



SENIOR INTERNATIONAL

News from the European Senior Citizens' Union (ESCU)

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The Executive Committee (the Board) of the ESCU will meet in Brussels on 7th December (14.00-18.00) to discuss forthcoming projects and conferences. The invitations are due to be sent out shortly. In accordance with the constitution, all member associations or member parties are eligible to send two representatives. The General Secretariat recommends booking early to secure the most cost-effective flights and rail tickets.

The first hour of the gathering is to be given over to an information exchange. You are requested to provide a short activity report and up-to-date list of office bearers, in order to facilitate the flow of information.

Our Union's General Secretariat will be moving - probably in the spring of 2007 - into the new headquarters of the European People's Party at Rue de Commerce/Handelsstraat 10 in Brussels. It's currently based in Berlin and was previously in Vienna (1995-2001).

Under the auspices of Prime Minister Karamanlis, an ESCU Regional Conference took place in Athens at the beginning of October with the theme "Towards a society for all ages – eliminating the isolation of the elderly". The "Athens Declaration" resulted in an offer by parents and grandparents to lend young people their "hands, hearts, wisdom and experience" which was linked to an expectation of "recognition and respect for senior citizens as equal and active members of society". There was a reminder of the new political strategies required to address the growing presence of the elderly and the looming threat of isolation. Vice President Kanellopoulou-Mantziafou praised the conference, which was held in high esteem nationally, as an important initiative in strengthening the Senior Citizens' Association of the Nea Demokratia Party.

At the CDU National Delegates' Assembly of Senior Citizens (held in Hanover on 16-17 October),

Dr Worms, ESCU President, highlighted the fact that both associations were rooted in the same Christian doctrines and appealed for greater efforts to raise awareness of these shared principles. He thanked the assembly for the wide range of support afforded to the ESCU, without which it would not be possible to operate either now or in the future. Dr. Otto Wulff was re-elected as President of the CDU Senior Citizens with 97% of the vote. Dr. Worms is Honorary President of the organisation he previously led for 12 years which has around 60,000 members and is active across Germany. As President of the CSU Senior Citizens' Association (and ESCU member), Dr. Weckerle gave the welcome address in front of more than 200 delegates, and a video message was relayed to the assembly from Chancellor Merkel. The ESCU's information stand, which was set up in the conference building, proved to be very popular.

Dr. Conrad Schroeder (of Freiburg im Breisgau in Germany) has died following a short illness. He was the Union's General Secretary from 2001 to 2004 and was remembered by the Board of the ESCU at their recent meeting in Brussels with a prayer.

Both Lithuanian senior citizens' associations, under the leadership of Jonas Volungevicius and Romualda Hofertiene, met with Prof. von Stetten, President of the CDU Senior Citizens' Association in the German State of Baden-Württemberg and Lithuanian Honorary Consul, in Vilnius in August. His visit began the process of cooperation, which had been agreed in Berlin in May between the Baden-Württemberg Senior Citizens' Association and their Lithuanian counterparts.