

JULY 2020

Dear Colleagues,
Dear friends,

It has been an exceptional period over the past few months, and it will continue to be so in the months to come, also for our meetings. Many of us missed the yearly Summer Academy in Vienna. But nevertheless, we stay in touch, in particular through this Newsletter.

Enjoy reading this July Newsletter and above all: have a nice summertime.



An Hermans

4th of July: ESU videoconference for the members of the Executive Committee (Exco)

For 10 years we met for the Summer Academy (SA) in Vienna. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and together with our Austrian colleagues of the *Österreichischer SeniorenBund* (ÖSB) we decided to cancel our SA, planned for 1-4 July 2020. As we are not yet able to decide exactly what our ESU activities will look like in the coming months, we felt the need to strengthen contacts with our members and organised a videoconference on the 4th of July. We saw a lot of familiar faces crossing the screen. Thank you for your participation. More information is available on [the site](#).



“Together for Europe’s recovery” : Germany’s six months presidency of the EU Council

At the beginning of this month, MEPs discussed with Chancellor Angela Merkel and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen the strategy and goals of the German Presidency for the coming six months. “The German presidency is determined to tackle the huge challenge posed by the pandemic”, Mrs Merkel said. She highlighted five areas that Europe needs to work on if it wants to emerge unified and strong from the current crisis:



1. Fundamental rights;
2. Solidarity and cohesion;
3. Climate change;
4. Digitisation and
5. Europe’s role in the world.

During our videoconference (4th of July) we had the pleasure of hearing a statement by Claus Bernhold, Deputy Chairman of the Senioren-Union of the CDU in Germany, concerning the German presidency of the Council of the EU. The statement is available in [German and English](#).

Deadline amendments resolution

‘Europe’s Recovery. For fair and resilient societies for all generations’

During the videoconference Secretary General Guido Dumon announced the first draft of the resolution that the ESU wants to submit in the EPP Political Assembly of September: *‘Europe’s Recovery. For fair and resilient societies, including all generations’*

We kindly remind you that the submission of amendments to this resolution should be made by **25 July**. You received an email with the resolution on the 5th of July.

Time table:

25 July: submission of amendments

27 July: discussion and adoption of amendments, prepared by Heinz Becker, in the Video Presidium meeting

September: submission to the EPP

Tribute to those who died from the coronavirus

In the previous newsletters our members repeatedly shared experiences about how they deal with COVID-19 across the different member states. In this context our colleague and ESU Honorary President Maria Kanellopoulou from Greece, where COVID-19 made many victims, has sent us a message of condolence for those who have died from the disease and she made a requiem poem in memory of the COVID-19 victims.



In honor of the victims, she has made the requiem poem in several languages (Greek-English-French). You are warmly invited to read the poem, which can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Thank you to Leif Hallberg for representing the ESU in Age Platform Europe



The ESU is a founding member of Age Platform Europe. From the start we support AGE in representing older persons at European and international level. Already several years Leif Hallberg, honorary president of the ESU, was representing the ESU in Age Platform Europe. In the future Leif is succeeded by Ghislaine Van Halewyn (cdH - BE) as ESU representative at [AGE Platform Europe](#). We would like to thank Leif for his dedication, follow-up and reporting.

Senior organisations on social media

During COVID-19 we tried to keep in touch despite everything. We came up with new ways of communicating such as newsletters and also our recent videoconference.

We also communicated via the social media platform Facebook and already have more than 2300 'likes' on our [ESU Facebookpage](#). Some of us are regularly active on this platform, which is always very pleasant to see.

Not only the ESU but also senior member associations such as [Kansallinen Senioriliitto ry](#) from Finland & [Senior Citizens Organisation of Cyprus](#) have their own Facebook page. We aim to get an overview of every organisation within the ESU family that is active on Facebook, either through a 'page of the organisation' or through a 'personal profile' that reports on activities.

So please reply to this mail and provide us with the following information, if applicable:

→ ***Does your senior organisation have a Facebook page, if so which one? (Share link)***

→ ***If there is no official Facebook page of your organisation, is there a personal Facebook profile where information about your organisation is shared?***

Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation.

Upcoming events

Presidium video meeting (27/07)

An invitation has been sent to the members of the Presidium. Main items on the agenda: final adaption of the resolution to be submitted to the EPP Political Assembly on 28-29 September 2020; further: planning agenda until the end of 2020.

Alternative activities in the second half of the year

You will be updated about this alternative at a later moment via e-mail.

November 6: Videoconference with Prof. Dr. Christiane Woopen.

Christiane Woopen is chair of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies and professor of ethics and theory of medicine at the University of Cologne.

In memory of the Victims of Covid-19

Inhuman, merciless killer,
You covered the whole Earth with terror,
You sneaked in our houses from the unguarded yard.
You reaped countless unsuspecting lives of the Past, the Present and the Future.
You hid in coffins, in anonymous monuments
Unmourned, ungrieved, unfuneralised, uncommuned
Without Divine Forgiveness, without Eucharist,
You threw them in endless Kaiadas¹
You satisfied your hunger with vulnerable groups.

Merciless Killer,
The greatest evil – how could your stone heart bear it –
Was that your victims left their last breath alone,
Without a tear, without a touch of their Beloved ones,
To soften their loss.
Without, oh merciless killer, Divine Forgiveness, without Eucharist,
Alone in cold, Intensive Care Units.

Fool, coward Killer,
You never learned that in this small place called Greece
Relatives and Beloved ones never threw into Kaiadas
Not a single man ungrieved, unmourned, uncommuned.
These wasted Lives will break the bonds of Hades,
They will become angels and they will judge you,
They will crush your filthy body with Their rhomphaias² and their swords.
These Souls, remember, they will eventually beat you.

Maria Kanellopoulou

¹ Kaiadas was an underground cavern at Ancient Sparta, into which corpses of state prisoners or weak babies were thrown.

² Rhomphaias were close-combat bladed weapons, referred to in the Book of Revelation of John of Patmos

Inhumain, assassinat impitoyable,
Tu as couvert la Terre entière avec terreur,
Tu es entré furtivement dans nos foyers par la porte arrière,
Tu as fauché innombrables âmes, sans méfiance, sans pitié. Demain,
aujourd'hui, hier.
Tu les as empilées dans des cercueils décontractés,
Tu les as bourrées dans mémoire anonymes,
Sans deuil, sans funèbre, sans le pardon divin, sans la communion.
Tu les as jetées sur Céadas³ innombrables,
Tu as satisfait ta faim avec des groupes vulnérables

Assassin impitoyable,
Le plus grand mal pour tes victims
– comment ton cœur de pierre pourrait il le supporter –
Est qu'ils ont laissé leur dernier souffle seul,
Sans la larme, sans le toucher de leurs proches, de leurs bien-aimés
Pour adoucir leur perte.
Sans, oh assassin impitoyable, le pardon divin, sans la communion divine
Dans les unités de soins intensifs des hôpitaux froids.

Assassin imbécile, lâche,
Tu n'as jamais appris que dans ce lieu appelé la Grèce
Les proches n'ont jamais jeté personne sur Céadas
Eau sans larmes, sans communion divine, sans funèbre.

Alors, ces âmes invaincues
Elles vont briser les liens des Hadès,
Elles seront transformées en anges, elles te jugeront,
Elles écraseront ton corps sale avec leurs “rhomphaïas⁴” et leurs épées.
Ces âmes invaincues, souviens-toi,
Elles te battront finalement.

Maria Kanellopoulou

³ Céadas est un précipice à Sparte, où étaient précipités les condamnés à mort à l'époque de la Grèce antique.

⁴ Rhomphaïas étaient des armes blanches de combat rapproché, mentionnées dans le livre de l'Apocalypse de Jean de Patmos