



# EUROPÄISCHE SENIOREN UNION EUROPEAN SENIOR CITIZENS' UNION L'UNION EUROPEENNE DES SENIORS



## SENIOR INTERNATIONAL

News from the European Senior Citizens' Union (ESCU)

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**Wilfried Martens (B)**, a person respected around the continent again heads the European People's Party for the next three years (EPP / PPE), voted in by the delegates to the electoral Conference in Bonn (D), including representatives from the European Senior Citizens' Union, on the 9<sup>th</sup> December. Antonio Lopez-Isturiz (E) remains Secretary-General. Ten vice presidents were elected.

**Our resolution on "migration"** was adopted by the EPP conference, in which the European Senior Citizens' Union with reference to a report by the UN calls for all countries to realise integration concepts without delay, as the "immigrants" – about 31 million within Europe alone! – are entitled to live amongst society as equal citizens. In her speech before conference, Dr. Angela Merkel (Germany) described integration as for her the most important issue in European politics.

**"The social market economy** as the solution to the global financial and economic crisis" prompted some several hours of discussion at the EPP conference. The position paper of the same title prepared with participation of the European Senior Citizens' Union was adopted.

In his Bonn speech **European Senior Citizens' Union President Dr. Worms** asked for solidarity with the pensioners from the EPP. Their position in the Baltic countries is so depressing as to be comparable to other continents. He also pleaded for a child-friendly family policy. "Old and young together" must be the basis of all political action. In the "five-generation society" of today, sprightly octogenarians are well suited to take on "socially important functions". Worms encouraged all Christian Democrats to tackle the problems decidedly and thus strengthen social peace.

**Commemorating Phoebus V. Zachariades (CY)**. The long-time chairman of the Senior Citizens' Organization of Cyprus, Phoebus V. Zachariades died in early December. Deeply affected by the loss, the Board and Executive Committee commemorated their colleague and friend on 8<sup>th</sup> December with a silent prayer. Dr. Worms praised him as "a reliable ally from the beginning" and the successful regional conference of the Mediterranean region in Nicosia in May 2008 remains associated with his name.

**Ria Oomen-Ruijten (MEP, NL)** presented an impressive commitment to our association in Brussels before the Executive Committees of the European Senior Citizens' Union. She promised to support efforts to better material resources through the EPP, and recommended making the EU Commissioners to be elected in January and Members of Parliament from all EU countries into allies.



Mr. Phoebus Zachariades

**Current and fundamental tasks for the future of Europe** must be swiftly undertaken following entry into force of the Lisbon Reform Treaty on 1<sup>st</sup> December, stressed speakers at the Brussels meeting. President Dr Worms, Vice-President Carlo Fatuzzo (I) and Ria Oomen-Ruijten spoke out before the Executive Committee for more solidarity in society, including between young and old – and including changes in social and pensions systems. Retirement age should thus be liberalized, said Fatuzzo. Vice-President Leif Hallberg (S), who chaired the meeting of the Board for Dr. Worms, as well as Vice-President Carmen Quintanilla Barba (E) urged decisive political action by governments for dignified life in old age. Our generation is tasked with reasserting the Judeo-Christian value system in the interest of Europe said Hallberg.

**The two regional conferences of the European Senior Citizens' Union** will be officially held in 2010 in Malta (May) and Brussels (June). At national conferences - possibly with immediate neighbours - interested European Senior Citizens' Union member groups have been called by Dr. Worms and Vice President Dr. Roubal (CZ) to organize such meetings on their own and in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Long-term planning is recommended. For Spain, an invitation to senior citizens in Portugal would be advisable to get them interested in the European Senior Citizens' Union.

**The Christian Democratic Seniors of the Czech Republic (SKS)** are represented in the country with 10 clubs. The "Prague Academic Club" deserves special mention, drawing attention at two rallies on 17 November to the closure of the university by the Nazis (1939) and the beginning of the "Velvet Revolution" (1989). In 2009 one of auxiliary Bishop Vaclav Maly's celebrated masses took place simultaneously in the Cathedral and the Prague Palace, whereby Dr. Roubal was involved with intercessory prayers.