

**5. Kongress der Europäischen Senioren Union (ESU)  
5<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Senior Citizen's Union (ESCU)  
5<sup>ième</sup> Congrès de l'Union Européenne des Seniors (UES)  
27 – 29/04/2004 Bonn-Bad Godesberg (D)**

**Message of the Prime Minister of Greece  
and President of Nea Demokratia, Dr. Kostas Karamanlis  
to the 5th Congress of the European Senior Citizens' Union  
Bonn, 27-29 April 2004**

Dear Mr. President,  
Dear Friends of the ESCU,

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to address the 5th Congress of the European Senior Citizens' Union. A union, which is very closely connected to our broader political family of the European People's Party as its recognized association

I follow the activities of your association very closely, since its foundation in November 1995, and I have been impressed by your active involvement in all major European issues and by the youthfulness of all your initiatives and actions. I remember how interesting and stimulating for me was our discussion, in September 2002, when Nea Demokratia hosted in Athens the ESCU Conference on a very critical topic: the solidarity among generations.

We in Nea Demokratia see the senior citizens as an invaluable source from which we can constantly draw experience and knowledge. We honour this experience, we honour your long contribution to our society and we express our gratitude for this. But we also need you take your part in our efforts for the construction of a better future. We are fully aware of the great potential that the use of your experience and knowledge entail for the success of all our future projects. We can not write off what has been achieved so far and we definitely need the advice of those who have accomplished it. We cannot afford to waste any human resources, especially those most experienced. We, therefore, acknowledge the need to encourage dialogue, cooperation and solidarity among generations and stimulate mutual understanding.

However, it is mainly the turn of the society to offer to you now. We have an obligation to provide you with a better quality of life, to reward you for all that we have inherited from you. We owe our senior citizens a better social security, public health and medical services, use of modern facilities and technologies to make social life easier for them and to facilitate their equal participation to social activities.

Nea Demokratia, realizing the importance of a Senior Citizens' Union at a European level, is a founding member of the ESCU. We believe that it is very important that all the members of the union from 20 different countries of Europe exchange their views and experiences and contribute new ideas to help us with our internal policies towards our senior citizens. Through our representative, the Vice President of the Union Mrs. Maria Mantziafou-Kanellopoulou, who has been very active in this field and all our members in the union, we sincerely hope to continue and further promote this dialogue and cooperation.

I wish you a successful 5th Congress

Kostas Karamanlis