

## **RESOLUTION of the EPP Congress in Dublin, 6 – 7 March 2014**

**Submitted by the European Seniors' Union (ESU)**

### **Together towards an age-friendly society in Europe**

#### **The European People's Party**

- States that demographic change is one of today's key challenges for the European Union, its member states and its citizens. The demographic developments – with increasing generations of older persons and a decreasing birth rate – already began to be noticed some decades ago. Very recently, however, they have become a subject for discussion and decision making in many policy areas. It is a key opportunity for governments at all levels, stakeholders, civil society and every one to work together and to cope with demographic change in a way that is fair and sustainable for all generations.
- Recalls that the binding and basic attitude of the EU concerning the rights of people living longer is the Article 25 of the Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union: 'The Union recognizes and respects the rights of the elderly to lead a life of dignity and independence and to participate in social and cultural life'. Everybody, regardless of age, gender or dependency is entitled to enjoy the fundamental rights and freedoms, anchored and implemented in numerous national and international legal texts, action plans and measures.
- Refers to the overall analysis and agreement (also in the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in August 2013) underlining the urgent need for improvement of the application of universal human standards to persons of all stages of life, also to persons who have reached old age.
- Is conscious that the creation of an age-friendly society is one of the most effective approaches for responding to the challenges of demographic change and the need of enjoyment of all human rights. It is based on a positive attitude to ageing that recognizes the value of all age groups and fights against discrimination and stereotypes. It means that the perspective of people living longer is understood as a development process with gains and strengths and is integrated in the concept and planning of the individual life course, when people grow up, in all areas of life and all fields of policies.

Reaffirms that in a long life society services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support every age and population group, enabling the active participation and involvement of all in cultural and social activities, sharing and developing their competences, providing them with adequate protection, support and empowerment, fostering solidarity between generations, contributing to fulfillment and wellbeing.

- Welcomes actions and strategies promoting active and healthy ageing and reinforcing social inclusion. Many dimensions of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth are presenting opportunities to develop actions to meet the needs of older people and to accelerate the deployment of new processes, products and services (e-health – healthcare practice supported by electronic processes, ICT – information and communications technology, innovative work in public transport...)

- Expects that Europe-wide networks and movements should mainstream the promotion of an age-friendly society in all relevant EU policy processes and funding programs to build synergies and support action at all levels.
- Stresses that an inclusive labor market enabling older workers to remain at work for longer is part of an age-friendly society. Concentrated and compatible efforts by all labor market related systems are required to develop an age-friendly environment, access to further training programs, promote innovative and flexible work schemes, ensure the compatibility of work and care responsibilities and facilitate the transitions between jobs and from jobs to retirements.
- Is particularly concerned about vulnerable people at risk of poverty and older people in need of long-term care and assistance. Age and dependency cannot be the grounds for restrictions on any inalienable human right and civil liberty. Policy frameworks should be developed to guarantee adequate, fair and sustainable social protection systems (health care, long term care, pensions...) for both current and future generations and to ensure that also the most vulnerable older people can live dignified lives, free of poverty and social exclusion.
- Is convinced that in the light of major political, economic and social challenges, growth and sustainability we need to make long lasting commitments to create an age-friendly society, promoting and facilitating active and healthy ageing and enhancing solidarity between generations.
- Calls upon all politicians :
  - To overcome the culture of solely debating issues on a day-to-day basis so that the long-term consequences of political acts can be identified.
  - To respect the commitments made previously based on justice and law in the event of change of Government. Long term planning is a prerequisite for any positive development.
  - To recognize that the living conditions can have a different impact among different cohorts (or age groups). This gives rise to an obligation to achieve a balance between generations.
  - To relate seniors closely to all policy decisions, and specifically to those which directly concern them.
  - To create the conditions, based on education and a sufficient economic foundation, that allow every single person to take responsibility for themselves and for his/her social environment.
- Calls on governments at all levels, members of parliaments, policymakers, researchers, service providers, media and citizens to create, promote and stimulate, in accordance to political competences and the principle of subsidiarity a long life society, respecting all age groups.