



SENIOR INTERNATIONAL

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Participating for the first time in the VI ESCU Congress (29th September–2nd October in Pulheim, Germany) will be representatives of the Italian Senior Citizens' Party and the Senior Citizens' Club of the Slovenian People's Party. Interest in joining our Union was also recently expressed by Danish and Norwegian Christian Democrat groups.

The Slovenian ESCU member association (see above) has a membership of 500 senior citizens. Their President, Bogdan Bradac, is committed to forging close contacts with the youth section of the party. Events take place at least four times a year at different locations. Politicians, speaking on political but mostly socio-political issues, address audiences of 40-50 people, and membership is conditional on belonging to the People's Party. (Information supplied by Erik Lozak, Executive Committee Member).

"Bridging Over" was the theme of the Nordic Regional Conference held at the end of August in Malmö, Sweden. Under the chairmanship of Vice President Hallberg, 50 senior citizens came together for discussions from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Estonia and Latvia plus guests from Austria and Germany. President Dr. Worms, proposed that senior citizens were not just bridge-builders between peoples and states but also between generations – standing at the centre of life as is our self-image. National borders, according to Worms, would become less and less important in Europe, with local regions gaining in significance. The identity of a person begins with their immediate environment, its language and culture. Young politicians also addressed the seminar with the message that intergenerational cooperation pays in all ways!

Topics included the right of senior citizens when abroad (Ingrid Lunderquist of Malmö) and the social status of pensioners in the Baltic States (Juris Zanders of Riga). Crossing the new and impressive Öresund Bridge on the way to the Christian Democrats and a care home for the elderly in Copenhagen was a "bridge crossing" befitting the general topic. The presentation by Dr. H.O.Tungesvik of Norway, a GP and member of the National Council for Senior Citizens, on "Elderly people – who cares?" is available at the ESCU website (in English). www.eu-seniorunion.info

ESCU Vice President Leif Hallberg (Stockholm) – just a few days after the successful Regional Conference – was elected President of the Christian Democrat Senior Citizens. Their four-page newsletter "Senior Aktuell" appears quarterly, with voluntary editor Bert Parsmo.

At the IV German-Polish Seminar of the Brandenburg Senior Citizens' Union in Germany 20 senior citizens from both countries assembled at Zbaszyn (Bentschen) in Poland at the end of August. Led by Dr. Röpke of Potsdam, topical issues relating to the history and present of both countries were discussed. Röpke brought participants up to date with globalisation trends. U. Winz advised on the growing influence of the ESCU.

There was a service of commemoration at a former Protestant cemetery for German inhabitants of the town and at a Polish memorial to victims of the uprisings after the First World War, with the Mayor also in attendance. Seminar participants declared they would continue to stand together in spite of gloomy official relationships. A visit to Potsdam is being considered.

The Ukrainian Senior Citizens' Union are pushing resolutely ahead with their programme to improve medical care for the elderly, advises their President, W. Dzjobak from Kiev. In spite of the difficult political situation, his organisation, which has ESCU observer status, will continue to be guided by Christian, social and European interests. To explore what is on offer, 19 round-table discussions have been held over several months.

Estonia and Latvia will be next to receive "SI". Berit Wirödal and Solveiga Elsberga have offered to undertake translation. "SI" appears in English, French, Spanish and German, but who else translates it into other languages?