

The **Serbian Democratic Party** is making efforts to found a senior citizens union, the European Senior Citizens' Union President, Dr. Worms encouraged parliamentarians in Belgrade with a view to membership in the European Senior Citizens' Union. Respective working up is primarily to be expected in the Voivodina. On the invitation of Claudia Crawford, head of the local Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Dr. Worms spoke in early October on the importance and areas of activity of conservative parties in society. Representation of the interests of senior citizens is in view of the increasingly older population indispensable he explained. Worms also referred to a decision of the Warsaw EPP congress in April, which urgently recommends the foundation of senior organizations by all European People's Party members.

Karl Fürst zu Schwarzenberg (Czech Republic) and Dr. Erhard Busek (Austria) advocate stronger participation of the Balkan states in the many shared tasks and structures of the European Union. "Enough of paternalism and laying down the law from the back of a Mercedes" exclaimed the former Czech foreign minister in Berlin. The high unemployment rate (up to 80% of the employable population) demands wide ranging investments, which until now haven't been realized. The former Austrian vice chancellor criticize the removal of visa requirements for only a part of the Balkan states, which causes unnecessary problems, and spoke for common European environmental protection, energy, fiscal, security, asylum and education policies, this then forming the prerequisite for acting on a global level. The politicians spoke at an event titled "1989 – 2009 / Change, Upheaval and Coalescence in Europe"



Serbian orthodox cathedral in Belgrade dedicated to St. Sava; the biggest place of worship on the Balkan peninsula; Beginning of building: 1935 – official inauguration: 2004.

The Polish yes to the treaty of Lisbon was welcomed by the European Senior Citizens' Union; President Worms expressed the expectation in Brussels that the Czech president Vaclav Klaus would now set aside concerns and also sign the treaty. Both his predecessor Vaclav Havel and Karl Fürst von Schwarzenberg (CZ) expressed optimism. Schwarzenberg replied in Berlin to a corresponding question: "He will sign."

A conference of the European People's Party (EPP) is planned for 9/10 December in Bonn (D) with election of the controlling committees, in which the European Senior Citizens' Union will participate with six delegates and guests. The European Senior Citizens' Union President Dr. Worms belongs to the political office of the EPP. Meetings of the Board and Executive Committee of the European Senior Citizens' Union will take place on 8 December.

A senior citizens conference will be held in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius on 28 November. According to the president of the European Senior Citizens' Union members organisation, Romualda Hofertiene, the current situation in Europe and particularly activity of the European Senior Citizens Union are to be discussed. Participants from other parts of the country are also expected, including Klaipeda, where a senior citizens group was only established this year. Next May Klaipeda will host a further national conference. The senior citizens network in Lithuania has also recently been extended by the founding of a group in Birzai.

Responsibility for history and the future dominated a several day visit to Vienna by politically motivated evangelical youth from Berlin-Spandau. Upon the invitation of European Senior Citizens' Union Treasurer Edeltraud Paul they discussed the behaviour of the population during the Nazi regime in Germany and Austria, and visited an exhibition on the topic in the Austrian Parliament and monuments to the victims of the dictatorship. The youth group had presented a performance under the maxim of "hear nothing, see nothing, and say nothing" in their home town on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the "Kristallnacht".

That senior citizens in the CDU (D) are "**often forgotten or neglected**" by their party was determined by their president Prof. Dr. Weckerle in retrospect of the national elections to the Bundestag. Although 42% of the over-sixties voted CDU or CSU, there was hardly any reference to the older generations in election flyers for example. The day after the elections CSU president Seehofer did however announce structural changes and the readiness to become receptive to senior citizens issues.