

The 7th Summer Academy for leading seniors (1-3 July 2016), organized in Vienna by the European Seniors' Union (ESU), the Österreichischer Seniorenbund, and the Politische Akademie der ÖVP (Polak), supported by the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies and the European People's Party (EPP), took place some days after the UK's Referendum.

The General Assembly of ESU (50 delegates present from 22 countries), a Member Association of the European People's Party (EPP) and the largest political seniors' organization in Europe, made the following statement in view of the new challenges resulting from the British Brexit vote on 23rd June 2016.

- We respect the British voters' right to choose their future, but we strongly regret their choice, both because of the political and economic turmoil that is likely to follow for the UK and because of the new strains and stresses the British leave-vote will expose the EU and its remaining 27 member states to.
- We urge political leaders at all levels to stay wholeheartedly committed to the European project, to defend the fundamentals of the EU Treaties and to oppose nationalistic tendencies strongly.
- European citizens - young and old – have the right to be involved in the building of our common Europe. Today's Europe owes this to both previous and future generations.
- Analysing the results of the Referendum, we note that there are differences relating to region, education and age. ESU stands for cooperation between the generations and therefore we regret that many young people did not vote.
- The older generations of Europe, having personally experienced the cruelty of wars and dictatorship and themselves having actively contributed to the reconstruction of their communities and to the build-up of modern welfare states, demand from today's European leaders that their due rights are fully recognised.
- Bridging the generation gap is an urgent necessity in our society. We need intergenerational solidarity for the further development of a truly social market economy which creates job opportunities and social security.
- ESU will continue supporting the European project and its overarching goal of preserving peace and security, developing a strong Europe in a globalised world and promoting a better future for all its generations.

Note: The European Seniors' Union (ESU), the EPP's official association to represent the interests of seniors within our political family, was founded in 1995 in the course of the EPP Congress that took place in Madrid. The ESU is a network of 37 associations, located in 27 countries, and chaired by its President An Hermans.

ESU is dedicated to the advancement of the rights of senior citizens, their active citizenship and engagement in European societies. The ESU aims to voice and promote the interests of older persons and focuses on a range of policy areas that impact on them. These include issues of anti-discrimination, active ageing, social protection, social inclusion, health, intergenerational solidarity and accessibility based on the experience of previous generations. In openness to the future ESU is to be a permanent bridge between generations.