

Activities of the Czech Christian Seniors Association - SKS

Lidmila Němcová, SKS President

SKS is a civic organization with the membership of parishes and of the local seniors organizations of the Christian Democratic Party KDU-ČSL as well. We have a lot of organisations as associated members or only co-operating without any formal dependence (EAPN, PTP, KAF).

SKS has been re-registered in 2017 according to the new civic law and for this reason also new elections of the SKS Praesidium took part with validity for 3 years.

Lidmila Nemcova has been elected as the new president, Mr. Jaroslav Hulak and Mr. Karel Tomek as the vice-presidents. Dr. Vaclav Roubal has been appointed as the honorary president. A new improved program was submitted to discussion at the SKS General Assembly and approved.

We are very strongly supported by the KDU-CSL, our office is established free of charge in the palace Charitas in Prague (headquarters of the KDU-ČSL). All our members are working for the SKS as volunteers. Our activities are focussed on local clubs. Our challenge is to reach more senior clubs as registered or co-operating members and to have more members involved in interesting activities.

Our web pages www.krestanstiseniori.cz are very well managed.

SKS has joint at the beginning of the new year 2018 the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) active at national, regional and local levels against poverty and social exclusion. The book "The active and independent senior" has been published together by the EAPN and by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and it also contains an article written by the SKS chairperson. SKS took part in the EAPN congresses with a speeches given by Lidmila Nemcova on shaping the future of the digital age for the Christian Seniors.

We are starting to participate in projects with EAPN (International bus for promoting the alternative approach to the future - guaranteed minimum income) , social services for seniors living not in towns, international co-operation with seniors on social services).

The activities of the clubs - members are different:

- Prague is more focusing to the formations and the lecturing and excursions, pilgrimages while others in the country prefer other activities:
- The club in Teplice and vicinity for knitting the bandage for leprous people in Africa, help to people from disfavoured milieu and to the Roma population living in the town area.

- The club of Žďar is very active in regular excursions, pilgrimage, in cooperation with the local administration and it is also taking a very active part every year in the local Passion plays (martyrium of Jesus Christ) in the open air with numerous visitors.

Our members are assisting in different conferences and discussions, some of them are local deputies; Dr. Roubal has been active for many years as the vice-president of the Czech Council of Seniors (Rada seniorů) and others have been involved in this top organisations as well.

In the coming three years the SKS is making efforts in introducing new working methods, in being open up more and more to the Czech society to gain new members from the Catholic and other Christian parishes and from the KDU/CSL. We want to strengthen our visibility in the Czech media such as television, broadcasting and the press. We participated recently several times in Proglas radio and in the Czech catholic newspapers.

We would like to intensify contacts with partners in other countries, primarily with Slovakia and Poland, and also with our neighbours Germany and Austria.

In this context currently the new executive committee is discussing and organising co-operation with personalities from friendly organisations, members of the SKS clubs, party leaders, and officers from the other seniors organizations.

SKS has started to organize special meetings of the Praesidium with persons from the clubs - we invited recently Mr. Jurecka, Mr. Daniel Herman (vice-presidents of the KDU-CSL and ex-ministers) for a strong brainstorming about the vision of our country. We are planning the campaign for the European elections 2019.

The SKS is actually preparing to co-operate with the Prague Archbishop gymnasium and schools with our old members well remembering the previous totalitarian regimes; they personally or their close relatives passed many years in prison (some of them even executed) or in the special military units for the politically unreliable persons (also mortal accidents – especially in case of works in coal or uranium mines). It is necessary to explain and to bring an authentic testimony about the communism and what the real democracy is about.

We assist to the commemorative seminars, meetings, excursions.

Testimony of practical activities in 2018:

As in the previous years the MENE TEKEL festival was in the focus of the Czech SKS activities starting at the end of February. The festival has been regularly organised after 1990 all over the country to illustrate the fight against the totalitarian regimes of both Nazi and communist periods.

The festival proposed to the Czech civic society movies, theatres, exhibitions, round tables, discussions in the schools, meetings, concerts etc. A special conference took part in the building of the Czech Senate in Prague about the heritage of Czech and Polish people in their common fight against the totalitarian systems.

Historical remembrances are very important for Czech seniors. The role of seniors still remembering the life during WWII and socialist period is to give personal objective testimony and warning younger generations. The present situation in many post-communist countries is discovering new serious dangers for their really democratic development.

The main values for SKS:

a) We are obliged to clearly declare our Christian values and apply them to the practice. The Decalogue, Social teaching of the Church, Magna charta of ESU.

b) The importance of the traditional family and its support respecting protection and the dignity of human life from conception to the natural end of the life. The model of the inter - generation cooperation should start in the family and being transferred to the whole society.

c) Social coherence including social insurance, pensions, housing, health services, medical policy and prevention, special care for seniors.

The motivation of these items is based on the actual danger for the life of the Czech seniors generations resulting from the previous communist regime and the special post-communist development in the country. Lack of solidarity and values among the generations.

Our principal challenges:

- to emphasize the importance of the seniors for the society, civic society should not be differed to young and old generation,

- invaluable experiences of seniors (especially in the post-communist countries) should help young generation to understand real values and needs of the life,

- the seniors are able to enrich the whole society. Quality of life cannot be limited only to the material part of the life but also the spiritual dimension is very important.

Our basic goal is to achieve a large community of active and autonomous seniors able to positively react to any needed new initiative.

We should never forget the added values of our Christian activities.