and Representation**
2. **Awareness and Advocacy**
3. **Expertise and knowledge-Sharing**
4. **Cooperation and bridge-Building**
5. **Policy Capacity and Influence**

The Strategic Document reflects the ESU's vision on Europe: it envisions a Europe where policies in every sector reflect the reality of an ageing population.

Therefore, the ESU strives to connect, empower, and represents seniors across Europe, fostering cooperation, knowledge sharing, policy influence and solidarity between generations.

Our Focus Areas for 2030

1. **Visibility and Positive Image of Active Ageing**
2. **Active Senior Citizenship**
3. **Lifelong Learning and Inclusive Participation**
4. **Intergenerational Solidarity**
5. **Health and Long-Term Care**
6. **Media, Digital, AI and Financial Literacy**

With the right vision and courage, Europe can turn this demographic shift into one of its greatest achievements: a continent where every generation has dignity, security, and a voice.

That is the Europe the ESU stands for — and the Europe we are building together!

Spring Conference 2025 – Bratislava

"Lifelong Active Ageing: An Asset for our Societies"

The European Seniors' Union (ESU) held its annual Spring Conference on 19 and 20 March 2025 in Bratislava, Slovakia. The event marked the opening of the Union's 30th anniversary year and brought together around one hundred participants from senior organisations across Europe. The conference was organised in close cooperation with Vice-President Peter Mach and the Slovak Christian Seniors' Association (ZKS), which also celebrated its own 30th anniversary.

More than 100 participants from across Europe gathered under the theme "Lifelong Active Ageing: An Asset for Our Societies." ESU President Stefaan Vercamer opened the meeting, followed by contributions from Secretary-General Patrick Penninckx, Slovak Christian Democratic leader Marian Čaučík, and Mikuláš Dzurinda, President of the Wilfried Martens Centre of European Studies.

A special session honoured three decades of ZKS, with reflections by Pavol Hrušovský, Jozef Mikloško, and Miloš Nemeček, highlighting the organisation's commitment to democratic values and senior engagement in Slovakia.

The programme featured expert discussions on European integration, democratic resilience, and the role of seniors in public life. Speakers Dr. Peter Hefele and Dr. Teona Lavrelashvili provided insights into the challenges facing Europe and the relevance of senior organisations in strengthening intergenerational solidarity.

The conference also touched on ESU's strategic priorities for its anniversary year, alongside regular organisational matters. Representatives of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, EPP, and the National Bank of Slovakia added valuable perspectives.

The event concluded with widespread appreciation for the excellent organisation and high quality of the debates. President Stefaan Vercamer closed the conference by reaffirming ESU's commitment to promoting active ageing and a Europe for all generations.

Spring Conference 2025 – Bratislava

The 'Bratislava Presidency Principles'

On 19 March 2025, during the ESU Spring Conference in Bratislava, the Executive Committee of the ESU approved the *'Bratislava Presidency Principles'*.

This step is a milestone in the history of the European Seniors' Union. It is a clear sign that the Organisation is ready to take up new roles and responsibilities in its daily functioning.

These principles outline the commitments taken by the President, Vice-Presidents and Secretary General for the future leadership of the European Seniors' Union and a distribution of responsibilities amongst the Presidency members.

The running of a non-governmental organisation – such as the European Seniors' Union – is not a matter of sole entrepreneurship; on the contrary, it is teamwork.

The Presidency of the ESU, leads the 'day to day'-running of the Organisation, which consists also in exploring new ways to deepen and broaden the role of the ESU. Therefore, following a deep brainstorming, the Vice-Presidents are committed to take up their role and responsibilities in achieving this endeavor.

The *'Bratislava Presidency Principles'* reflect these commitments. Together, acting according these principles will make the European Seniors' Union the principal interlocutor when it comes to defend the rights of older people!

The Bratislava "Presidency Principles' unveiled

1. *The Vice-Presidents, along with the President and Secretary General, are dedicated to assuming roles within the Presidency and leadership of the ESU. These roles may vary and include: 1) Providing content and substance to the focus areas;2) Undertaking representational functions, and 3) Taking responsibility for co-organising ESU events.*
2. *The Congress establishes Focus areas, which are then refined by the Executive Committee for multiple years.*
3. *Representational work may be devoted to teach out to umbrella organisations and interest groups, the EPP, EPP associations, the European Parliament and PACE.*
4. *The events may include the Spring Conference, the Summer Academy, the Autumn Conference, the organization of Presidency meetings, Executive Committee meetings, or other events such as webinars and seminars.*
5. *The Vice-Presidents provide information about their organisation to the ESU for dissemination on the ESU's website and social media platforms. They also promote the work of the ESU through national communications and social media.*
6. *The Vice-Presidents assist in securing logistical, financial, and administrative support for the operation of the ESU. This includes seeking new methods for funding ESU events and publications, such as collaborating with the Martens Centre, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Robert Schuman Institute and Foundation, as well as obtaining funds from public and private sectors.*
7. *The Vice-Presidents provide new ideas for the operation of the ESU and serve as a resource to other member organizations by sharing best practices.*
8. *The Vice-Presidents maintain their connection to their respective organisations and political parties. They engage with MPs and MEPs to advocate for the interests of older adults in various focus areas and priority fields.*
9. *The Vice-Presidents continually reflect on redefining the role of active seniors in digital democracy, and in doing so, define the value added for the European Seniors' Union and member Organisations in Europe.*
10. *The Vice-Presidents actively participate in events organized by the ESU, serving as speakers, moderators, and contributors to the discussions; they also work actively to the expansion of the ESU to new member Organisations.*

Summer Academy 2025 – Bruges

"Demographic changes in Europe – Consequences for seniors and challenges for European governance"

From 12 to 14 September 2025, the European Seniors' Union (ESU) held its 16th Summer Academy in Bruges, organised with the WMCES, CEDER (CD&V), CD&V Seniors and the CDA research department. This year's theme, "Demographic Changes in Europe – Consequences for Seniors and Challenges for European Governance," brought together senior leaders, policymakers, academics, and civil-society experts from across Europe.

Participants examined Europe's demographic transformation and its impact on seniors' lives. Key discussions focused on digital inclusion, political participation, long-term care, economic security in older age, and the fast-growing "silver economy."

A video message by Commissioner Dubravka Šuica highlighted the EU's increasing attention to demographic issues.

Experts from the Martens Centre, national administrations, and organisations such as AGE Platform Europe contributed insights on combating ageism, ensuring intergenerational fairness, and adapting governance to demographic realities. The Academy stressed the need for tailored policies across regions, innovation in healthcare, and stronger participation of seniors in democratic processes.

The event concluded with a set of forward-looking recommendations, including calls for a European Action Plan against Ageism, systematic integration of demography into EU policymaking, and a proposed European Pact on Intergenerational Solidarity. ESU will further develop these conclusions into a formal policy document to be presented at its coming Executive Committee meeting.

On that occasion, a book celebrating 30 years of the European Seniors' Union, was handed over to the Mayor of the city of Bruges, Mr. Dirk De fauw.

The closing remarks were giving by the former president of the European Unions, Mr. Herman Van Rompuy.

"Generations Together"

"Celebrating 30 years of the ESU's Commitment to a Common Europe"

2025 marks the 30th anniversary of the ESU. Since its foundation, the ESU "*championed intergenerational solidarity, and promoted policies that foster understanding, cooperation and mutual support across age groups*" (quote by Manfred Weber, President of EPP, in his foreword).

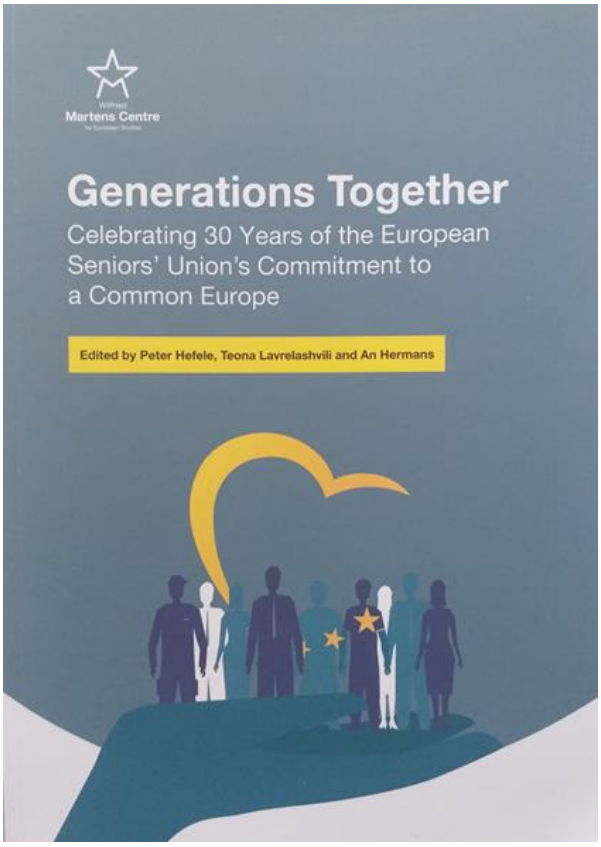
At this time, the ESU remains crucial for elderly people, but stands firmly for intergenerational solidarity.

During the Summer Academy, our publication "Generations Together: Celebrating 30 years of the ESU's Commitment to a common Europe" was presented. Specialists from the WMCES and co-authors – Peter Hefele, Teona Lavrelashvili and An Hermans– expressed their great enthusiasm and vision on the importance of including senior citizens in society.

During the Summer Academy, our publication was solemnly presented to the Mayor of Bruges at the townhall of Bruges.

Finally, the book was handed over to officials during the Ciudad Real Conference.

Aside many contributions, the book includes many recommendations for European Institutions and national (and regional) governments.



This publication has been made possible with the support by the WMCES.

The ESU's activities: 2025 highlights

11.01.2025 White Paper - Towards an inclusive digital society - ESU recommendations

The start of the EU's new mandate in 2024 marked a crucial moment to ensure digital technologies serve everyone, enhancing innovation while safeguarding society. Microsoft's White Paper acknowledges this challenge and looks forward to working with the new European Commission, the European Parliament, and the incoming Presidencies of the EU Council, as they together embark on this new political mandate to protect key groups, including older adults.

The ESU welcomed Microsoft's invitation to participate in the formulation of recommendations and emphasises that the inclusion of seniors in the digital age is not just desirable but essential to build a truly inclusive society, Therefore, ESU calls for a shift in perspective. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) must go beyond schools and reach all age groups, ensuring seniors have access to tailored learning opportunities. Policymakers, businesses, and civil society must collaborate to develop practical measures that equip older adults with the knowledge and skills to navigate the digital world safely and effectively.

18.01.2025 'Labour Shortages: Between Demography and Migration – Responses from European Workers' – International Seminar in Barcelona

From 30 January to 2 February 2025, the Universitat Abat Oliba CEU in Barcelona hosted the International Seminar titled "Labour Shortages: Between Demography and Migration – Responses from European Workers' Organisations". Supported by the European Union, the event will address challenges in the labour market linked to demographic shifts and migration.

The ESU joined a round table titled Demography/Immigration: Employment Consequences.

The ESU remains dedicated to fostering intergenerational solidarity and inclusive employment strategies

22.01.2025 Exchanging topics with European Commissioner Dubravka Šuica

On 22 January, Patrick Penninckx had the opportunity to exchange with Dubravka Šuica, European Commissioner for the Mediterranean and Demography, following her statement to the European Parliament on the 'Implemention of the 2023 Demography Toolbox', addressing these demographic challenges. The Toolbox contains elements for family policies, youth, older persons and migration. It focuses on empowering older generations and sustaining their welfare, through reforms combined with appropriate labour market and workplace policies.

28.01.2025
Exchanging topics in the light of the winter session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

On 28 January 2025, Patrick Penninckx underheld talks with Theodoros Roussopoulos, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Pablo Hispan, at the occasion of the Winter Session of the Assembly.

During this session, important Reports and Resolutions on Ageing, Age Discrimination and Migration were discussed.

The Assembly already debated several times on issues related to Human rights of older persons.

On 31 January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted the report Overcoming Age-Based Discrimination Against Older Persons, presented by our Vice-President, Andrea Eder-Gitschthaler,. This report calls for urgent action to combat ageism and ensure older persons are treated as rights holders, with equality, dignity, autonomy, and participation at all stages of life.

01.02.2025
International Seminar of FIDESTRA, supported by EZA, on the link between migration and demography

On 1 February 2025, the ESU attended the International Seminar of FIDESTRA, supported by EZA, on the link between migration and demography, looking at the role of workers' organisations in this context. The Secretary General of the European Seniors' Union, brought in the perspective of senior workers and how a review of the age concept in our societies needs to be taken seriously.

The panel was chaired by ESU Vice-President Carmen Quintanilla.

14.02.2025
National Meeting of Senior Høyre in Oslo

On 13-14 February, Senior Høyre hosted its National Meeting in Oslo. This event was particularly special as they are bidding farewell to Lars Myraune, former president of Senior Høyre, he led the organisation with dedication for the past six years.

President Stefaan Vercamer was invited as a guest speaker to present the work of the European Seniors' Union and highlight our policy priorities.

12.03.2025
"30 Years of Beijing: Women's Effective Leadership and Entrepreneurship as Drivers of Change"

On 12 March 2025, Vice-president Carmen Quintanilla Barba participated at the side event "30 Years of Beijing: Women's Effective Leadership and Entrepreneurship as Drivers of Change," which AFAMMER co-organized with the Permanent Mission of Albania to the United Nations, the Permanent Mission of Andorra to the UN, the Permanent Mission of Greece to the UN, and UN Women.

Thirty years ago, at the Fourth World Conference on Women, AFAMMER was present in Beijing representing rural women from Spain and around the world. That global action marked a turning point in the fight for equality, enabling women to take control of their own lives. However, we still face major challenges.

The wage gap and the digital divide remain a reality. In addition, two out of every three people who leave rural areas are women, because they cannot find employment opportunities. It is essential to take action to curb depopulation and ensure that the demographic challenge does not disrupt women's lives.

19.03.2025
ESU Spring Conference in Bratislava

On 19 and 20 March, The ESU held its Spring Conference in Bratislava; prior to this conference, the Executive Committee of the European Seniors' Union held its first meeting of 2025.

At this occasion, 3 new vice-presidents were elected, notably Ms. Kalliopi Marangaki from Greece, Ms. Andrea Eder-Gitschthaler from Austria, and Ms. Noëlla Jacobs from Belgium.

01.04.2025
#EuropeforAllAges

On 1 April 2025, the Secretary-General discussed with Michał Szczerba the recent kick-off of the European Parliament's Interest Group '**EuropeforAllAges'** together with members of the European Parliament and the Polish Deputy Minister responsible for the Council Presidency, Ms. Sobkowiak-Czarnecka.

This interest group is a forum for all democratic, pro-European parties in the European Parliament to address ageing, longevity, healthy ageing, older persons' rights, social inclusion, and intergenerational solidarity, with the participation of AGE Platform Europe.

02.04.2025
14th 'Senioren Tag' 2025

From 2 to 4 April 2025, on the occasion of the 14th German Senior Citizens' Day 2025, the ESU took part in several workshops and panel discussions.

The German Senior Citizens' Day is the platform for exchange, information and networking around ageing in Germany. For three days, everything revolved around the question of how to achieve a good life in old age.

09.04.2025
Spring Session of the CINGO

From 7 to 9 April 2025, Secretary-General Patrick Penninckx together with ESU-Counsellor Günter De Schepper attended the Conference of INGO of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The ESU o sons of the almost 300 non-governmental organisations that are represented in this body, with a participatory status.

During this session, many issues have been discussed, with focus on participative citizenship.

29.04.2025
ESU attends the EPP Congress in Valencia

On 29 and 30 April, our President and Secretary-General, together with a delegation of ESU-Vice-Presidents, met in Valencia during the the **EPP – European People's Party** Congress.

The Congress achieved a number of statutory changes and adopted Resolutions, inter alia on our response to Demographic changes. The Congress also elected a new leadership with Manfred Weber as President and Dolors Montserrat as Secretary General, as well as 10 Vice-Presidents. The European Seniors' Union – ESU supported a good number of the elected Vice-Presidents.

During this congress, the ESU representatives met the newly elected Secretary-general of the EPP, Ms. Dolors Montserrat, as well as Siegfried Muresan (MEP) and Wouter Beke (MEP).

The Congress furthermore allowed us to have meetings with the other EPP Associations EPP Women YEPP EUCDW and our partners, the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the Robert Schuman Institute (Budapest).

Additional – bilateral – talks were organised between our Secretary-General and the president of EUCDW, Dennis Radtke, with Mr. Rodriguez, and other EUCDW members, and with Ms. Annita Demetriou, President of the House of Representatives of Cyprus and leader of the Democratic Rally (DISY).

In the aftermath of the congress, on 6 Mai 2025, Secretary-General Penninckx met again Ms. Dolors Montserrat during the session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

15.05.2025
ESU attends the "Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for All Ages: Addressing Ageism"

On 15 Mai 2025, the ESU Secretary-General attended multi-stakeholder meeting "Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for All Ages: Addressing Ageism," hosted at the Google Digital Atelier in Brussels by AGE Platform Europe and the Berlin Digital Services Centre (WZB). During a presentation he focused on concrete solutions for the development of age-inclusive AI technologies—tools and systems that do not marginalize older persons but instead actively empower them.

27.05.2025
Let's Act Now! – Empowering Seniors in Europe's Digital Future"

On 27 and 28 May, the ESU participated in the Digital Citizenship Education Forum in Strasbourg, held under the banner of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education. As Secretary General of the European Seniors' Union, I represent the voice of Europe's older generations at this vital event.

03.06.2025
ESU takes part at the EPP Political Assembly

On 3 and 4 June 2025, Secretary-General Patrick Penninckx participated at the Political Assembly of the EPP.

06.06.2025
Seniors and intergenerational fairness – meeting with European Commissioner Glenn Micallef

On 6 June, Patrick Penninckx had the pleasure of meeting with European Commissioner Glenn Micallef, responsible for Intergenerational Fairness, to discuss the crucial role that seniors must play in shaping Europe's future. As Secretary General of the European Seniors' Union – ESU, he emphasized the importance of involving older generations in the development of the EU's Intergenerational Fairness Strategy.

Patrick Penninckx also had the opportunity to highlight his role in the Coalition for Digital Inclusion, where we are actively contributing to one of the key strands of the strategy. Digital inclusion is a gateway to participation and empowerment — and must be a priority for all age groups. We share this objective with AGE Platform Europe EPP Women and YEPP, as well as many seniors' organisations.

Looking forward to continued collaboration and deeper involvement of the ESU in the elaboration of this vital strategy for Europe's future. ESU will organise, together with the Robert Schuman Institute (Budapest) a European conference on this topic in 2026.

19.06.2025
AGE Congress 'Intergenerational Solidarity'

On 19 June, President Stefaan Vercamer took part in the AGE Platform Europe congres in Leuven, focused on intergenerational solidarity — a timely and vital theme in today's ageing society. Main message was the breakdown of segregation between generations, and the way forward to intergenerational fairness.

On this occasion, President Vercamer had insightful talks with Desa Srsen (Cabinet of EU Commissioner Glenn Micaleff, working on the EU Strategy for Intergenerational Fairness).

30.08.2025
ESU takes part at the CDU Seniors' congress

On 30 August, The CDU Seniors' congress took place in Magdeburg, Germany.

The congress elected a new President, Mr. Hubert Hüpper, as well as a new Board. A new memorandum was adopted for the next 5 years. Our President, Stefaan Vercamer, had the opportunity to speak on behalf of the ESU.

12.09.2025
ESU Summer Academy - Bruges

From 12 to 14 September, the ESU organised its yearly Summer Academy in Bruges (Belgium), The programme covered key topics with top-level speakers and policy makers. More than 60 participants attended the conference.

Policy makers and leaders of seniors' organisations discussed with experts on demographic changes, digital developments, finances, health and long-term care.

All participants were invited by the Mayor of the city of Bruges.

26.09.2025
Meeting the Christian Democratic Seniors of Cyprus

On 26 September, on initiative by to Antonios Demetriades, Vice-President of the European Seniors' Union, President Stefaan Vercamer met the Christian Democratic Seniors of Cyprus.

The President met also Annita Demetriou, the President of the Parliament of Cyprus and also the leader of the mother party, together with the core leadership of the senior citizens' movement in Cyprus.

30.09.2025
PACE autumn session with Andrea Eder-Gitschthaler

At the occasion of the autumn session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (30 September 2025), our Vice-President Andrea Eder-Gitschthaler shared her vision for seniors in Europe.

Andrea Eder-Gitschthaler is the author of the Parliamentary Assembly's landmark report "Overcoming age-based discrimination against older persons" in January 2025.

She is preparing a follow-up report to continue the fight against age-based discrimination.

01.10.2025
Meeting of the AGE Platform Europe - Copenhagen

On the 1st October, at the meeting of the Executive Council meeting in Copenhagen, Secretary-General Patrick Penninckx presented the publication of 30 years European Seniors' Union – ESU to the President of the AGE Platform Europe.

Taking place in the inspiring setting of UN City in Copenhagen, and in the framework of the AGE Council of Administration, the participants reflected on what it truly means to age well – in a society that is itself ageing.

The Secretary General was appointed as ESU representative at the Council.

Patrick Penninckx also participated in an important exchange at WHO Europe on the development of the WHO European Strategy on Ageing – under the fitting theme: "Ageing is Living".

01.10.2025
A European Framework for Activating Older People- Tallin

On 1 and 2 October, Georg Männik, Vice-President of the ESU, and Günter De Schepper, Counsellor to the ESU, took part in a thought-provoking panel discussion organised by the Europees Forum, in collaboration with EZA, focusing on "A European Social Framework for Activating Older People." Georg was our local organiser of the event, to which ESU collaborated for both substance and organisational infrastructure.

Together with social partners and civil society representatives, participants explored how European and national frameworks can evolve to meet the needs of an ageing population — through dialogue, innovation, and solidarity.

The seminar concluded that activating and empowering older people is not only an economic necessity, but also a moral commitment to a fairer, more inclusive Europe.

06.10.2025
"Europe's digital future": Café Connect

At the invitation of the EPP Secretary General, Dolors Montserrat, Patrick Penninckx, Secretary General, participated at the digital EPP Café Connect for an engaging discussion on "Europe's Digital Future: AI, Sovereignty, and Global Competitiveness."

Together with Silke Dalton, Cabinet Expert of Executive Vice-President Henna Virkkunen, Kai Zenner, Head of Office and Digital Policy Adviser to MEP Axel Voss, and Dimitar Lilkov, Senior Research Officer at Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, the participants explored how Europe can strengthen its digital sovereignty, foster innovation, and complete a truly integrated Digital Single Market. During the discussion, Patrick Penninckx raised an important question: Are we risking overregulation at EU level?

07.10.2025 Launch of the EP Intergenerational Forum

On 7 October, Secretary General Patrick Penninckx represented the European Seniors' Union at the launch of the European Parliament's Intergenerational Forum in Strasbourg.

The event brought policymakers, youth and seniors organisations together in one room — and that matters deeply to us at ESU, because it's all about what we stand for: dialogue, solidarity and fairness between generations.

The Secretary General also contributes to this work as part of the Coalition for Digital Inclusion, which is preparing the Intergenerational Fairness Strategy of the European Commission under Commissioner Glenn Micallef. Digital inclusion is essential to ensure that no one — regardless of age — is left behind in Europe's digital transformation.

13.10.2025 Autumn Session of the CINGO

Together with Günter De Schepper, Counsellor to the ESU, Secretary-General Penninckx attended the Autumn session of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, that took place from 13 to 17 October.

The week was filled with constructive dialogue and strategic discussions on strengthening civil society across Europe. A key highlight was my meeting with Ambassador Aloisia Wörgetter, Permanent Representative of Austria to the Council of Europe, where we explored the creation of a "Group of Friends of Ambassadors in Strasbourg".

The presence at the CINGO is the result of the participatory status of the ESU, and facilitates our contributions to the multiple issues that are discussed, for example, the instauration of the "Foreign Agents Act" in Georgia.

16.10.2025 EPP Political Assembly - Vilnius

On 16 October, President Vercamer and Secretary-General Penninckx attended the Political Assembly of the European Peoples' Party, in Vilnius.

The key issues debated, as announced by President Manfred Weber and Secretary General Dolors Montserrat, are clearly the follow up to the Congress in Valencia: security and defense, migration and economic relaunch and competitiveness.

05-07.11.2025
30th Anniversary of ESU – Ciudad Real

The European Seniors' Union (ESU) celebrated its 30th anniversary with a memorable gathering in Ciudad Real, Spain, bringing together senior representatives, experts and partners from across Europe. The event marked three decades of commitment to the democratic participation, social inclusion, and well-being of older citizens throughout the continent.

The highlight was the unanimous adoption of the Ciudad Real Strategic Action Plan 2030, setting a bold roadmap for seniors' political participation, digital inclusion, rural vitality, and intergenerational solidarity for the next years.

The anniversary celebration concluded with a renewed commitment to the future. The ESU pledged to continue advocating for strong participation of older citizens in European decision-making, to address social and digital inequalities, and to contribute actively to the promotion of European values. The gathering in Ciudad Real symbolised both a moment of recognition for past achievements and a launchpad for the ESU's ambitions in the coming years.

08.12.2025
EPP Political Assembly - Brussels

On 8 and 9 December, President Vercamer and Secretary-general Penninckx represented the ESU in the Political Assembly of the EPP. The ESU's Strategic Action Plan was one of the main items for the ESU to be presented.

Meet the ESU's Treasurer: Gnanam Seminck

"As Treasurer of the European Seniors Union, I am committed to strengthening intergenerational solidarity, managing our resources transparently and responsibly, and giving seniors an active voice in shaping the future of our continent."
(quote by Gnanam Seminck)

Following her unanimous election as Treasurer of the European Seniors' Union (ESU), the newly elected Treasurer, Gnanam Seminck shared her vision for a transparent, value-driven financial stewardship of the organisation.

A Mission Beyond Numbers

For Gnanam, the treasurer's post is far more than a technical role. "It is a mission," she explained. "Seniors should not merely receive support — they must actively contribute, shape, and co-create."
Guided by values such as *intergenerational solidarity, dignity and respect, social cohesion, lifelong learning, health and well-being, and digital inclusion*, she aims to give these principles "financial form and strength" through stable, transparent, and impact-oriented management — fully aligned with the **ESU Strategic Action Plan 2030**, adopted in Ciudad Real.

Local Roots, European Vision

Drawing from her political experience in **Oudenaarde**, where she has long been active in local government and civic projects, Gnanam emphasises how local insight shapes her European engagement. "Municipal work teaches you how policies affect daily lives," she said. "At European level, ambitions must be translated into inclusive processes, budgets, and frameworks that truly reach people."

Six Principles for Financial Stewardship

Gnanam outlined six guiding principles for ESU's financial governance: transparency; accountability; reliability; efficiency; sustainability, and compliance.

"Our finances must serve our mission — not constrain it," she stressed.

Financial Support for European Solidarity

For Gnanam, financial policy is the backbone of ESU's European advocacy. She intends to channel resources toward cross-border cooperation, joint projects with other EPP associations, and capacity building among national senior organisations. Diversity and inclusion will also guide the geographical spread of ESU events planned for 2026 and 2027.

Promoting Intergenerational Bridges

A central priority is intergenerational solidarity. Gnanam advocates joint initiatives between youth and senior organisations, mentoring programmes, and local projects that bring older people into schools, community centres, and digital hubs. "Seniors are not a separate group," she said. "They are mentors, contributors, and partners in shaping our shared future."

Dignity, Participation and Lifelong Learning

Gnanam also highlighted *dignity and respect* as essential criteria in ESU programming: projects must empower seniors rather than patronise them, ensuring accessibility, diversity, and participation in policy design. Her financial strategy will invest in lifelong learning and digital inclusion, supporting training for seniors, hybrid learning models, and digital access initiatives. "Digital empowerment is essential for inclusion and for bridging generational divides," she notes.

A Shared Journey

Looking ahead, Gnanam hopes her mandate will strengthen ESU's credibility and impact. "By 2030, ESU should have a robust, transparent financial base and be known for trustworthiness and results," she said. "Member associations must feel supported — as partners who innovate and shape our collective mission."

She expressed gratitude for the support of her family — her husband and two children — in balancing her European, political, and local responsibilities. "Their encouragement allows me to dedicate myself fully to this role," she said.

Patrick Penninckx said "Gnanam brings both financial competence and a deeply human approach to this role. Her leadership will help ESU continue building bridges — across generations and across Europe."

We wish Gnanam a fruitful periode as newly appointed Treasurer of the European Seniors' Union!

Information Services and Communication Channels

The ESU uses a variety of communication channels to keep members informed and engaged with our activities, initiatives, and priorities. Our primary platform is the ESU website (**esu-epp.eu**), which provides access to event reports, updates, and messages from our leadership.

Our social media channels further enhance our outreach, with Facebook (**facebook.com/esu.eu**) being our most active platform. Here, we share live updates from events, senior-related topics, and EPP news.

Through these communication channels, ESU strives to keep members connected and well-informed, while encouraging them to engage, share news, and promote our work within their networks. For further details or to access these resources, please visit our website or contact us directly.

8 EL MUNDO. Sábado, 8 de noviembre 2025

ESPAÑA LEGISLATURA A MEDIAS LA OPOSICIÓN

El líder del PP, Alberto Núñez Feijóo, ayer, en el XXX Congreso de la Unión Europea de Mayores (EUM), celebrado en Ciudad Real. DIEGO PUERTA / PP

El PP se volcará en las iniciativas que puede apoyar Junts

Acelerará medidas sobre autónomos, IVA, IRPF, inmigración, okupación o nucleares

JUANMA LAMET MADRID

El Partido Popular va a aprovechar la ruptura de Junts con el Gobierno para intensificar su agenda legislativa. Con la formación de Carles Puigdemont deliberadamente alejada ya de la «mayoría progresista», Alberto Núñez Feijóo cree que hay más margen para aprobar en el Congreso medidas de los *populares* con el apoyo de Vox y Junts. Sin ceder ante ellos y sin moverse de sus postulados, pero sabiendo perfectamente que ahora hay más mimbres para repetir el castigo aritmético a Pedro Sánchez.

«Con más razón vamos a meter iniciativas parlamentarias consecuentes con nuestro ideario, porque la mayoría del Congreso, en lo ideológico, es de derechas, una vez que Junts ha arrancado de su fachada el cartel de "bloque progre- que sus votantes son de derechas», detallan las fuentes.

Por eso el Partido Popular va a acelerar sus iniciativas parlamentarias sobre fiscalidad, vivienda, okupación, inmigración, energía –sobre todo, la nuclear– y seguridad ciudadana, según detallan a este diario fuentes de Génova. «La realidad es que ahora mismo Feijóo tiene más capacidad legislativa que Sánchez, y si no fuera por Armengol, que bloquea las iniciativas en la Mesa del Congreso, el BOE se redactaría desde Génova», subrayan en el equipo de Núñez Feijóo.

Eso sí, en Génova insisten mucho en que ellos no van a ceder ni un ápice de su ideario para convencer a Junts, y que simplemente van a presentar medidas en las que se pueda «coincidir». ¿Por qué? Porque la formación de Carles Puigde- Sánchez por no cumplir sus exigencias. «Ahora nuestras posibilidades son mayores», reconocen en el PP tras el veto de Junts a toda las iniciativas de Sánchez.

«El objetivo es que caiga el Gobierno y ahora parece que Junts se apunta a ese objetivo», añaden las fuentes. No de manera directa, con una moción de censura, pero sí por la vía del desgaste y el bloqueo, creen en el PP. Porque ¿se puede gobernar sin Presupuestos, sin convalidar reales decretos, sin aprobar leyes y sin desbloquear los fondos europeos? La respuesta es que «Sánchez sí», pero la duda es por cuánto tiempo.

Mientras el PSOE sufre por no tener la mayoría del Congreso, el PP va a impulsar en esa misma cámara algunas de sus medidas más ideológicas, en las que precisamente Junts coincide con los postulados generales del principal partido de la oposición. Entre las principales estará, de nuevo, la deflactación del IRPF, así como la bajada del IVA de los alimentos básicos. Pero no sólo: el PP quiere «retratar» al PSOE con medidas para endurecer la legislación contra la okupación, para ampliar la vida útil de las centrales nucleares, para permitir construir más vivienda asequible o para bajar las cuotas y la tributación de los autónomos. ¿Por qué «retratar»? Porque el PP cree que los socialistas, junto con Sumar, van a torpedear sus medidas.

Así ocurrió a finales de 2024, cuando la formación independentista catalana pactó con el PP una enmien- puesto a la producción eléctrica y para aplicar nuevos incentivos a la industria de la cogeneración energética. Obtuvieron el apoyo de los nacionalistas vascos, de ERC y de Vox, de manera que se aprobó con una mayoría holgada en la ponencia de la Comisión de Transición Ecológica. Pero el PSOE y Sumar aplazaron sin fecha la reunión de comisión que debía avalar esta medida. Tres meses después, el Gobierno retiró el proyecto de ley en el que PP y Junts habían logrado incluir la mejora fiscal.

«Feijóo tiene más capacidad que Sánchez para aprobar leyes»

«El objetivo es que caiga el Gobierno y parece que Junts se apunta»

Además de erosionar al Ejecutivo con iniciativas que configuren otra mayoría aritmética, el PP quiere adelantarse al PSOE en medidas que ambos podrían enarbolar de manera indistinta en estos momentos. Por ejemplo, la revalorización de las pensiones. Alberto Núñez Feijóo anunció ayer que el PP una proposición de ley para garantizar la actualización de las pensiones incluso en situación de prórroga presupuestaria.

Después de que Junts haya roto con el PSOE, ya no hay posibilidades reales de que los Presupuestos Generales de 2026 salgan adelante, por eso el PP –que el año pasado se opuso al decreto ómnibus que las revalorizaba, al contener otras cosas con las que estaba en desacuerdo– se adelanta al Ejecutivo en un tema de disputa capital.

«Los pensionistas no son culpables de que el Gobierno de Pedro Sánchez no tenga mayoría ni proyecto para gobernar», aseguró el líder del principal partido de la oposición. «Quienes han contribuido al bienestar y al progreso de un país deben tener garantizada su recompensa», añadió.

Esta iniciativa se suma a otra que el PP presentará en el Congreso «para impedir que Sánchez siga abusando de la prórroga presupuestaria» y sea obligatorio convocar elecciones ante la falta de cuentas públicas durante dos años consecutivos, según fuentes de Génova.

«Llevamos toda la legislatura denunciando que un país no puede funcionar indefinidamente sin Presupuestos. Los ciudadanos no deben ser víctimas de la irresponsabilidad de un Gobierno que no aprueba las cuentas», añadió Feijóo.

Por otro lado, el vicesecretario de Economía y Desarrollo sostenible del PP, Alberto Nadal, aseguró que los *populares* han «coincidido en muchas ocasiones» con Junts en votaciones en el Congreso y dijo que espera poder seguir haciéndo-

AZNAR

LEGITIMIDAD. El ex presidente del Gobierno José María Aznar dijo ayer que el Ejecutivo de Sánchez tenía la legitimidad de origen, pero la ha perdido «de ejercicio», y que sin someterse a una cuestión de confianza o a una convocatoria electoral queda «al margen de la ley».

«REFORMAS». Aznar lo expuso durante un coloquio en la Universidad Francisco de Vitoria. «En este momento, este Gobierno es un Gobierno ilegítimo, al margen de la ley, porque en una democracia parlamentaria lo que te determina la legitimidad fundamental es el tener la confianza y la mayoría en el Congreso», reiteró.

SIN ELECCIONES. «No creo que vaya a haber elecciones, porque implicaría que tenemos un presidente del Gobierno responsable», ha apuntado la portavoz parlamentaria del Partido Popular, Ester Muñoz, en la senda de lo que ya había apuntado Aznar en el mismo acto.

Looking Ahead:
ESU's vision on 2026 and beyond

As we bring 2025 to a close and reflect on another year of milestones and progress, the ESU reaffirms its dedication to championing the rights, dignity, and active participation of seniors across Europe. The challenges of an ageing population, rapid demographic changes, and evolving societal needs once more underscore the urgency for innovative, collaborative, and human-centered approaches.

Moving forward, we remain steadfast in our advocacy for a truly inclusive Europe. Our ties, strengthened by multiple encounters between the European institutions, the EPP and ESU, will lead to the fulfilment of the needs of seniors throughout Europe. We continue to engage ourselves to ensure that the voices of seniors are not only heard, but also prioritised.

As one of the major outcomes of the Ciudad Real Congress, ESU announced that 2026 will be the 'Year of Intergenerational Solidarity'. The initiative will focus on strengthening ties between younger and older generations, encouraging mutual learning and shared responsibility in shaping Europe's future. In 2026, the ESU's will therefore focus on promoting active senior citizenship as a pillar of democratic participation and fostering a positive view on ageing to combat stereotypes and ageism.

We will start to put our Strategic Action Plan into practice, so it translates the experience of our Organisation into action. This Plan sets out an ambitious framework to ensure that seniors across Europe enjoy dignity, active participation and opportunity in all aspects of life. It is a call to policymakers, communities and citizens to recognise ageing as an asset and a shared responsibility.

Ciudad real Strategic Action Plan 2030, aligns civic engagement, policy advocacy and partnership-building into a single, coherent agenda. Its adoption in Ciudad Real reflects a determination to move from strong voices to measurable impact — to bring European values to life in every community.

We will continue to support active ageing and inclusion, ensuring seniors thrive in their communities, while enhancing media, digital, and AI literacy to empower them in the digital age.

Strengthening intergenerational solidarity will remain a priority, as we work to bridge generational divides and foster mutual respect. At the same time, we will advocate for comprehensive solutions to long-term care and palliative care challenges that respect dignity and ensure access for all. Last but not least, sufficient income and affordable housing will remain on our agenda.

As we celebrated the 30th anniversary of our Organisation, the ESU will remain a leading force in building broad support for a robust European seniors' policy. This ambition will be achieved through close collaboration with our affiliated organisations, the European People's Party, the Martens Centre, Members of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, and many other partners. Additionally, we aim to expand the ESU's reach by initiating activities in countries with elected EPP representatives but no active ESU presence.

Looking ahead, the ESU envisions a Europe where ageing is celebrated as a natural and enriching course of life. By combining the wisdom of older generations with the creativity of the young, we can build a society that values every individual's contributions. Together, we can ensure that no one is left behind, creating a future that honours the achievements of today while preparing for the challenges of tomorrow. Let 2026 and beyond be a time not only of celebration but of inspiration and action, and look forward to many more years of impact and progress. It will be the year where intergenerational solidarity will be at the core of our work, activities and commitments.

Stefaan Vercamer & Patrick Penninckx

1995 – 2025

Commemorating the 30th Anniversary:

Images often tell more than Words…

Inspired by the spirit of La Mancha,
we are not fighting windmills like Don Quixote,
but addressing the real and pressing challenges
that millions of seniors face every day

2025

annual report

ESU Headquarters
Rue de Commerce 10, 1000 Brussels
+32 2 309 28 66 – esu@epp.eu
http://esu-epp.eu
f esu.epp

Edited by: Stefaan Vercamer, Patrick Penninckx, Günter De Schepper.
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