



## EUROPÄISCHE SENIOREN UNION EUROPEAN SENIORS' UNION (ESU)

Newsletter „SENIOR INTERNATIONAL“ Issue No. 97 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014

### **The Way to a "Better Europe"**

was discussed by participants at the 5<sup>th</sup> ESU Summer Academy in Vienna.

Over 60 leaders from 16 countries discussed for three days in the Political Academy of the Austrian People's Party. Their credo: we have helped shape the European elections - now we must ensure that confidence is restored and the "Europe of Citizens" becomes a reality. Heinz K. Becker (Austria) received best wishes for his re-election to the European Parliament. Dr. Vaclav Roubal, a former Vice-President from Prague, was serenaded by the guests on his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. Thanos Michael, recently deceased in Nicosia, and former President of the Cyprus Seniors' Association, was remembered with a minute's silence. In honour of all victims in eastern Ukraine, the company rose from their seats. Because Volodymyr Dzobak, UARP Chairman of the ESU partner-organization in Ukraine, was prevented from attending, President Prof. Dr. An Hermans again expressed the solidarity of our organization. The ESU relies on political solutions to the crisis. The bond should be strengthened through written contacts.

Another highlight of the Summer Academy was the handover of two symbolic stones for the future Peace Centre in Oswiecim (Auschwitz/Poland) to the project director, Janusz Marszalek, a Vice-President of the ESU and also President of the Polish Seniors' Union. Into his hands, a granite stone was delivered from the construction site of the Brenner tunnel between Austria and Italy, obtained by Vice-President Elke Garczyk (Bavaria/Germany), as well as an approximately 800-year stone from the oldest tower of St. Stephen's Cathedral, which was blessed by the prelates in a ceremony in the presence of 10 seniors from five countries.

Which conclusions can be drawn from the European elections were outlined in lectures given by prominent politicians and academics, as well as by the reports from the ESU's member associations. The submitted, written "country reports" reflected both the joy of the good overall performance of the EPP parties, as well as concern about the

strengthening of the Euro-sceptic and right-wing spectrum.

There were increased demands, especially from Eastern Europe, to give more importance to health and social security. Pension levels between 200 and 400 Euros, as in Latvia and Slovakia, are inappropriate in wealthy Europe and favoured widespread poverty in old age, alleged some of the delegates.

Great attentiveness was paid to Othmar Karas from Austria, Vice-President of the European Parliament. He listed a number of hitherto hardly-reflected facts, with which the EU has successfully combated the financial and economic crisis since 2008. (We will return to this in the next Newsletter.)

Heinz K. Becker gave thanks for the support of his candidacy and announced the continuation of his unremitting efforts to make life easier for many citizens. (Details in No. 98). At the suggestion of the President, he intends soon to form a parliamentary group of MEPs who feel especially committed to senior-specific concerns. Member associations are encouraged to send him names of suitable and willing parliamentarians.

Dr. Dieter Halper, director of the Political Academy of Vienna, gave an assurance that the Summer Academy can take place there again in 2015. Other cooperative partners of the ESU could then be again the EPP and the Wilfried-Martens-Centre.

## **Presidency and Executive Committee deliberated**

The relocation of the ESU headquarters from Vienna to Brussels is, in the main, complete, declared the Executive Committee in Vienna. The conversion from the status of an association under Austrian law into an "international non-profit association (IvoG)" under Belgian law had required the amendment of the Statutes. The legal document, signed on 17<sup>th</sup> April, provides, for example, an innovation in that elected members of the governing bodies, including Congress delegates, may be represented, in substantiated cases, by one of their colleagues in the plenary.

The IX. (Election) Congress is, according to the Statutes, to be prepared for the year 2017.

In the conception of a communication strategy, introduced by the Secretary-General, Guido Dumon, next to the re-designed website ([esu@epp.eu](mailto:esu@epp.eu)) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/esu.eu>), the Newsletter also has its place. Above all, he is instructed to pursue a "horizontal integration", that means the mutual exchange of information and experiences. In the plenum, the Editor thanked Mr. and Mrs. Hawkes

for translation into English and Dr. Eva Permann (SLO) into Slovenian; to Claus Bernhold (DE) for the adoption of the Newsletter in the Info-Portal of the CDU Seniors' Union, and to Susanne Walpitschker (ÖSB) for reprinting in the magazine SIS. Andrzej Chodorowski (PL) said spontaneously that he will provide unpaid translations into Polish.

A working group will be appointed to clarify the question of whether there should be rules of procedure for the Presidency. Also on the agenda is the future financing of the Association.

Vice-President Lidmila Nemcova invited participants to Prague for the days 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> November for another Regional Conference East.

This is the fourth time the "Golden City" has been the host since 2003. The conference theme this time is "Solidarity and Cooperation between Generations."

*Redakteur: [ulrich.winz@web.de](mailto:ulrich.winz@web.de)*

*Translated by Margit Hawkes*