



## SENIOR INTERNATIONAL

News from the European Senior Citizens' Union (ESCU)

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**History and the future affect us all.** The ESCU Board has called on the elderly and young people "to actively support and promote all activities aimed at democracy and reconciliation", as the best response to the "bitter experiences of war and dictatorship" in Europe and other parts of the world. The EU Reform Treaty would enable citizens to identify with Europe while at the same time strengthening their attachment to their native countries, the press statement continues.

**Schengen Agreement makes it happen.** "A reason to rejoice" is how ESCU President, Dr. Worms, described the removal of border controls between the new EU countries on 21<sup>st</sup> December. "It fulfils a long-held dream. I firmly believe that open access for visiting will further promote the reconciliation of our peoples and European integration," explains Worms.

**ESCU participates in Madrid "Family Workshop".** At the invitation of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Spanish institute, Dr. Worms spoke at a forum of politicians responsible for social affairs and family policy in January about social care insurance legislation in Germany. Prof. Lehr spoke about the "changing profile of the family".

**Top posts for senior citizens.** Since the start of the year, the Chairman of the Austrian Senior Citizens' Union (ÖSB), Prof. Khol, has also headed up the cross-party Senior Citizens' Council, which plays an active role in social affairs. 80-year-old ÖSB President from the Tyrol, Helmut Kritzinger, has been granted the presidency of the Upper House of the Austrian Parliament, thereby occupying the third-highest office in the Austrian Government.

**Commemorating victims of the Holocaust.** ESCU President, Dr. Worms, will be travelling to Poland in March to visit the Nazi concentration camp of Oswiecim (Auschwitz). He was invited by the city's Lord Mayor and will be accompanied by Vice President, Dr Flemming (A). In early April, he will address a German/Polish seminar in the Polish town of Poznan, well-known for its trade fairs.

**Our Congress rolls on.** The events and results of the VI<sup>th</sup> ESCU Congress (held in Pulheim (D) in September/October 2007) continue to remain on the agenda at events in many different places, especially with Congress delegates from more than 20 countries inviting the ESCU to their events. The editor described his impressions to CDU Seniors in Cottbus (D), while the media have incorporated issues raised at the Congress into various items. One of the local newspapers in Westphalia in Germany, the "Westfalen Blatt", based its interview with Dr. Worms on the main Congress topic with the headline, "The Elderly Back the Young".

**The elderly settle the election outcome.** Over-60s in the federal states of Hesse and Lower Saxony in Germany formed the biggest age-group to vote in the state government elections in January with 48 per cent in each case and had a significant impact on the result. Prior to the elections, President of the CDU Seniors' Union, Dr. Wulff, spoke at 22 events to a combined audience of more than 4,000.

**On course for growth.** The All-Ukrainian Association of Retired Persons reports on the opening of two new offices in Kamjanec and Zytomyr. Wolodymyr Dzjobak tells us that, although they're not expecting any assistance from the state, they are full of new ideas and are busy implementing them – "for the elderly, the sick, the poor and the disabled". The Association has ESCU observer status and provides medical and financial assistance as well as spiritual and cultural support.

**Austria: new limits on prescription charges.** News just in from the "SIS" reports that when a patient's total prescription charges reach 2% of their net income in one calendar year, there is automatically no further need to pay during the remaining months of the year. This applies to pensioners and those in employment.

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