



# EFOS

European Federation of Older Students in the Universities  
Europäische Vereinigung älterer Studierender an den Universitäten  
Fédération Européenne des Etudiants Âgés aux Universités



# EFOS NEWS

# 1

# 2017



funded by the European Union programme for  
education, training youth and sport 2014 – 2020

**English edition**

## European Federation of Older Students

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## From the editor:

It has become a tradition for our president to open the EFOS News with a report about the last year, this time 2016.

For the UN NGO Committee on Ageing in Vienna Katarina Grunwald made a compilation of activities in various countries for the International Day for Older Persons on 1 October. Our readers will find this interesting as well.

Our European project EduSenNet will come to a close in October 2017. The results will be published in a booklet. In this issue of the EFOS News we include one of the intermediary results, a summary of the survey that the project partners held among older people who do not yet or not anymore attend senior education.

Last year the University of the Third Age in Wroclaw celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an international scientific conference. Björn Odin took part on behalf of EFOS and wrote an article about it.

Again I want to finish with saying thank you to all the authors of the articles. Sincere thanks also to those EFOS members who, with their translations and corrections, made it possible to issue the EFOS News in German and in English.

May 2017

Peter Hug

## EFOS News

Publication of the  
European Federation of Older  
Students in Universities

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## President's report for the year 2016

Referring to the EFOS action plan 2014 – 2018 and latest update of EFOS goals we can evaluate the EFOS activities in the year 2016 in following items:

1. Fostering of academic studies of older people alongside younger students or at special academies / universities for older people – presentations of EFOS during the meetings and conferences abroad and in our own membership countries have promoted the idea and importance of LLL in older age. Marketing tools as the EFOS and EduSenNet posters, flyers, conference presentations, 5 project Newsletters and EFOS News have been used in Wroclaw, Osaka, Reims, Berlin where we propagated the EFOS goals. During the AIUTA world conference in Reims the Memorandum between AIUTA and EFOS was signed, as supportive and important document promoting learning of the elderly.

2. Fostering of joint projects for older students throughout Europe – the Educational Senior Network (EduSenNet) project is one concrete example of the common project work and cooperation of the EFOS members. All the institutional members of EFOS and also some individual members are actively involved in this Erasmus+ project. With the EduSenNet project we have already realised concrete results with the first research work of 11 universities in Europe and very valuable results of the Survey among elderly non students. The project is continuing successfully in many groups of older students (about 3000 respondents together) and is moving into its final phase.

3. Fostering and securing the access of older people to academic education including those without formal qualifications – all EFOS members offer to seniors a variety of study possibilities in their own universities or academies for older students. The study programmes have been summarized in the brochure of the EduSenNet project. EFOS members permanently focus on other communities of the elderly in many different areas to encourage and include them in the learning programmes. This interest leads to very fruitful results in the membership

countries as shown by the support for our common projects and interest. The study programmes for older students with their big variety of study possibilities offer chances to a wide public for active ageing and socialising by the learning activities on offer.



4. Activities and requirements of the UN Committee on Ageing were outlined at the conference held on 5. October 2015 under the title “UN partnership with Civil Society – How can we work towards a sustainable future”. Concrete results from EFOS and the project activities are regularly presented on the EFOS website, in EFOS News, public meetings and conferences, showing the necessity of academic education for older people in politics and society and the wide interests of the elderly students. Important issues are the yearly reporting to the UN Committee on Ageing and to national political bodies and the personal participation in meetings of political bodies. This is clearly visible through our participation in the meetings of the UN NGO Committee on Ageing, where we have been represented in June, August, September and October by Katja Grunwald, Horst Leonhard and Ingrid Dummer. Our delegates worked on the finalisation of the brochure “Social innovation on active and healthy ageing for sustainable economic growth.” In October 2016 - the Month of the elderly - a new report has been presented about the activities of elderly students devoted to the 1<sup>st</sup> October - International Day of the elderly. The conference in Magdeburg on 1. October 2016 was also devoted to this day, with presentations of Roland Schöne and Olaf Freymark. Appreciation for our work was expressed by the invitation of the UTA and the

rector of the university of Wroclaw to the 40th anniversary of the UTA and the Jubilee International Scientific Conference where EFOS was awarded a Diploma. Other events were attended by EFOS representatives in Germany with project presentations at the Senior's Forum in Halberstadt, in the Parliament of Saxon-Anhalt, during the conference "Die Linke" in Berlin and at the DGWF conference in Vienna.

On request of the population unit of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe we submitted a report about the project research and learning activities realised by the EFOS member institutions. The EPALE platform of EU is presenting current results and news from adult learning. Therefore also some of our members (Alicante, Bratislava) sent reports to this platform.

5. Fostering of autonomous national organisations with similar goals - our EFOS members are involved in the National organisations/networks in their own countries and are in touch with other UTAs. The information from EFOS activities and meetings are also presented at the national meetings and conferences. In October and November 2015 two conferences were organised in Bratislava, where activities of the EFOS members were presented from Vienna by Herta Spitaler, Gerti Zupanich (Conference of the Bratislava municipality) and Wolfgang Spitaler (Conference about learning Slovak language). We should also mention the involvement of EFOS in meetings of BAGWiWa (Germany) and of the Slovak association of UTA and a presentation by Nadežda Hrapková at a conference in Brno.

6. Identifying possibilities of using the skills and expertise of older students for the benefit of science and society – the EduSenNet project specifically focuses on older students and their knowledge and skills to use them for the work in other communities of older people. Older students can present their knowledge, promote their own UTA and encourage elderly to take part in learning programmes for seniors. The EduSenNet project has 3 main research tasks and the results are disseminated throughout Europe.

7. Cooperation with other international organisations that support lifelong learning

(LLL) – members of EFOS participated in many international events such as a conference of AIUTA in Reims (France) and Osaka (Japan), a conference of the university in Wroclaw (July) "Seniors for culture", where our members (Gozdowski, Grunwald, Hrapkova, Kurz, Mrowiec, Odin, Schöne) successfully presented best practices from their university, posters of EFOS, EduSenNet and gave presentations in the conference workshops. A specific presentation was given on "Reflection on EduSenNet project and results – so far". During the AIUTA conference in Reims in May 2016 the Memorandum between AIUTA and EFOS was signed. This document brings EFOS flexible cooperation on an international level and wider contacts and possibilities for future work. All the mentioned activities gave us opportunities to present EFOS as an important European federation and to get in touch with other countries such as Island and Italy – Sardinia, Ukraine and Russia.

Very useful dissemination of EFOS along other work has been done during the Danube regional strategy meeting and conference in Ulm (October 2015) and in a project document prepared in cooperation with AIUTA advising Bulgaria on how to establishing new UTAs.

In the year 2016 the EFOS members have met during two regular EFOS meetings combined with workshops and project meetings held in Uppsala and Magdeburg. For both meetings an agenda and other social programmes for all EFOS members were prepared. If needed EFOS members could get financial support from the EFOS budget for their participation in the meetings, according to the rules that we have formulated previously.

The project brochure published in May 2016 contained the first project task presented as a Review Table with a description of the study possibilities and methodology of learning at our member's institutions. We are preparing a new Booklet for next year as a project tasks which will contain a Review Table with results of the research work with non-students and some important results from the survey among older students at UTAs. The final evaluation of the project is going to be submitted next year and will be prepared by all partner institutions and other participating EFOS members in October 2017.

I believe that the coming EFOS conference in Chemnitz „Education for the elderly and



young people in Europe“ in June 2017 gives the members scope to discuss and exchange project results and best practices from senior's learning and to show new ways and possible innovation for the educational programmes. My thanks go to each member who has an active attitude to the EFOS tasks and mission, because EFOS is us, EFOS belongs to us all

and through our work for EFOS, EFOS is visible and will be accepted and understood. Thank you for your trust.

Dr. Nadežda Hrapková,  
EFOS president



Meeting in Uppsala April 2016



Meeting in Magdeburg November 2016



## 1 October - International Day of Older Persons

*Compiled by Dr. Katarina Grunwald, Bratislava (Slovakia)*

On your travels in the lands of classical antiquity, it's the ancient monuments that catch your eye. As you walk along the street, the sight of an older person produces no reaction. But there is beauty in Man not only when young, lively and in cheerful stride. Beauty lies in wisdom, experience and in hair, as it turns grey over the years. And it is precisely past generations who, before our time, created those monuments and wrote their stories. Just like today's older generation. It's they who built what the economy and life itself stand for. They commit themselves to social projects and use their time and energy to support their family members. But they are also responsible for the transfer of knowledge, skills, tradition and values to the younger generation as they prepare for their future lives. Life is give and take, rich and poor, healthy and sick, young and old. It's a dialogue in a never ending cycle but a dialogue that wants to be heard.

One must try to be aware of the ageing process and with a positive attitude embrace a new, diverse, active and worthwhile stage of life. Older people can take more time for the essentials, for peace and reflection, for the pleasures in life. But to be able to make a significant contribution to the community as well as enjoying leisure activity, you need to keep as healthy as possible.

Help must also be given to those who are isolated and alone. If not they will very quickly succumb to sadness, depression and illness. They need sensitive companions to release them from their psychological prison. Integrating older people in society prevents exclusion.

On December 14<sup>th</sup> 1990 the United Nations General Assembly (*resolution 45/106 point 15*) designated the 1<sup>st</sup> of October as International Day of Older Persons.

This sprang from a report on the demographic development of the ageing population. Population ageing entails considerable

economic and social challenge for both industrial and developing countries. Attention needs to be given to the situation and living conditions of the elderly and awareness raised of the particular challenges of poverty and discrimination. At the same time, this day is intended to honour the achievements of the elderly and, in addition, to foster mutual understanding between the generations.

This was preceded by initiatives such as the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing – which was adopted by the 1982 World Assembly on Ageing – and endorsed later that year by the UN General Assembly.

In 1991 the General Assembly (*by [resolution 46/91](#)*) adopted the United Nations 18 Principles for Older persons under 5 main headings: Independence, Participation, Social Security, Self-fulfilment and Dignity.

In 2002 the second World Assembly on Ageing adopted the *[Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing](#)* as a response to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and as a way of promoting the development of a society for all ages.

The International Day of Older People is celebrated all over the world in different ways. Each year it has been dedicated to a theme related to ageing.

### **Brief overview of themes and main characteristics for 2012-2016:**

#### **2012 Theme: 'Longevity: Shaping the Future'**

Offering universal access to social services; increasing the number and value of pension plans; passing laws to prevent age and gender discrimination in the workplace.

#### **2013 Theme: 'The future we're seeking: what older people are saying'**

This theme draws attention to the efforts of older people, civil society organisations, United Nations



organisations and Member States to get the issue of ageing onto the international development agenda.

**2014 Theme: 'Leaving no-one out: promoting a society for all'**

Pursuing this theme is to understand that demography is part of sustainable development and that population dynamics will shape the key developmental challenges confronting the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**2015 25<sup>th</sup> International Day of Older People. Theme: 'Sustainability and Opportunities for the Aged in the Urban environment'**

The impact of the new urban environment on older people as well as the impact of the older people on the new urban environment.

**2016 Theme: 'Taking a stand against age discrimination'**

Ageism is a widely prevalent and detrimental attitude which stems from the assumption that age discrimination, and sometimes neglect and abuse of older people, is a social norm and therefore acceptable. It is to be found in one form or another in every community and finds its expression in the attitudes of individuals, in institutional and political practices as well as in media representations which devalue and exclude older people. Such discrimination shapes how older persons are treated and perceived in their communities, in medical settings and workplaces, creating environments that limit older persons' potential and impact on their health and well-being. Failure to deal with age discrimination undermines older peoples' rights and hinders their contribution to social, economic, cultural and political life.

**Activities in some countries:**

**Spain**

IMSERSO (Institute of Older Persons and Social Services) is traditionally the national organism in-charge of the celebration of the UN International Day of Older Persons. The media, stakeholders and civil society are relevant in this area and take part on the event.

In 2015 celebration of the 1st State Congress on Social Services took place in Vitoria-

Gasteiz, culminating in the organization of an event to mark the International Day. During this event, special awards were given to Administrators, Academic and Health professionals and to NGO's who had dedicated their professional efforts to the benefit of older persons. An exhibition of the works and activities carried out by the Elderly was also organized, in the presence of the Minister of Health, Social services and Equality and of senior officers of the city of Vitoria-Gasteiz..

In addition, on October 1st, the *Framework for action for the Elderly* was officially presented to the media by D. Mariano Rajoy, President of Spain in the presence of stakeholders. This document was agreed by the members of the State Council for older persons and contains proposals and lines of action to guide public policies on ageing.

**Slovakia**

In all regional health authorities in the Slovak Republic this day will be an "Open Door Day". Activities will be offered throughout the month of October.

Additional activities will be implemented by the regional authorities in cooperation with the Union of Retired Persons of Slovakia, the Slovak Alzheimer Society, the universities of the third age, or in conferences where the focus is on the elderly.

- promotion of the "International Day of the Elderly" on the Internet pages of the Office of Public Health, on the radio, in urban and regional newspapers or on television
- activities of the mobile health advice centre - professional advice on a healthy lifestyle for the elderly
- educational activities – Universities of the Third Age, lectures, discussions (eg: healthy lifestyle and ageing, Alzheimer's disease, osteoporosis, prevention of injuries among the elderly, preparation for old age, diseases in old age, physical activity, memory training ...)
- in the schools - artistic or literary competitions on the theme: "My Grandparents and I".

**Austria**

**2012:** National Quality Certificate Award for Older Persons Residential and Nursing Homes

**2013/2014:** Age-friendly Communities Award  
**2015:** Film-presentation: We Accompany Older Persons: Views into a Multicoloured World  
 and Panel-discussion about the Tie-in Book: '*How to Cherish Professional Enthusiasm*'  
**2016:** Young and old volunteers pair up

## Canada

In 2010, Canada's federal government introduced the *Celebrating Canada's Seniors Act* to establish October 1 as National Seniors Day.

- The legislation aims to formally recognize and raise awareness about the important contributions seniors have made in shaping Canada and continue to make to Canadian society.
- Through the *Act* and alongside all orders of governments and civil society partners, Canadians are encouraged and equipped to acknowledge and celebrate the enormous contributions seniors make to their families, communities, workplaces and Canadian society.
- The Government of Canada continues to support National Seniors Day celebrations through outreach to targeted stakeholder groups across the country. This includes social media engagement as well as traditional communications mechanisms. For example, in 2014, two videos were developed and posted on the National Seniors Day webpage featuring Canadians sharing inspirational personal stories about seniors.

To mark the first year of the National Seniors Day (October 1, 2011), the Government of Canada developed a suite of communications products to support communities in planning and implementing activities and events. Online materials included, among others, a Do-It-Yourself Guide to planning and preparation for NSD activities or events, tips for celebrating National Seniors Day, and a mayoral proclamation template, among others.

## Finland

has celebrated the Day of Older People since 1954. This event takes place on the first Sunday in October, and the following week is the Week of Older People. Each year, VTKL chooses a theme for the week and produces a poster and a magazine as inspirational

material. The campaign is one of the oldest themed events in Finland. In 2016, the theme of the week is "I want to learn!" With the campaign, we want to pay attention to old people and their community issues. During the week, different kinds of festivities and events with a focus on good ageing are held around the country. The Week of Older People involves many leisure activities including theatre performances, concerts, dancing, and outdoor events. People of different ages are also encouraged to organise something together and invite older people to join in. Each year VTKL organizes the main event of the national day of Older People. The celebration is always held on the **first Sunday in October** but in different locations. The events are organised together with the city/municipality, the local parish and various associations. The main event usually features a speech by a government representative. The Tuesday of the Week of Older People is the **SeniorSurf Day**, the purpose of which is to encourage older people to learn about IT. Libraries, IT associations and others organise orientation and guidance sessions for older people. One of the main goals of SeniorSurf is to increase the awareness among people of all ages of the importance for senior citizens to be helped by the use of IT. The SeniorSurf Day has been held annually since 2013. October 1<sup>st</sup> is not celebrated because we have our own National Day of Older People.

## The Netherlands

In 2015 the annual National Day of the Elderly was celebrated on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

All over the country varying local initiatives were developed by various organisations and groups of people. They may differ every year, or are repeated annually, as, for example, in libraries and welfare organisations where sessions take place where the elderly are read to.

Apart from all these local activities, the National Committee for the 'National Day of the Elderly' facilitated local committees that enable older persons to express a wish and to honour this wish. For example, older people can request the development of a special website and are then assisted on the computer by a volunteer if necessary. On the other hand, a volunteer can scroll through all the expressed wishes to see if there is a wish they would like to honour and in this way a match can be

made. The volunteers are screened beforehand by the local committees.

The wishes expressed by the elderly can be:

- to visit a certain museum
- to visit their hometown again
- to go on a sailing trip
- to go to a concert
- to parachute from a plane (they can express all kinds of wishes!!)
- to swim with dolphins
- to ride pillion on a motor-bike
- to play a famous organ
- to take a stroll through a nature reserve
- etc. ....

The National Committee is responsible for the national coordination of this activity. Its members are all volunteers. The National Committee supports and facilitates the work of local committees in more than forty towns and villages all over the country, from north to south.

These local committees are also formed by volunteers and consist of representatives of, for example, private individuals, welfare organisations, charities, etc. The local committees take care of fundraising, public relations and the coordination of the activities at local level.

In this way, on this special day the National Committee seeks to:

- honour a particular wish expressed by thousands of elderly people
- to raise awareness of the National Day of the Elderly and enable younger generations to experience the pleasure of meeting with Elderly persons
- to raise extra attention for those older persons who are lonely or vulnerable

## Germany

### *Call for the International Day of Older People 2016*

"In 1990 The United Nations General Assembly had already called on governments around the world to celebrate the "International Day of Older People" annually on October 1, as part of an international Action Plan on Ageing. In this way the contributions to society by older people and their rights can be recognised and promoted. The "International Day of Older People" was officially celebrated for the first time in Germany in Magdeburg on

October 1, 2016, as an initiative of the Federal Labour Union of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and under the patronage of the Federal Minister of the Interior, for the family, seniors, women and youth, Manuela Schwesig. In this connection, elderly people and representatives of senior citizen from all the federal states and from abroad, were invited to participate in the day's festivities.

In this way older peoples' lifetime achievements on behalf of society can be valued and their rights and contributions fostered. Never before have older people been so active. This should be portrayed in the media and reflected in society. We, as country representatives of the *Länder*, advocate a new culture of age. With increasing life expectancy, older people have more and more time to get involved within the family and community. The aim and task of a policy which is age-appropriate and all-embracing is to promote cohesion in society and between generations. Together with the regional governments, we want to create a framework for helping people to live actively and independently for as long as possible.

We therefore call on the federal government, the *Länder* and municipalities, as well as all generations, to work together with us jointly to commit to the following objectives:

- **to respect and safeguard human rights and anti-discrimination** for all people (especially for the elderly and women), in accordance with the conventions ratified for this, including the refugee convention
- **to combat poverty**, which is becoming increasingly widespread in the case of older people as a result of a lack of basic care and insufficient old-age provision
- **to ensure a self-determined** life in dignity for all people through appropriate living and working conditions, e.g. supervised multi-generational housing instead of separation in nursing homes, as well as **ensuring high mobility** and accessibility through improved transport planning, structural and technical measures as well as making communications easier for all people with special needs and reduced mobility

- A regular **nationwide conference** on the "International Day of Older People" alternating in the different federal states.

We call on the politicians of the Federal Government, the *Länder* governments and municipalities to implement these goals in a step-by-step manner through concrete measures. At the same time, as elected representatives, we ask you to report by the next nationwide conference on the International Day of Older Persons on measures introduced and successes achieved, thus publicly informing older people about what has been achieved and what remains to be done.

*Federal Working Community of the 'Landesseniorenvertretungen e.V.' "*

Each of us was once a child, each of us has experienced more or less happy time in life. How soft was then the embrace of my grandmother! How often we ran with "ouchies" or with complaints straight to the grandma! And their gentle eyes never denied us. And how clever was the advice of the grandpa! The grandparents can sometimes understand the grandchildren better than the parents, who are too much taken up by their own work. The grandparents are no longer burdened with the daily needs of their children, so they can afford to spoil their grandchildren and give them time, hearing and love. And a little piece cake to it. And from the grandpa a bit pocket money?

**Vienna**

**NGO Committee on Ageing**

Each of us was once a child, each of us experienced more or less happy times in life. At such times how soft was grandmother's embrace! How often we ran straight to grandma with our "bruises" or our troubles! And her gentle eyes never denied us. And how clever was grandpa's advice! Grandparents can sometimes understand grandchildren better than their parents, who are too involved in their own work. Grandparents are no longer burdened with the daily needs of their children, so they can afford to spoil their grandchildren and give them time and an ear and love. And a little piece of cake. And from grandpa a bit of pocket money?

On October 26, 2016, the NGO Committee on Ageing in Vienna celebrated the International Day of Older Persons. The celebration took place on board the training ship "Bertha von Suttner", with some students, the NGO members and invited guests.

The students had prepared brief contributions to describe their feelings and their experiences with grandparents or with older persons.

The students believe mutual communication to be very important. Age is seen as just a number, but the what they talk about is instructive, the elderly reveal their competences in different areas and teach values. The young people hear about the grandparent's past; about their former life; about the hard times, like war; about flight from their home country; about unhealthy lifestyles like smoking; about being unhappy because they have grown older; about the death of friends and relations of their age, which reminds them how close are the last days of life. Simply about things that come with life.

The rule "never stop learning" signifies an exchange of experiences between the generations, where it is important to learn from each other. In this context, younger people can explain the world of new technologies to the elderly, showing how important it is to communicate with others by the computer, especially when you feel alone or when movement is rather restricted. The Internet is a source of knowledge for young and old, bringing them to places they could not go in their early years and where as pensioners it is no longer possible to go or where they are motivated to go. Today's older person is more active, lives longer, is more aware of health issues than in the past, thirsting for new experiences, more eager to learn, interested in politics, takes on voluntary work and willingly participates in community life. No distinction should be made in the community between young and old. Both generations are people who seek mutual respect and understanding. And when "active" grandparents return home from their travels, they invite their family, their grandchildren for a good meal and a piece of cake and tell them about their new experiences. This is a relationship that radiates warmth, joy and wisdom. The human side.

So, let us show our appreciation throughout the year, not just on one day or one month. They have earned it!

And thus, we can claim as a result, that we the Elderly, can place hope and trust in the new, young generation. They are more confident, open-minded and ready for dialogue between

the generations. A dialogue that wants to be heard.



UNITED NATIONS

NATIONS UNIES

## **International Day of Older Persons 1 October**

### **Secretary-General's Message for 2016**

The International Day of Older Persons is our chance to take a stand against the destructive problem of ageism.

While older persons are often said to enjoy particular respect, the reality is that too many societies limit them, denying access to jobs, loans and basic services. The marginalization and devaluing of older persons takes a heavy toll. It undermines their productivity and experience in the workforce, in volunteerism and through civil engagement while constraining their capacity for caregiving as well as financial and other support to families and communities. Ageism frequently intersects with other forms of discrimination based on gender, race, disability and other grounds, compounding and intensifying its effects.

Ending ageism and securing the human rights of older persons is an ethical and practical imperative. The stakes are high and growing. The global population of older persons is expected to rise from just over 900 million in 2015 to 1.4 billion by 2030 and 2.1 billion by 2050, when there will be roughly the same the number of older persons and children under 15.

I condemn ageism in all its forms and call for measures to address this violation of human rights as we strive to improve societies for people of all ages. This demands changing the way older persons are portrayed and perceived, from being seen as a burden to being appreciated for the many positive contributions they make to our human family.

I also call for greater legal guarantees of equality for older persons to prevent ageism from resulting in discriminatory policies, laws and treatment. I urge policy makers to compile better data and statistics on older persons' health, economic status and general wellbeing in order to better address their concerns. And I hope we will all reflect on our prejudicial attitudes and consider how, as individuals, we can counter ageism.

We have a clear roadmap to transformation: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This visionary plan and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize inclusion and equality, promising to leave no one behind. Older persons are both agents and beneficiaries of change. By advancing progress on the SDGs, we can mobilize the considerable talents, energy and experience of all older persons in carrying out this Agenda.

Let us mark the International Day of Older Persons by forcefully rejecting all forms of ageism and working to enable older persons to realize their potential as we honour our pledge to build a life of dignity and human rights for all.

*Ban Ki-moon*

## 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University of the Third Age in Wrocław

*Dr. Björn Odin, Uppsala (Sweden)*



The University of the Third Age in Wrocław (Poland), on the occasion of its 40th Jubilee was celebrating with an international scientific conference “Seniors for Culture” from 4 to 6 July 2016. For the year 2016 Wrocław was at the same

time appointed “European Capital of Culture” by the European Union. The programme for the conference was also a part of and in line with this appointment.

The aim of the conference was “to present the role and importance of older people in the cultural life of the society.” It was stressed in the invitation to the conference that in everyday life seniors also carry out a generative mission, which consists of the care for the tradition and transmission of its values to the younger generation.

The conference very well illustrated that Seniors are not only grateful recipients of culture but they also have their own, direct contribution in the development of culture. Very often seniors are its authors and ambassadors which was demonstrated in a great number of interesting workshops, exhibitions and posters. The headings for the programme were the following:

- Creative activity of seniors in various fields of culture (art, science, education etc)
- Creative activity of seniors in everyday life
- The presence of seniors in the great works of the masters
- Seniors – the recipients of culture

More than 200 people from different countries in Europe were attending the conference, and specially invited guests were invited from Germany, Italy Spain, Holland, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Ukraine and Iran. At coffee breaks and during a well arranged ceremonial dinner on the first day of the conference there were many opportunities to meet old friends and start new interesting contacts across the borders and different U3As represented.

At an awarding ceremony EFOS - represented by its president Dr. Nadezda Hrapkova -

among a number of other organisations who throughout the years had been supporting U3A/University of Wrocław received a diploma. Dr Katarina Grunwald and Dr Björn Odin from the EFOS presidium made a presentation of the EduSenNet project on the second day as a lecture with the title: “Research oriented activities at U3A in Bratislava and Uppsala”. Professor Dr Roland Schöne lectured about “Cultural Education for and with elderly people” and Dr Rosemarie Kurz about “Senior Theatre - an important part of Senior Culture”.

In the afternoon of the first day and during the following two days more than 30 different lectures were on the programme as well as 7 workshops, 3 exhibitions (painting, photography and craft) a poster section and an artistic program. Last but not least were two impressive performances carried out by senior students of U3A/University of Wrocław: “Light of Imagination” inspired by the life and work of Rembrandt van Rijn and “Crawls” inspired by the work of Pedro Calderon de la Barca.

The conference was carried out in a very professional and inspiring way and from EFOS we congratulate the University of the Third Age in Wrocław for what it has been doing for seniors throughout these 40 years, where the quality of its work was clearly demonstrated by the organisation, content and spirit of the conference. We wish all the best for your future work!





## Compilation of surveys among non-students

*Dr. Katarina Grunwald, Bratislava (Slovakia)*



The Erasmus+ program is an EU Program focusing on education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014 to 2020. **EduSenNet** (Educational Senior Network) is an Erasmus+ project of European Universities and

their U3As and belongs to the category KA2 entitled “Strategic partnership for Adult learning”.

EduSenNet seeks to identify both the specific needs of older learners aged over 50 and the conditions under which they learn. The project examines the extent of possible innovation, how it may be undertaken and for whom. Identification of the learning environment can assist us in programme innovation not only in urban situations but also in specific communities in rural areas.

Researchers from 7 institutions in 6 European countries and 2 non-project partners are working together to find the best possible ways of helping older people to fulfil their learning needs and to show the importance of learning activities during retirement for people, who never took part in it. They will show, that the study at the UTA is one of the means for the support of mental health as well as slowing down the aging process and reducing the feeling of social exclusion and social unimportance upon retirement.

Objectives, needs and outcomes are catered for in various ways by:

- summarising experiences;
- encouraging older people to take part in learning activities;
- developing interest in learning through participation in activities designed to promote and extend knowledge and skills.

It is necessary to examine the objectives, motivation and barriers to learning of the older persons who take part in the programmes and of those who do not. The introduction of new programmes and the upgrading of old ones will involve older people in activities more suited to their needs.

The questionnaire was handed out to people over 50 not taking part in senior education to collect

basic information about their needs, requirements, experiences, fears, handicaps and opinions regarding the various forms of learning. This survey among non-students were carried out by all project partners in their own region. The teams had focused on elderly of 50 who don't have easy access to the different types of education in their area, or have other limits and barriers:

- elderly who live rather isolated with limited sources of information
- elderly who are limited in their mobility
- elderly with other physical restrictions
- elderly with financial restrictions
- elderly who live at a long distance from places where education is offered, with limited or no public transport.

### **EduSenNet project partners**

- Comenius University in Bratislava / Centre for Continuing Education (Slovakia) (Coordinator of the project)
- Uppsala Senioruniversitet (Sweden)
- Otto-von-Guericke-Universität, Magdeburg (Germany)
- Seniorenkolleg an der TU Chemnitz (Germany)
- Senioren Academie Groningen-Friesland-Drenthe, Groningen (Netherlands)
- University of the Third Age - Brno University of Technology, Brno (Czech Republic)
- Universidad Permanente, Alicante (Spain)

### **EduSenNet non-project partners**

- Dresden (Germany)
- Bytom (Poland)

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part (A) referring to socio-demographical data like: Age; Gender; Level of education; Domestic situation. The second part provides data about education.

### **Total respondents: 878**

Slovakia/Bratislava: 109; Sweden/Uppsala/146; Germany/Magdeburg: 49; Chemnitz: 109; Netherland/Groningen: 135; Czech Republic/Brno: 227; Spain/Alicante: 103

## **Results. Part A: Personal data.**

During the project work we have contacted communities of the elderly in many different places and towns mentioned in a survey.

### **Nationality; Living place; Housing**

- In the group from Uppsala 100% of the respondents are of Swedish nationality but 9% of them are born in another country, mainly in Finland, and most of them came to Sweden as a child of refugees during the Second World War.
- For the other project groups the respondents have the nationality of the country in which they live.
- Chemnitz: The geographical distribution of the respondents shows, that 22,9% live in urban areas with > 50.000 inhabitants ("in a town/city") and 43,1% with < 50.000 inhabitants ("in another town"). 30,3% live in rural areas with villages under 10.000 inhabitants ("in a village/country").
- Most of the respondents are living in a town or city.
- In Alicante 55,34% of non-retired respondents live in relatively large cities or towns with more than 100.000 inhabitants.
- In Groningen 38% respondents live in a town or city with an institution for higher education for older people (i.e. Senioren Academie).
- In Bratislava 31,2% of respondents live in residential homes, in Groningen 10%, in Uppsala 68%.
- Most of the respondents live together with the partner or with the relatives. In Spain it reflects the cultural and traditional values of their country, supporting a family based structure of society.

### **Male/Female; Age; Handicap**

- Approximately 2/3 of the respondents are female. Only in Brno (male 45 %, female 55

%) and Groningen (male 42%, female 58%) it is slightly less.

- For most partners the biggest group of respondents is between 61 and 70 years.
- In Uppsala, the biggest group of respondents is between 71 and 80 years. Two respondents were more than 90 years old.
- Only Magdeburg and Chemnitz had extended their questionnaire with an age group 'under 50'.
- Magdeburg: Physical handicap was not part of the questionnaire. In Chemnitz 12,8% no response.
- Most respondents do not have handicaps or health problems that would hinder them in taking part in learning activities.
- The respondents mention the following physical handicaps: Orthopaedic illnesses; disabilities; arthritis; osteoporosis; heart diseases, shortness of breath; deafness, poor eyesight.

### **Education:**

- For this part it is important to notice that for a study at the UTA of Comenius University in Bratislava an educational prequalification at secondary school level is obliged. The same applies to Brno.
- The other partners do not ask for prequalification.
- In Alicante the large number of respondents in the primary school group is remarkable.
- In the group "Others" many respondents have a completely different level, related to their professional studies or medium-level vocational training of a technical nature.
- Except for Bratislava and Alicante, most of the respondents have an university education.

## **Part B: Learning**

Question: Do you think learning in later life is important and are you interested in taking part in learning activities?

A majority of respondents think that

learning in later life is important. The reasons for taking part in learning activities are very similar for all respondents:

- slow down the aging process, stimulate brain activity
- be able to cope better with everyday life
- be able to maintain previous live independently as long as possible, develop myself
- understand the technical progress
- to continue to be actively involved in social life
- to understand globalization, to gain information (especially about politics and society)
- to maintain my mental health and my curiosity

There are some issues that discourage respondents from becoming involved in learning:

- lack of basic skills
- high age and health problems
- lack of interest
- cannot take part in learning activities because they have to take care of domestic chores and

of their husband (the role of gender and socio-cultural self-exclusion are argued by some of the female respondents in Alicante)

Most of the interviewed persons say that they learn about possible learning opportunities through friends, relatives and colleagues or via Internet. In Uppsala “advertising” and “newspaper” is more frequent. In the rural areas in Chemnitz meetings in the church, clubs and other meeting events and citizens’ centres encouraging older people to take part in learning activities, play a major role.

Asked whether they know any University of the Third Age or having heard of learning opportunities for elderly people, the majority of the interviewed persons say “Yes”. Only in Alicante there is a high percentage of respondents (58,25%), who do not know any University of the Third Age.

Which of the following do you think are good reasons to take part in learning activities?

	Bratislava	Uppsala	Magdeburg	Chemnitz	Groningen	Brno	Alicante
<b>Finding out about things /getting new information</b>	60,6%	35%	97,5%		47%	74%	66%
<b>Meeting people and improving social contact</b>	48,6%	24%	65,0%	23,55%	10%	41%	58,3%
<b>Overcoming isolation</b>	18,3%	3%				14%	19,4%
<b>Being more active</b>	45,9%	13%	35,0%		17%	36,6%	48,5%
<b>Improving the quality of life in retirement</b>	48,6%	24%	17,5%		21%	52%	33,0%
<b>Other</b>	3,67%	1%	12,5%	1,24%	5%	1,8%	5,83%
<b>No response</b>				2,89%			

- For all respondents, the most important category for the answers is “Finding out about things / getting new information”.
- Similar results we can find for the three categories “Meeting people and improving social contact”, “Improving the quality of life in retirement” and “Being more active”.
- In Groningen the reason – “Overcoming isolation” - was not included in the list of choices.
- From all interviewed persons, seniors in Bratislava, Magdeburg, Chemnitz, Brno and

Alicante mentioned most often that more information with more thematic topics could persuade them to take part in learning activities.

- In Groningen for a small majority of respondents (52%) more information was no incentive to take part in education.
- In Uppsala 39% of respondents answered with “Do not know”.
- If the answer was “**Yes**”, the interviewees were asked: which subjects would interest you?

- In the answers we can see a wide scale of senior's interests:
- History, Philosophy, Language and literature, Computer, Social science, Music and theatre, Economics, Law, Health care, Environment, Political Science, Theology and other.
- In Alicante respondents mentioned Tourism and leisure management, ecological farming, environment, trekking and open-air guided tours to enjoy nature and meditation workshops.
- In Uppsala respondents mentioned a "Lack of political issues".

If the answer was "No", the interviewees were asked what would prevent them from taking part.

	Bratislava	Uppsala	Magdeburg	Chemnitz	Groningen	Brno	Alicante
<b>Personal health problem</b>	<b>52,3%</b>	<b>12%</b>	4,3%	<b>15,6%</b>	10,4%	<b>52,4%</b>	<b>32,1%</b>
<b>Partner's health problem</b>	11,9%	4%		4,6%	5,2%	15,9%	3,6%
<b>Lack of spare time</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>26,1%</b>	<b>10,1%</b>	<b>14,8%</b>	<b>26%</b>	10,7%
<b>Personal commitments</b>	20,1%	8%	<b>17,4%</b>	7,3% 1,8%	9,6%	<b>22%</b>	14,3%
<b>Distance from venue</b>	<b>32,1%</b>	7%	8,7%	<b>16,5%</b>	<b>12,6%</b>	17,6%	<b>35,7%</b>
<b>Lack of suitable travel facilities</b>	5,5%	1%	4,3%		5,2%	7,5%	<b>35,7%</b>
<b>Financial problems</b>	20,1%	2%		8,3%	<b>15,6%</b>	20,3%	10,1%
<b>Not enough quality teachers</b>	9,1%	2%			3%	16,3%	
<b>Volunteer Work</b>				6,4%			
<b>Professional Activities</b>				3,7%			
<b>Other</b>	10,1%	5%	4,3%	2,8%		4,8%	25%
<b>Nothing</b>		<b>30%</b>					<b>59,3%</b>
<b>Work commitments</b>			<b>78,3%</b>				

- We can see that for the interviewed seniors especially in Bratislava and Brno the "personal health" is the most significant barrier.
- Very important to know is, that the "distance from the venue" is an important argument for the interviewed people in Bratislava, Chemnitz, Groningen and Alicante. Chemnitz - (to develop local transport!)
- In Alicante the factors linked to dependence, reduced (or lack of) mobility or difficulty to get to the place where the formative action develops because of "lack of suitable travel facilities" explain, why such a high percentage of individuals do not (or would not) participate.
- "Financial problems" are mentioned in Bratislava and Groningen.
- "Lack of spare time" was mentioned in Uppsala as one of the main problems as well as in Bratislava, Groningen, Brno and Magdeburg, where also the "work commitments" are a most significant impediment (78,3%).
- It is remarkable that in Uppsala 30% and in Alicante 59,26% of the respondents answered that there is "nothing" which really prevent them from taking part in learning activities.
- As for the type of education that respondents would prefer, lectures were in first place for all interviewed persons, followed by seminars in Magdeburg and Chemnitz. In Chemnitz in all lectures discussions are included.
- In Groningen and Bratislava "excursions" were on the second place. In Magdeburg, Brno and Alicante "excursions" were on the

third place. However, the respondents in Chemnitz are willing to attend excursions as long as they are realized in the own region.

- In Uppsala the respondents mentioned on the second place “discussions”, whereas in Groningen “discussions” and “exercises and training” were chosen less frequently.
- The respondents of Alicante and Brno put “Exercises and training” on the second place.

- In Magdeburg a circle of interested older people meet in a “project group” (11,9%).
- As for “Other”: in Alicante 13,59% say that they would enjoy “workshops” and “something active which goes beyond mere listening .....which catches my attention and motivates me”.

How important for you is the social aspect of learning? (Chemnitz: learning inside a group and in direct contact with the lecturer-)

- The social aspect of learning is very important for most of the respondents from all project partners. As a reason they mentioned that interpersonal contacts offer chances for great exchange of views and experiences and indicate the social importance of training.
- The respondents in Chemnitz ask for a widely varied ways of learning and there are only very small differences between the answers “alone” (35,66%) and “in a group” (41,26%).
- In Uppsala for most people the social aspect is important (58%), but 42% of “No”s show that it is not that important as is sometimes assumed.
- Under “NO”: some of the pensioners have no PC. Other seniors do not think that social aspects are important for the contacts with people and they mentioned that Internet suits them fine. They feel more flexible, not bound to deadlines and they can study when and what they want.

Would you want to use new media for learning either at home or in a group (e.g. courses on cd, live transmission of lectures via internet)

- Only in Groningen a majority of respondents (60%) said “Yes” and see new media in education for elderly people as an important point for expanding their knowledge, exchanging experiences and getting new information from more subjects, “it enables me to have access to exhibitions, music, cinema and a huge number of art and literature resources, as well as news without leaving home; and at a low cost or completely free of charge”.
- The others mentioned that they would like to learn and manage new tools and innovative learning formats, but they need help from people, who can teach them how to follow activities on the Internet or multimedia resources.
- Other respondents said “No”, with the argument that communication face to face with real contact is essential. Internet is perceived only as a supplement. Either they feel old, or training new technologies will be complicated.

What sort of measures do come to your mind that would make it easier for you to take part in learning?

Here are the answers without any order:

- Short distance to the learning venue, better transport (public/private) facilities, good accessibility of the place of learning;
- Free and low-cost learning opportunities, better financial situation, cheaper courses, lower fees;
- Accessibility and facilities for lectures and seminar rooms matching the special needs of disabled persons (comfortable seating in case of orthopaedic disorders, hearing amplification in the auditorium for better participation in the lecture);
- Senior-friendly learning environment;
- Teachers-instructors must be aware of the type of audience they are addressing, and they must use the pedagogy, methodology

- and empathy required to deal with these seniors and to train them properly;
- More information. A day of “open house” would be helpful, where teachers inform the seniors about the different activities;
- Home tutoring and opportunity to have learning material;
- Attend the lecture together with friends, pleasant atmosphere, overcome access barriers;
- Size of groups and duration of courses;
- Quality of audio equipment, access to Internet;
- Location-based services, learning opportunities in the home town or residential area, more instruction nearby;
- Extending and adapting the training activity offer, since it is still limited and unsuitable in many small towns and villages;
- This offer must additionally be conceived for small groups –15 people at the most who can be given a personal treatment;
- A need exists to establish close collaboration schemes between social agents, public-private institutions and communities of citizens and older users in order to adapt the offer, to extend it and to provide it with the necessary formative services suited to the diverse realities that characterise the life of today’s seniors (comment from Alicante).

## Conclusions

The presented report is used as basis for the innovation of the learning programmes for older persons who are not included in a learning process. In our research we noticed, that the educational level of the respondents in Bratislava and Alicante was not very high and shows, the number of respondents with the primary and secondary education being considerably higher than for university graduates. For the other project partners the percentage with academic education is higher. However, the consequences of the project to the life of the older persons will be directly visible when proposed measures will be practically implemented and successfully put into a practice.

For persons who are not interested in learning activities or have a low qualification, the university is not the right address. It might be possible to develop a special advice center (system) for this target group. The staff of the university can support such a centre with regard to didactics and teaching methods and train instructors. It has to be pointed out that learning activities for these persons cannot be realized at a university, because its essential task is to teach scientific knowledge.

There are big differences in education and social environment. An integrated educational programme for all of them would be too difficult to realize. Educational and professional differences between participants would be too big.

Interviewees in Alicante suggest launching personalised dissemination campaigns (lectures)

which show them the values of these training actions and their practical side (with specific examples or cases); they ask for proximity and convenience for them to take part (in their centres, near them, with flexible timetables); and with teachers, instructors or volunteers who are capable of satisfying the formative needs of seniors (pedagogy, patience, empathy) sometimes limited by physical and emotional issues or issues related to culture or studies.

In Chemnitz the project partner will use the results of the report to develop new educational programmes for elderly people and to motivate them to participate in learning activities, like the Seniorenkolleg of the TU Chemnitz. In rural regions they are already preparing new workshops for the “Newcomers” amongst the seniors, who are now starting to explore the field of learning in later life. The goal is it to motivate them to participate in application oriented education. To achieve that they reach out to gathering places for elderly people. There they collectively watch a lecture of the Seniorenkolleg via Livestream, which they moderate and discuss together with the seniors. They started out with presentations on culture (e.g. music, theatre) to pick up specific interests of the Elderly. In rural regions they used gatherings in churches, clubs and other meeting places as well as in the civic centres.



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## Gallery of distinguished EFOS members

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### Stanley Miller



It is now time to recognise in this column the influence Stanley Miller has had on EFOS.

His committed contributions to our discussions, often delivered with a touch of English humour which elicits a smile, are valued by the participants in our meetings.

First contact with Stanley took place within AIUTA (International Association of Universities of the Third Age) after he had been elected as its Chairman in 2006. This contact developed to the extent that after he had completed his four years as Chairman he became a member of EFOS because he had formed the impression that EFOS enabled an open and lively exchange of ideas.

The range of Stanley's experience in education and training is of great value to EFOS. His career began at university where he studied French, German and later Latin and trained as a teacher. It was there that he met his wife, Eileen, whom we meet at EFOS meetings. After some years as a teacher of French in a middle school and then in three other secondary schools, he moved into school administration in Nottingham. He worked there as an inspector and adviser for modern languages. This provided him with a good insight into the running of schools and aroused his special interest in school management. His ability did not go unnoticed. He was appointed Senior Adviser / Staff Inspector to Birmingham City Council and this involved him more intimately with all the ups and downs of politics.

At the age of 56 he took early retirement and together with an emeritus professor set up a

consultancy which among other activities included research into the EU's Erasmus scheme. During this period he was also writing and organising many courses. In addition, for some time he was a modern language inspector within the newly instituted national schools inspection authority. In the unconventional schoolbooks which he wrote, he wanted to show that language learning can be made entertaining. This can be seen in his collection of stories in French which are richly illustrated but contain neither grammar nor vocabulary sections.

It was in 1997 in Birmingham that Stanley first became involved with U3A. The idea of self directed groups of seniors working under the banner of "Those who teach also learn and those who learn also teach" enthused him. Thus in EFOS he sees himself continuing to be a messenger ( or 'clarifier' as he would prefer to say) of the U3A system. He found the continental form of third age learning to be too formally organised as in the French model and taking too little account of the way older people learn. For him there is a lack of discussion and exchange of ideas.

In the U3A Stanley's organisational and communicative abilities were equally recognised. He was chosen to be a regional representative of the Third Age Trust and was its Vice-chairman for three years. At this time he heard of AIUTA and took part in their Governing Body meetings, representing a colleague who was unwell.

Stanley was amazed when in 2006 he was elected as Chairman of AIUTA. He had to

cope with a difficult situation where there was rivalry between French speaking and English speaking camps. He himself describes his four year period as Chairman as problematic.

EFOS which he joined after that has a quite different feel for him. He enjoys the open discussions and has the impression that with his experience he can contribute something of value.

Stanley is highly appreciated not only for his contributions to discussion with their touches of English humour. He has also made valuable contributions in other ways. These include his

many translations for EFOS News in which he always tries to catch the essential meaning of the text; his cooperation in the work on the original action-plan; his article in EFOS News on the British U3A system; the questionnaire for the survey among U3As and much more.

We hope that we can count on his continued work with us for a long time to come despite the problems of travel which recently have become more pronounced.

*Peter Hug*

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## News in Brief

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### **100<sup>th</sup> Governing Board meeting of AIUTA and International conference “Equal learning opportunities for the elderly” in Bratislava**

This event was held at the Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia), Centre for Continuing Education from 18 to 20 May 2017 in Bratislava under the auspices of Prof. Peter Plavčan, minister of education, research, science and sport of the Slovak Republic and Prof. Karol Mičieta, rector of Comenius University in Bratislava in cooperation with AIUTA (International Association of Universities of the Third Age), EPALE (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) and the municipality of Bratislava. The participants from 20 countries all around the world presented their best practices and experience from seniors' education.



### **International EFOS / Erasmus Conference in Chemnitz**

From 8 to 10 June 2017 the University of Technology Chemnitz (Germany) organises a conference with 70 experts from 10 European countries to round off the two Erasmus+ projects “Elderly build bridges with Young people in Europe” and “EduSenNet – Educational Senior Network”.



### **32<sup>nd</sup> Berliner Sommeruni**

The *Berliner Akademie für weiterbildende Studien e.V.* organises its yearly *Sommeruni* from 28 August till 3 September 2017 at the Humboldt University in Berlin. The theme is “Material – Knowledge – Culture, a discussion about the Humboldt Forum”. Further information on [http://www.berlinakademie.de/su\\_ankuendigungen.php](http://www.berlinakademie.de/su_ankuendigungen.php).

