



**EUROPÄISCHE SENIOREN UNION  
EUROPEAN SENIOR CITIZENS' UNION  
L'UNION EUROPEENE DES SENIORS**



**General Secretariat:**

Hermann-Seger-Str. 23, D-50226 Frechen

Tel: +49 (0)2234 188 419, Fax: +49 (0)2234 188 410

e-mail: [esu@cdu.de](mailto:esu@cdu.de) Internet: [www.eu-seniorunion.info](http://www.eu-seniorunion.info)

## **Give the elderly their place!**

**Statement by the President of the European Senior Citizens' Union to the world press in recognition of the UN International Day for the Elderly**

**Brussels (1<sup>st</sup> October). To celebrate today's UN International Day for the Elderly, the President of the European Senior Citizens' Union (ESCU) has issued a statement, which reads as follows:**

**“I very much welcome the decision of the UN as a global organisation to institute this day of observance. The decision is one, which is worthy of the dignity of senior citizens and their role in society. This resolution by the world's forum attests to the wisdom, which is rightly attributed specifically to the older generation: the experience of a long life coupled with political insight and the foresight which is derived from this.**

“The ESCU respectfully pursues all initiatives which serve the cause,” declares Bernhard Worms, “and participates in them. The spectrum ranges from information on concerns specific to the older generation at a local level and discussions with younger people right through to seminars and conferences. Among these I include the Bonn Conference, which is addressing the topic of “Elderly people with a background of migration in Europe”. It focuses on the political and social involvement of these citizens and looks at housing, cultural life, health care and opportunities for integration and communication.

The presentation by Vice President, Dr. Marilies Flemming (Vienna), ensures that the ESCU's influence will be brought to bear on the process and results of the conference.”

### **The ongoing task of securing of human rights**

Exploring the connection between the UN International Day and the “Declaration of Human Rights” adopted 60 years ago, Dr. Worms emphasises: “The document applies to all generations of all peoples. Experience nevertheless tells us that the enforcement of human rights is by its nature a process and demands tenacity in the struggle. Defending and consolidating human rights therefore remains on the agenda of politicians. In Europe, they are fundamental to the search for common positions in putting down grievous violations of the binding conventions for dealing with sovereign states.”

“It is with great regret that we discover,” says Worms, “that in warlike conflicts such as recent events in the Caucasus it is not just women and children but most of all the defenceless elderly who suffer injury and even loss of life.” The ESCU considers itself to be especially concerned and committed to those affected by virtue of our principles and aims.

## **A call from the ESCU**

In the name of more than half a million members of the ESCU in 28 countries, the President, Dr. Worms, appealed to multinational and national organisations and to the peoples and their governments:

- “Ensure that greater trust enters into relationships between peoples and states to replace mistrust and threats of violence. Make your contribution so that democracy is developed and strengthened everywhere: Belarus needs our solidarity most of all in Europe.
- “Stand up for your elderly fellow citizens who remain an indispensable and valued part of society – given access to paid and voluntary activity and adequate provision in sickness and invalidity.
- “Let those in retirement and pensioners have their share of the growing prosperity of the population: they have worked for it in their working lives and deserve social security in their later years! Senior citizens should not be fobbed off with handouts!
- “Fight against all manifestations of discrimination based on age, wherever they might occur. Human rights irrevocably include equality among all sectors of the population – from the child to the senior citizen – and also demand civil courage if necessary.”

## **Towards a society based on shared values**

In conclusion, the President of the European Senior Citizens’ Union declares: “Only those who perceive their responsibility in this light can truly embrace the cause of the UN International Day for the Elderly and make their contribution to a civil society based on shared values – in Europe and across the entire globe. It is after all a great truth that human rights are indivisible!”