



EUROPÄISCHE SENIOREN UNION
EUROPEAN SENIOR CITIZENS' UNION
L'UNION EUROPEENNE DES SENIORS



Awakening Awareness for Europe's Tasks in the 21st Century

Speech by Dr. Bernhard Worms, president of the European Senior Citizens' Union at the ESCU Regional Conference in Vienna (May 2009)

Only those who are alert can formulate goals and find routes, which actually help to achieve these goals.

The old maxim is also still valid for Europe;
“Life punishes the latecomer”

The path toward Europe has become irreversible.

Anyone who took part in the EPP congress in Warsaw at the end of April and carefully followed the messages from the 27 EU and 9 invited Eastern and Central European states could go home with the certainty that “Europe is already here, now it just a question of how we Europeans build our house together!”

Which is where the contribution of senior citizens begins.

Every construction needs to be built on stone.

Our foundation is: all politics has to serve just one goal: “human dignity is inviolable!”

This goal corresponds to the Christian image of mankind; its realization requires three prerequisites: freedom, justice and solidarity.

As these three statements are primarily acknowledged in the European Senior Citizens' Union, for us the term “CHRISTIAN OCCIDENT” is not just paying lip service but rather an unrenounceable mission. The standards we measure ourselves by are coherent with our faith, and so firmly rooted in our occidental culture we greet those of other minds with tolerance and understanding for their own way of life to ensure that social peace continues to be maintained.

Resolutions of the European Senior Citizens' Union for the House of EUROPE

Only a strong Europe guarantees economic growth and associated social security and so welfare for all.

We must reinforce the current status quo (union of 27 nations), and ensure the stability of the Euro, provide the necessary conditions for scientific and technical innovation and create calculable financial markets and effective education systems.

European politics can only achieve this when it is clearly stated to all which borders can only be removed over extended periods, when at all. In this way, we unanimously support the statement which we owe it to Turkey to announce, that for us there can be no acceptance into the EU, rather a different form of cooperation, i.e. privileged partnership.

Old and Young Together

The solidarity between generations (demographic change, attitude of the generations toward each other and our image of old-age) led to the Pulheim Congress statement of 2007; "Old and Young Together – Guarantee for the Future of Europe!"

To reinforce the solidarity between generations, politics must make the changed courses of life into the basis of its decisions.

Experience of life is the most valuable thing which we would like to contribute to ease the collaboration between the generations.

There is no consistent image of older people.

There is a breadth of active, effective and cognizant people. Through which people are redefining assumptions of old age as a positive section of life.

No age discrimination, unprejudiced reassessment of existing age limits.

Values are our spiritual and ethical foundation. Giving everyone stability, providing orientation and guaranteeing respectful interaction between the generations.

We must shape our environment preventatively for everyone, young or old, who is not fit and active (urban planning, access, product design, freedom from barriers).

Social Market Economics as Guiding Principle for Europe!

The guiding principle of social market economics must be established to counter the current insecurity of the banking and financial crisis. We must acknowledge failures where they have occurred and be prepared to pass resolutions and acts which exclude such malpractice in future.

The Lisbon Agenda Revisited

We support the goal of making the EU into the most competitive economic area of the world. Even in the globalized world our success model is still social market economics, as this is based on the principles of catholic social doctrine and evangelical social ethics. This means, yes to freedom and yes to responsibility of the individual as well as yes to a social approach within business.

We recognise the role of the state/EU Commission (where applicable) as the guardian of freedom, competition, and a reliable regulatory framework for international organisation of the capital markets.

Security in Old Age

A new generation agreement for five instead of the previous three generations must be filled with life in politics and society as an unwritten law.

The most important factor here is that there can be no social union in Europe in the foreseeable future. The existing economic differences simply do not allow unification of social conditions. On what level? Who can afford it and at whose expense? Questions on questions for which there are no answers capable of holding up to a plausibility check.

Equally, social goals are still to be developed and striven toward through relinquishment (in fiscal law for example).

Health for All

Our principle: "everything a doctor diagnoses must be treated." Strengthening prevention and health promotion have the highest priority.

Education and training (gerontology – geriatrics) are to be tailored to the five-generation agreement.

Care and care organisations (insurance) belong inseparably to health in old-age.

Our Concept of the Family

The imperative of subsidiarity leads mandatorily to the family and its function and role in the state and society.

The family is the foundation of society. All generations belong to the family. Family is the first and most important place for communication of values and respectful interaction between the generations.

- Our concept of the family is marriage with children.

We understand and provide equivalent answers for ways of life and conditions in which family exists.

Our experience teaches us: education and training begins in the parental home. Nevertheless the responsibility of society (state, community) to provide care for children also begins very early.

Education and the transfer of knowledge belong together; they are equally important and therefore equally valuable.

Vote!

For European senior citizens, the European elections are the signal to awake!

After the events of Warsaw in April 2009 we are certain our generation has seized the signs of the times and will help the European Peoples Party (EPP) to become the strongest political power in Europe in early June.

We are therefore gladly here in Vienna to assist, through our regional conference our friend, General Secretary Heinz Becker, to achieve a mandate from the Austrian electorate.

Experience, voting, making the right decisions and our readiness to accept responsibility are the guarantees of our success!