

Translation

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE IN BUDAPEST

On September 17-19 this year, two members of the Lithuanian EURAG Association, Virgilija Dolgova and Gediminas Kuliešis, participated in an international conference organized by the European Federation of Older Persons, or EURAG European Federation, in Budapest. Due to the fact that the federation unites 29 older people's organizations from the European Union and other countries, the number of participants in this conference was small, only 9 countries (1-4 people) - Albania, Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Lithuania and Ukraine, as well as the federation leadership: President Dirk Jarre (Germany), Secretary General Dana Steinova (Czech Republic), Vice President Monique Epstein (France) and Vice President Jaap van der Spek (Netherlands). The Covid-19 situation apparently deterred other participants. The theme of the event is the participation of older people in decision-making. Organized by Eva Orsos Hegyesi, she is the president of her largest national elderly organization, Let the Aged Live! Or Life for Years, and her husband, a very warm and caring man, Gabor Hegyesi, by profession - social worker.

The first day of the conference took place in a very solemn setting - in the beautiful meeting room of the Budapest City Hall. A number of reports in Hungarian with simultaneous translation into English were read by local government representatives. The reports were very formal and told about the various measures taken by the state to target the elderly. Memorable facts are: social supermarkets, clubs for seniors, where they can learn to dance for free, yoga, handicrafts, etc., hotline for seniors, seniors' councils, the planned increase in pensions - 6% (in 2019 the average pension was about 380 EUR).

We also had the honor of hearing the report of the Mayor of Budapest. It was on that day that he also launched his election campaign as a candidate for the position of Hungarian Prime Minister. The mayor said that we all live in an aging society and that young retirees from the labor market enter directly into public life and that harmonization of society is very important here. Following this announcement, Dirk Jarre, President of EURAG Europe, presented the Mayor with his book "Make choice for societies" and a commemorative gift, and wished him to be elected Prime Minister.

This was followed by several reports from members of our federation. The Austrian spokesperson was the first to speak. Rosemarie Kurz, she works for the University of Graz Student Union, so she shared her impressions of interacting with students. Charming woman, for whom we are already 85, we have not only rights but also responsibilities. years and it exudes light, energy and joy of life.

Jaap van der Spek, Dutch representative, presented the activities of his organization. It is an umbrella organization uniting about 300,000 members across the country. He said that out of 3.1 million. about two million retirees (retirement age from 68.3) are active participants in volunteering. They work unpaid, participate in various civic actions. Their aspirations are to accept a new world, to share knowledge and experience with people of other ages, the relationship with the media is very important and it is important to remember that we have not only rights but also responsibilities. There are as many as 50 pension funds in the Netherlands.

Povl Anker Anderson, a spokesman for Denmark, said their organization also relies on the work of volunteers, who work in shops, produce and transport food for grandparents and grandparents' homes. The cooperative movement is still popular.

Monique Epstein, a representative of the French organization E'seniors, spoke about the activities of her organization. They are more engaged in the development of digitization and computer literacy,

organize various trainings, a remote book club. Monique said she did not support volunteering, saying she should be rewarded for her experience and knowledge.

At the end of the first day's session, EURAG President Dirk Jarre read out a draft of a document he had prepared, entitled the Budapest Declaration, and all participants agreed on the content of that document. The Budapest Declaration will be available on the EURAG website.

The second day of the conference began in the hotel's conference room. The mayor of the lower rank, 6th district of Budapest, came again. Again, he read his report in Hungarian on what the district government is doing for the welfare of seniors, who make up 1/4 of the total population of the district. It is important to mention that public transport throughout Budapest is free for all retirees (aged 62.5), including those from other countries, which was very convenient for us. The mayor of the district spoke about public safety, the cleanliness of the city (better with us), attention to seniors, for example, on the occasion of October 1 (World Day of the Elderly) donates 10 thousand. forints (about 30 EUR), free pneumococcal vaccinations, active clubs for seniors, congratulations on the occasion of the 100th anniversary, donates more and more before the New Year