

**Report of the parting EFOS president,
PhDr. Nadežda Hrapková, PhD.
Meeting of 10-12 November 2011 in Vienna**

Dear guests, EFOS members, ladies and gentlemen.

EFOS is a federation which has a lot of experience. During its existence we had to deal with several problems and we learned well from them. We are a very good team and I know that the project of the EFOS and its results can be valuable, visible and of high quality. The time runs very quickly and it is sometimes difficult to recount all our activities without forgetting something important, which has happened in our federation in the last 4 years.

The year 2008 was special, successful and very important for the future of EFOS.
In that year:

- six organizations out of seven applicants were accepted for the project Virtual European Cultural Centre (VECU), which meant that an important part of our activities could be financed by Grundtvig funds.
- we met for the first time in Uppsala and also at the university in Kiel. We had possibilities to get more acquainted with the study activities as well as the history and traditions of the visited areas,
- we decided, taking into account the EFOS financial situation, to establish the rules for covering travel expenses of EFOS members and invited guests,
- we established and adopted the rules for the membership in the EFOS,
- we continued updating the EFOS homepage and we started to use the EFOS Forum for a flexible discussion via Internet,
- we started working on the EFOS history.

Active ageing is one of the phenomenons, which can strengthen our lives, make it longer and improve its quality. EFOS as an association supports active ageing. One of its main goals is to focus on the activities of the members. This is also strongly represented in our **newspaper EFOS News**. Possibilities for the presentation of the students' ideas, their knowledge and experiences is very important not only for the students themselves, but for the whole society including the young generation. In the year 2007, The EFOS News were published 2 times, presenting the results of the systematic research made during the EFOSEC project. Since the year 2008, when we started the project VECU, the EFOS News were dedicated mainly to the presentation of project results. On the other hand the magazine also contained articles from our members which focused on the future of the senior's education, roles of the emeriti, on the activities of the EFOS members and other articles which dealt with some philosophical subjects e.g. „What does it mean for seniors to be Europeans?“, etc. Till now, we have put together 12 (twelve) issues, the first having been printed in 1993. At present we use to prepare one issue per year. I would like to thank those who helped with the preparation of the EFOS News, its writers, translators and mainly to its editor Peter Hug. All the issues are available on the EFOS homepage, including the oldest ones, which were scanned as a magazine.

In September 2007, during the meeting in Wroclaw we started to discuss a project idea of Dr. Daniel Meynen. Discussions among all EFOS members resulted in a **project** proposal of high quality. The application for the project **VECU** has been accepted by all national agencies that were approached and almost every university that applied gained support for the project. Our project Virtual European Cultural Centre (VECU) which we started in August 2008, demonstrated that seniors are interested in literature, culture of daily life, in music as well as in collecting proverbs. The VECU project offered a lot of possibilities to seniors for using their knowledge and abilities, meet groups of students and compare interests with the young generation. From my position as the EFOS president, I would like to

express a great gratitude for the contribution of all of you. Many of us know what it means to get a project. It is not only a budget of money, but a lot of work too. It is an obligation, which we had to fulfill. The previous project EFOSEC showed, that senior students are able to participate in the management of study activities and even give lectures, prepare own presentations, do research and run projects in cooperation with other partners. Both projects had their own logo and flyer. The formal requirements for Grundtvig projects which is the active inclusion of the seniors in the project, publicity for the project and dissemination of its results were met. The final outcomes, the intergenerational contacts and the discussions on the themes are presented on a special project homepage. The projects were financially supported by the Grundtvig program which is part of the Lifelong Learning programs of the European Union. I would like to thank all the elderly and young persons for their voluntary contributions to the project.

The summer courses were one of the splendid opportunities to make friends on an international level and learn about differing cultures and habits of our countries. Non-formal learning, next to informal forms, offers education to the seniors in friendly meetings and social activities, also arranged by themselves. This way, we could extend seniors' activities and enrich their learning in later life. Summer courses were combined with project meetings and meetings of triples and were attended by seniors from Austria, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia.

The members of EFOS are sometimes changing. A couple of years ago in 2007, when the University in Uppsala and its UTA decided to become a member of EFOS we were glad that Scandinavia too got represented in our European federation. In the year 2009 Niace (**the** National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) in the UK became a member of EFOS. We were glad, that with them EFOS got a new dimension and wider contacts and information. Almost at the same time the representative from the university in Namur, which also represented Belgium, decided not to continue his membership. In the year 2011 the Universidad Permanente at the University in Alicante became a new member, which gave EFOS an enlargement to the Southern Europe and gave a perspective for extended possibilities for co-operation. During the conference in Wroclaw in June 2011 we invited the representative from the UTA from Lvov in Ukraine to participate at our EFOS meeting in Wien. He showed a preliminary interest become an EFOS member. We will see how this contact will develop in practice. At the present time our federation has 16 institutional representatives from 9 European countries and 19 individual members from 6 countries.

Our federation realized during the last 4 years 8 regular EFOS meetings at the Senior University in Uppsala, University in Kiel, Graz, Brno, Bratislava, Wien and the Senioren Academies in Dresden and Groningen.

Another important area of EFOS activities were national and international **conferences** in which EFOS was involved. In the year 2009 our president was invited to participate at the Economical forum in Krynica Zdroj in Poland. Round-table discussions focused on the situation of the senior education and the life of seniors locally and globally. In the year 2010 our representatives and members actively participated on some European conferences. The first was held in March at the University of Hamburg, where members of EFOS in three workshops presented aims, activities and results of EFOS. The conference at the University of Wroclaw, which was held in June 2010, was aimed on the one hand at the education of seniors in Poland and on the other hand on the presentation of the VECU project and its results. The third conference where EFOS played an important role was the international conference held in October 2010 at the Comenius University in Bratislava. This conference was organized on occasion of the 20th anniversary of EFOS and was combined with a regular EFOS meeting. In the year 2011 a conference was held at the University in Wroclaw on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of its U3A. Our representatives presented the goals of EFOS, results from the projects and also our main ideas for the future.

The future of the education of adults, especially education for the elderly, is one of our main interests. The majority of you remembers our initiative and the letter which we sent to the commissioner of the European Commission. We were not satisfied with the answer and therefore we felt the necessity to

deal with this issue further. Due to this, an article “Towards the future of higher education for the elderly” was written. The **discussions** started in April 2009 in Graz on the basis of a paper of the „Goslar Group” of emeriti and were attended by emeriti of the University of Graz. Discussion continued during the next two EFOS meetings. Finally in the year 2010 we decided that the members should write down their ideas about future innovations and changes in EFOS and about the manifesto that was designed by Dr. Daniel Meynen. The manifesto and the papers of the members formed the basis for a thorough discussion during a whole day in October 2010 in Bratislava. This discussion clarified the needs of the seniors and the organizations for senior education and resulted in a new description of the aims and tasks of EFOS. At the meeting in Dresden Olaf Freymark presented a collection of the study possibilities for the seniors in the European countries. The participants decided to prepare a shorter version of the manifesto, which can be used by all the members for various reasons to interest e.g. national governments, representatives of the cities and other responsible persons who could influence the situation in the education of elderly.

Last important topic which was discussed in the workshop held by the Seniorenakademie Dresden was “The role of the education in the democracy of an aging society.” Maybe also this theme influenced us to prepare a new Grundtvig project for the next period, which will focus on the morality and values.

On occasion of its anniversary EFOS published a **book which described its first 20 years**, titled: „Aufgaben und Initiativen der EFOS. 20 Jahre – Geschichte und Gegenwart“ (available only in German). The book about the history of EFOS contains the speeches, research results and other EFOS activities. In addition to all the information that is available on the website, it is useful to have a printed publication that can be offered as a present when visiting e.g. a university or the governors of a city. It is available also on CD.

On 1st October 2010 the EFOS president attended an UNO event on invitation of Dipl.Ing. Monika Anna Klenovec, the chairwoman of the Committee on Ageing. The information workshop was enriching. It highlighted the global activities of the UNO and its committees.

The **EFOS homepage**, which is under control and arrangement of Peter Hug was permanently updated and enlarged according to the EFOS needs. The pages of the EFOS projects are linked fluently to the main homepage. The EFOS homepage contains the main goals of the federation, the list of the board and EFOS members, EFOS events, special articles, the issues of the EFOS News, the project results and a picture gallery. It is the best way to present our activities and be more visible in the European context and for other institutions. A new design, which became operational this year, makes our homepage more elegant, readable, clear and wealthier.

International contacts and contacts with other organizations on a National, European and World level are also very important for us. They give us possibilities to present our activities, exchange information and find new possibilities for cooperation. In this way we practiced our contacts with AIUTA, BagWiwa, Gefas, Niace, Hovo and ASUTV. EFOS presented its own activities on the occasion of international congresses, conferences, workshops and meetings giving a speech or presenting posters, e.g. at the AIUTA congress in Costa Rica 2010. Personal contacts with other organizations are realized via EFOS members, who are also members of the other organizations. Two of our members are representatives in the Committee on Ageing at the UNO in Wien and regularly attend the meetings of the committee.

Dear representatives and EFOS members,
at the end of my speech I would like to thank all of you for your work, which you have done for the EFOS during the last 4 years. It is not possible to mention all the names and persons. Some of them I already addressed. Not mentioned yet, are our honorary president Horst Leonhardt, who during the whole period took care of our finances and our managing director Herta Spitaler, who never forget to fulfill her tasks and, with her own precise work attitude, saw to it that the content of all our meetings was perfectly prepared. Thank you also, Peter Hug, who was always helpful to me and supported me

in my work. Thank you, Katarina Grunwald, for your translations from and to German. Thank you, other members of board, and also all of you who lend a helping hand in the EFOS tasks.

Thank you for your attention.