



SENIOR INTERNATIONAL

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Bulgaria extends the ESCU family. With the admission of "SGERB", the senior citizens' organisation of the "GERB Political Party", the ESCU now also has a member from Bulgaria in its ranks. The Board approved the application at its meeting on 12th June in Brussels which was submitted on the 18th May, the date of SGERB's inauguration. The President is former ambassador, Prof. Nikolay Andreev. He advised us that the founding conference attended by 500 delegates at the Palace of Culture in Sofia was an event of national importance. The speeches by the ESCU President, Dr. Worms (D), and the Vice President, Dr. Flemming (A), were broadcast live on television. SGERB is the country's only political organisation for elderly citizens. By the end of the year, the membership is set to increase from its current level of 2,000 to 10,000, Andreev assured "SI". His association's activities are based on the points laid down in the ESCU's "Magna Charta" of 2002.

Standing up for human dignity. The ESCU resolutely rejects all blatant and covert forms of age discrimination. "Such acts are incompatible with the right of each and every individual to dignity and equal treatment," declared Dr. Worms in Vilnius on 15th June. The UNO had called for this date to be a day of action to heighten public awareness of discrimination against the elderly. "The position paper, "Violence towards the elderly and discrimination against elderly people", published by the ESCU in 2003 (www.eu-seniorunion.info/en/activities/projects.htm) is still relevant today and is to be commended again to Europe as a basis for political action," Worms explained. The examples presented by Dr. Krista Schüssel (A) at the "South East" Regional Conference held in Vienna at the end of May revealed the full extent of wilful and negligent behaviour towards people in their later years. "We call on politicians and the business community – in respect of the development of products and their use in particular – to make significant changes for the benefit of the elderly."

European elections in sight. The Austrian Senior Citizens' Union (ÖSB), the ESCU's biggest organisation with a membership of 330,000, has nominated its Secretary General, Heinz K. Becker (59), to stand as a candidate for the European Parliament. The announcement by ÖSB Chairman, Dr. Andreas Khol, prior to the South East Regional Conference was greeted with applause, as Becker has proved in his function in various ways to be conviction politician and enthusiastic supporter of European integration. His activity is regarded with liking beyond the national boundaries of Austria.

Becker told "SI" that, should he be elected on 7th June 2009, he intends to address wholeheartedly the challenges of demographic change for politics and the economy. This follows on from the findings of the Regional Conference he moderated, which was attended by representatives from 7 countries in the region and other guests from Greece, Sweden and Germany. (Detailed report soon on the Internet at www.eu-seniorunion.info).

Not the last word! "The result of the referendum of the Irish people on 13th June is disappointing but at worst will only delay the process as the Lisbon Treaty comes into force," declared ESCU President, Dr. Worms, in an initial statement. "In the long term, sense and political insight will prevail on the Emerald Isle and it will be recognised that there is no serious alternative to a United Europe whose house rules are supported by all."

At the invitation of Angela Merkel. The ESCU Board and Executive Committee have been invited by the German Chancellor to a reception in Berlin on 6th November.