



European Senior Organisation – PES seniors

Activity report 2022

As an **umbrella organization of socialist and social-democratic senior-organizations in Europe**, ESO – PES seniors bring together representatives coming from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Switzerland.

ESO will improve the position of senior citizens in Europe, their access to fundamental rights, their participation in political decision processes. ESO is promoting intergenerational solidarity and will represent the interests of senior citizens and their organizations in the European governing bodies.

To this end, ESO contribute to the public debate on ageing, inter-generational solidarity, consumer protection, social security and economic protection (pensions and annual allowances), housing, health-care, care and long term-care and communicates its position in the most effective way possible, f.e. by participating very actively to the consultation-initiatives from the European Commission, participation in AGE-Platform and into the several working groups in the PES. Lastly, we promote and safeguard the social, cultural and economic interests of senior citizens in Europe and strengthen senior citizens' participation and active involvement in society. We also show active interest in the wellbeing of each individual regardless of age. The needs and rights of older people have to be on the European agenda: building towards an age friendly society, decent income for seniors, addressing the problem of housing and adapted housing, accessible and face to face services in the era of digitalization, the cost and quality of care and healthcare, the problem of ageism and discrimination and disrespect of human rights of older people.

As we , since few years - in the PES, experienced an increasing interest on the seniors and their specific needs. On the level from the sectorial organizations, the PES Staff we experienced more recognition and this, probably, has to do with our active participation in our European party, but also with the involvement of the PES staff and their cooperation in our thinking process. We are also very happy with our common statement PES – ESO “together for European citizens” adopted by the PES Presidium in February 2022.

We would now, as we ask it since several years, extend our enhanced involvement to an institutional strengthening of our relationship with the PES. ESO- PES-seniors is also demanding to the PES to be recognized for full, and to have the right to participate to the PES Presidium, on the same way as the

other sectorial organizations from PES : PES-women, YES, Rainbow-rose and our Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS)

We would also like to see this increased attention spread to a number of national parties so that senior citizens, also there too, would be more involved in political decision-making and action. Seniors are not only “volunteers” offering their help and support, but also as engaged citizens and militants, counting as active participants in decision and policymaking processes.

Although, within the PES network over 40% are older people, we, unfortunately, tend to experience in many member states and parties a low interest in rights of older people. Older members tend to be taken for granted by their parties, and are not viewed as group with specific needs and concerns and remain without recognition of their vast experience and resources. A state of mind we want to tackle as it perpetuates ageism and we are asking that seniors and their organizations should be treated on similar way as youngster, in party-structures and representations.

2022 was the third year we were (partly) confronted with the COVID19 pandemic. Already in 2020 we discovered “Zoom” and the videoconferences, and in 2021 and 2022 we used these tools for regular exchange, administrative board meetings and general assemblies. We also experienced a decrease of interest in this new tool for public activity, as our activity on intergenerational day, April 29. We were also happy that it was possible to organize our seminars with physical participation. We were also very happy to prolong our cooperation with the PES and our common PES family with YES, PES-women, Rainbow-rose and the FEPS.

2022, where do we stand as an organization:

Since 2018 we have strengthened our contacts with the European Party of Socialists and Social Democrats, to develop a new dynamic of consultation and exchange on PES positions and discussion papers. We stay very active in the PES social network and the economic and financial network, but also in the Coordination-team. Apparently, our status as Observatory member, didn't allow our participation to the presidium-meetings, in contrary to other full-member or sectorial organisations. **For the next year we are also asking to reinforce our cooperation towards a full recognised sectorial organisation from the PES and access to the PES-presidium on the same foot as other sectorial organisations.**

Since 2021, as S-plus has to withdraw his support (bookkeeping, administration, management from social media, secretary support, we run completely on a voluntary basis.

Thanks to an additional financial support from the PES, we have outsourced certain tasks. We have done it already for the bookkeeping and we have met an external consultant for our internet communication. We were also **very happy to work together with the PES secretariat after the reinforcement with a new staff member who, among other things, would also focus on intergenerational solidarity.** We were very enjoyed on this involvement and to work together.

However, there are new challenges to whom we must meet. **For several years now we have been confronted with the so-called depoliticization of civil society organisations, and this applies in**

particular to the Scandinavian countries, the Flanders region in Belgium and now also Austria. In these countries, social-democratic and socialist-oriented organizations were depoliticized, either to meet new government funding requirements or in an effort to attract new members. Although there is little to argue against opening up our grassroots organisations, this may have consequences for the link between these organizations and their party or with the social-democratic family. We must therefore look for new forms of cooperation, representation structures and that in the light of a growing gap between civil society and politics; and the need for seniors to participate from their ideological point of view in the preparation and implementation of policies that concern them. On the same way as youngsters, women's, also seniors will have their proper organisation structures into the national parties and have to be threatened as full responsible citizens in their structures.

What actions were taken to tackle our challenges?

ESO contribution in policy-making activities.

To strengthen our relation with PES, ESO was represented by his president in **PES Coordination team meetings, the Social Europe Network meetings and the PES working group meetings on economy and finances.**

We actively contributed to PES discussion papers, action plans, working documents: **f.e. "Working document on pensions" "Position paper on fair taxation". Contributions were prepared by several proposals and in feedback by our member-organizations representatives.**

ESO was also very involved by the draft from the common statement with the PES for the Presidium in February and also by the PES resolution for the October-Congress in Berlin. We have actively participated into debates in the framework of the Congress and organized our own fringe -meeting on peace and peacekeeping in a changing global government.

ESO also made a follow-up to the **European Commission's consultation on the Green paper on ageing**, that we drafted in 2021. We also stimulate our member-organization to do the same at their proper level and in their proper network. As we were very engaged in drafting our own contribution and this in cooperation with our member-organizations, we were very disappointed to learn that the Commission is not following up his Green Paper by drawing up a White Paper on aging with an action program and proposals for binding legislative instruments, **we take up action for this White Paper on ageing.** We were meeting our responsible Ministers in Germany, Spain and Belgium to look how we can bring it on new on the European agenda. Nevertheless, our contribution will stay as our 15 points program for action in the next years and in the preparation for the 2024 European election campaign and can also be used by Member-organizations and PES and member-parties as a memorandum for Seniors concerns in politics.

ESO was also very active in the preparation from the **MIPAA – Conference in June in Rome.** We have participated with a large delegation to the civil-society event before the Conference and we were also represented at the Ministerial Conference. Our president has taken the floor pleading not only for an International Convention on Seniors rights, but also **for national and regional instrument guaranteeing Seniors 'access to fundamental rights.**

Activities and conferences.

On **April, 27, on the eve from the European day on intergenerational solidarity, ESO participated at the common event together with YES, PES and ESO “Intergenerational Solidarity Dialogue for Democratic Participation”**. First in 2 years the activity was organized with a live public into the FEPS HQ in Brussels and streamed via Facebook.

Participants were MARIA JOAO RODRIGUEZ (President FEPS), ALICIA HOMS (MEP and YES-president), JOS BERTRAND (President ESO), VICTOR NEGRESCU (MEP and President PES-activists), ANA PIRTSKHALAVA (Sec-Gen. YES), LAURA SPARAVIGNA (Florence City Councilor, EVELINE LOGGHE (Vice – president YES), Elisa Gambardella (SOLIDAR-Foundation). MAGDA DE MEYER (former MP Vooruit in Belgium and European Sec. Gen. of the international Council of Women) moderates the event.

On **June 13 and 14, ESO organised his semestrial seminar on the eve from the MIPAA- ministerial conference in Rome**. Introductory speakers were INA VOLCKER (BAGSO and staff-member ENECE) and prof CARLA FACCINI (President Associationi Nestori) on **MIPAA: what can it brings for our organisations and seniors**.

On **October 13**, we have organized our Autumn seminar in the eve from the PES-Congress in Berlin : **Fringe meeting on Peace, international solidarity in a changing world**. We invited speakers from 3 generations: WILLY CLAES (first president PES, former SG NATO, Belgian Minister of state), EVELINE REGNER (MEP and VP European Parliament from Austria), and HANNA KIVIMAKI (Vice-president YES from Finland).

By the end of 2022, we also launched a **“participatory project on adapted housing for seniors”** asking member organizations and national parties to inform us about good practices, challenges on this item and to look how on European level, policies can be helpful to reach better conditions for national, regional and local initiatives concerning adapted housing and care for seniors. This process will be concluded by a seminar in Autumn 2022 on adapted housing for seniors.

Representations outside

ESO remains a full member in **AGE European Platform**. Here, we also endeavor to defend the rights of older people in Europe. We were also active in the AGE Board and general assemblies, but also by placing our own priorities on the AGE agenda: decent income and adapted housing and care, age friendly cities and communities and solidarity between generations, monitoring the access to fundamental and human rights, dualization provoked by digitalization from services.

We were very involved in the AGE preparation from the Ministerial MIPAA conference and his follow-up. By preparing the MIPAA ministerial conference from Rome and the civil-society event in before, we have drafted our own contribution and we were successful in the introduction into the preparatory motion from the civil society our demand for a more subsequent monitoring of senior’s access to fundamental rights.

Management activities.

ESO organized **2 board meetings and 4 general assemblies in 2022** in order to manage the operation of ESO. There were also several on-line consultation and contacts on the organization from the secretary between President, Treasurer, Secretary general. All these meetings were organized by on-line tools.

Overview interventions and meetings.

Name of meeting	Date	Location
PES social network	3 February	On-line
PES coordination team	17 February	On-line
PES Presidium	24 February	On-line
ESO-YES-PES-FEPS preparing 27/4	28 February	On-line
ESO-YES-PES-FEPS preparing 27/4	9 March	On-line
ESO Board meeting	10 March	On-line
ESO General assembly	31 March	On-Line
PES economic and financial working group	11April	On-line
ESO-YES-PES-FEPS preparing 27/4	13 April	On-line
PES Coordination-meeting	21 April	On-line
AGE Board-meeting (representing ESO)	27 April	On-line
Facebook event on intergenerational solidarity (PES, YES, ESO, FEPS)	27 April	FEPS HQ and on Facebook
Debriefing Intergenerational solidarity (YES-ESO-PES-FEPS)	9 Mai	Online
PES Social network	19 Mai	Online
PES coordination team	10 June	Online
ESO Board meeting	13 June	UNAR - Roma
ESO General Assemblée	13 June	UNAR – Roma
ESO Seminar “MIPAA: what can it brings for our organisations and seniors”.	14 June	UNAR – Roma
UNICE Joint Forum of Civil Society and Research on ageing (participation by a delegation ESO)	15 June	Ergife Roma
MIPAA + 20 – Rome Ministerial conference – ESO delegate by his President	16-17 June	Ergife Roma
ESO GA (follow-up MIPAA)	19 September	On-Line
PES Coordination Team	22 September	On-Line
PES social network	27 September	On-Line
ESO GA	13 October	Berlin W. Brandt Haus
ESO Seminar on Peace and international cooperation (fringe meeting)	13 October	Berlin W. Brandt Haus
S&D – fringe meeting – participation	14 October	Berlin W. Brandt Haus
<i>PES – Congress berlin – representation by a ESO- delegation</i>	14-15 October	Berlin
PES Coordination meeting	7 December	On-line

Brussel, February 2023

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