



SENIOR INTERNATIONAL

News from the European Senior Citizens' Union (ESCU)

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Second Eastern Regional Conference (in Berlin)

Agreements

The premier highlight of the 2nd ESCU "Eastern" Regional Conference (5th to 7th May in Berlin) was the official signing of two "Cooperation Agreements" between Lithuania and Baden-Württemberg, which had already been pre-scripted in Vilnius. They propose experience and information exchanges, practical help with projects (e.g. in press and publicity work) and joint initiatives with regard to the ESCU and the European People's Party (EPP). The agreements bear the signatures of Prof. von Stetten (Baden-Württemberg) and Jonas Volungevicius (Lithuanian Christian Democrats) and Romualda Hofertiene (Homeland Union/Lithuanian Conservatives). They were witnessed by Erika Reinhardt (Stuttgart), who is to be thanked for her preparatory work.

Rolf Reinemann (Lower Saxony CDU Senior Citizens' Union) extended a similar offer to the representatives of the ruling Polish PiS ("Law and Justice" Party), Jadwiga Pomawska-Szwejk and Josef Karczmarek, who had travelled from Warsaw. Reinemann, the Lower Saxony State President and National Deputy President of the CDU Senior Citizens' Union, hoped that it might be possible to sign an agreement at the German-Polish seminar in Zbaszyn/Bentschen at the end of August, following detailed discussion in Poland. ESCU Vice-President, Leif Hallberg (Sweden), informed the conference that he planned to use these first experiences in setting up specific cross-border arrangements in the "Northern Region". He was delighted that Baden-Württemberg also wanted to cooperate with the two ESCU member associations in Latvia (Christian Democrats and the People's Party).

Observer status and congratulations

Applauded by guests from four countries, Dr. Worms confirmed that events during his visit in March to the Ukrainian Association of Retired Persons (UARP) with General Secretary Uhlenbrock had led to the organisation – with its 26,000 members and under the leadership of Wolodymyr Dzjobak – being awarded ESCU observer status with immediate effect, including speaking and voting rights in the Executive Committee. Up until now, the UARP has made active use of its guest status.

Dr. Vaclav Roubel from Prague (President of the Christian Democratic Senior Citizens) congratulated the conference on its appointment to the Czech Government's new Senior Citizens' Council. Participants felt that exploiting any opportunity to work with Senior Citizens' Councils or advisory bodies at the national, regional or local level had to be in the interest of the concerns of our generation. Silvia Vlachova (of the Czech Freedom Union's Senior Citizens' Platform) spoke enthusiastically about the growing interest among young people for meeting with their older compatriots. She was very optimistic about this development.

Support for the European Senior Citizens' Pass...

... to promote greater mobility and therefore greater involvement during our third and fourth ages of life was expressed by the conference following in-depth discussions. The proposal was also supported by Prof. Ursula Lehr (Germany) who spoke about the consequences of demographic change in Europe and had advice about adopting a healthier lifestyle from childhood onwards in terms of physical activity, nutrition and intellectual activity).

Minute's silence

It was the heartfelt wish of participants at the conference that the victims of war and violence should be remembered on the eve of the 61st anniversary of German capitulation. They assembled at the "Neue Wache" war memorial in Unter den Linden, with a wreath bearing the yellow and blue of the ESCU, where Dr. Worms spoke in haunting words of how their legacy inspired and obliged us to continue to pursue relentlessly the consolidation of good relations with our continental neighbours. A tour of the city introduced conference participants to local features such as the Holocaust Memorial, Checkpoint Charlie and the remains of "The Wall", which were reminders of National Socialism and the Cold War.

News in brief

Representation in all 290 constituency committees of the Tyrol People's Party – that's the goal of the "Movement for Senior Citizens' Support and Solidarity between the Generations" (SVP). At the moment, they are represented in just 200. In his address to the second National Conference of Senior Citizens held in Bozen on 26th May, Dr. Worms spoke with passion in support of this initiative. The conference argued for greater responsibility towards our neighbours based on human warmth and regard.