



EFOS

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



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Board

President:

PhDr. Nadežda Hrapková, PhD, Bratislava, Slovakia
Univerzita Komenského, Univerzita tretieho veku
e-mail: nadezda.hrapkova@cdv.uniba.sk

Vice-president:

Olaf Freymark, Magdeburg, Germany
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Vice-president:

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General Secretary:

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Univerzita Komenského, Univerzita tretieho veku
e-mail: katarinagrunwald@gmail.com

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Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom

Contact address:

Dr. Katarina Grunwald
Červeňáková 19
84101 Bratislava, Slovakia
Mobil (00421) 94800472
e-mail: katarinagrunwald@gmail.com

From the editor:

This issue of EFOS News has something special in it. It will not be about the work you do for EFOS, not about projects you have already done successfully. No, it won't be, except for the President's Report for 2023 and Action plan.

We will read about the moments in the lives of individuals that were significant for them and whose lives were shaped by these experiences and situations.

Björn Odin talks about Namibia, the country where he spent a long time dedicated to the education of the local people. About the time of Nelson Mandela, about apartheid on the way to democracy - in a nutshell...

We will be able to read about Archbishop Hildebald of Cologne and the cathedral library, which is a unique cultural heritage of Europe and the world,

A story about retirement and activities in old age - visit to UTA

We will learn about the history of mutual relations in our society

Experiences with the occupying power from 1945 to 1994, Jürgen Loesch - a life story

Gallery of deserved EFOS members - Evi Rudolph",

We thank all authors for their contributions and for allowing us to share their experiences.

May 2023

Katarina Grunwald

EFOS News

Publication of the
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Students in Universities

Editor:

Katarina Grunwald
Červeňáková 19
841 01 Bratislava
Slovakia
Tel. +421904 800 472
E-mail: katarinagrunwald@gmail.com

Peter Hug
Prinses Irenestraat 8
9401 HH Assen
Netherlands
Tel. +31-592-330464
E-mail: s.p.hug@planet.nl

EFOS Website:

<https://efos-europa.eu>

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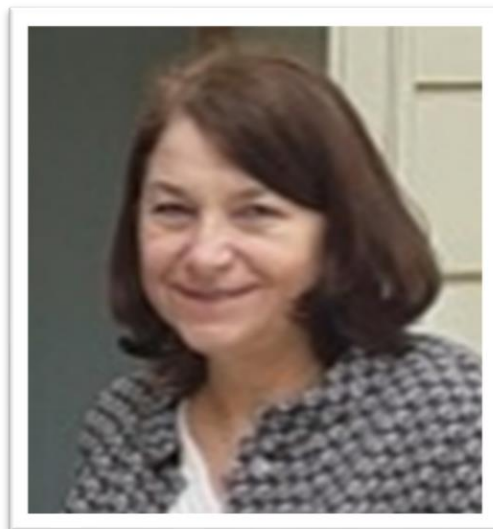
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President's report for the year 2023

PhDr. Nadežda Hrapková, PhD., EFOS president



The year 2022 was important for the EFOS members from many points of view. It was a year when the three-year project Erasmus + SeLiD finished, and we evaluated our very intensive work about Digital technologies. We were very satisfied with how we managed and finished the project Erasmus+ SeLiD (Senior's Learning in the Digital Society) during the Covid pandemic and the limits to personal communication. The project started in September 2019 with its evaluation in June 2022. The partnership of 8 universities realised 4 personal meetings (at the University of Wroclaw in Poland, Dresdner Seniorenakademie, UPUA University of Alicante in Spain and at Otto von Guericke University in Magdeburg, Germany) with the participation of other partner institutions (TU Brno, Senior University Uppsala, TU Chemnitz, and CU Bratislava). The project put the interests of senior students in digital technologies into practice. Presentations of the project partners and the coordinating institution, the Comenius University of Bratislava, showed a big opportunity for focusing on the digital literacy of Seniors and on improving the skills of older students. The project SeLiD encouraged groups of Seniors and lecturers at the European universities in 9 countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden) to search for information to support interest in the digitalisation and daily life of Seniors in the digital society.

The regular EFOS meetings during the project period have been combined with the project transnational meetings and the specialised workshops on the chosen topics:

- What is the importance of new technologies in Seniors daily lives. How to live with them.
- New methods and programs in ICT learning for older adults.
- Needs and wishes of the elderly in the digital society. Internet of things, social media, and digital security.
- Solving problems in the digital society. Responsible Seniors in digital agency and at home,

supporting the digital skills of older people.

The final conference and transnational project meeting were organised by the project partner at the **Otto von Guericke University in Magdeburg in March 2022 (10. – 12.03.2022)**. Outcomes, good practices, and the research results are published in the project booklet and available on the project website <http://selid.efos-europa.eu/>:



Project Outcomes:

- A review table which presents the changes in digital activities at UTAs (Universities of the Third Age) during the SELID project period.
- Research about the needs of older people in the use of digital technologies and home equipment.
- Ways and possibilities for encouraging isolated older people to become involved in the life of digital societies have been practiced.
- New innovative curricula for the training of the seniors' skills to prepare them for online learning and be able to use digital technologies.
- Courses on Digital technologies, education and training of low-skilled adults have been made available.
- Good practices in using ICT have been collected and disseminated to support the learning activities for older people and implementation by institutions.

Within the project we created a **Research questionnaire** to find out the needs of Seniors in the digital society and support their interests. In the project, 1,175 seniors have been involved, with another 303 seniors evaluated by Ph.D. students within their research work. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-four questions of different typologies and gained 1,478 respondents in total. From eleven different institutions there were 107 participants (managers, older students) directly working on the project tasks when we officially realised 74 mobilities supported by the Program Erasmus +. Other 4.800 persons were involved in the project activities realized in 9 project European countries. **Final report of the Erasmus+ project SeLiD** with the summary and description of the working process, outcomes and results we submitted to the European Commission on 28. May 2022.

The collection of 8 good practices consists of encouraging initiatives:

- Accessible resources, accessible technologies, accessible apps, life-long learning
- Online café, online university for Seniors
- Computer Literacy Courses
- Good practice case example on the subject of Online Banking
- Use of Digital Technologies by Older People
- Smartphone-Course
- Introduction of pilot courses for digital beginners.
- Online Learning in COVID Time / challenge for instructors and senior students how to get around during the pandemic/

The project results have been presented during the AIUTA world conference « U3As and Lifelong Learning » **in Athens at the New York College in April 2022**. For the project documents and its dissemination, we have created the project website (<http://selid.efos-europa.eu/>), which is a part of the EFOS website. The EFOS website is regularly updated by our webmaster Peter Hug who has carried out this very precise work for more than twenty years. The EFOS International activities this year focused mainly on the presentation of the EFOS and project results, support of the activities for seniors and looking for new contacts and EFOS members. Concerning these interests, the EFOS president had discussions with the representatives of institutions in Croatia, Czech Republic, Portugal, and Spain during the Erasmus mobilities and other events at which she participated. These initiatives have had a good result and we have received 3 new applications for membership in the year 2023.

In July 2022 the EFOS president and General Secretary were invited by the DANET – Danube Network of Seniors, University in Ulm, ILEU to take part at the **Danube festival in Ulm, Germany in July (6.-10.) 2022** and have active participation in the poster section, during the workshops and also to present the EFOS website, SELID project, cultural program, and activities for Seniors. This very fruitful and friendly meeting showed again the possibilities for active ageing after the end of the pandemic and for future cooperation in the education of Seniors.



In Autumn 2022 after finishing the SeLiD project we started to discuss our new possibilities for active cooperation and ideas for a new project for the EFOS members. We have noticed that there are some universities with a long history of the educational activities for seniors. The oldest institution within the EFOS membership is the University of Wroclaw, which is going to celebrate its 45th anniversary of its University of the Third Age. Therefore, the Autumn regular EFOS meeting took place at Wroclaw University at the invitation of Wroclaw university to associate it with the conference on Senior education and traditions in Wroclaw. The EFOS agenda focused on future project goals and ideas. These have led to a new project application and EFOS Action plan for 2023 – 2030. The main EFOS interests and future initiatives are to be focused on the topics of Environmental education and ecological themes in Senior education and the behaviour of Seniors in relation to nature.

The international and political initiatives of EFOS are practically presented in its representations and work at the Committee on Ageing (CoA) at UN Vienna. There are 3 members representing EFOS at CoA with regular participation in the monthly meetings (online or in person). In 2022 our individual EFOS member, Associate Prof. Monika Zavis PhD., from the Comenius University Bratislava, was invited to the IDOP event (International Day of Older Persons) to make a speech for the guests on 3. October 2022 in Vienna. She presented a very good lecture on the topic: "Older persons: Strengthening Resilience to Mental Health Issues". During other meetings of the CoA we actively took part in the discussions on initiatives and documents to fulfill the goals of SDG (Sustainable Development). The main proposed topic for the UN-IDOP 2023 is "Violence against and abuse of the elderly". Combating violence and abuse against the elderly will be discussed, led by the speakers The proposed title fits very well with the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights.



EFOS Website is always up-to-date and relevant to the EFOS news and its activities.
<https://efos-europa.eu>

Action plan 2023 - 2027

In EFOS Action plan for 2023 – 2027 we can refer to the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its formulations: Older persons must be recognized as active agents of societal development in order to achieve truly transformative, inclusive and sustainable development outcomes.

The ageism is a persistent challenge: prejudice and discrimination towards older persons at individual and institutional levels undermines their status as rights holders including their right to autonomy, participation, access to education and training, health and social care, security, and decent employment.

Keeping the above in mind we formulate **the EFOS goals as:**

1. Promoting inclusive education of older persons at special academies/universities for older people or in special programs at tertiary education institutions to foster and secure their access to education at multiple levels, including those without formal qualification.
2. Focusing on improving and extending learning opportunities for using digital technologies and ICT, to get key digital competences of the elderly
3. Fostering of joint projects for older students throughout Europe
4. Identifying possibilities of using the skills and expertise of older students for the benefit of science and society
5. Representing the interests of academic education for older people in politics and society
6. Cooperating with autonomous national organisations with similar goals and other international organizations that support lifelong learning (LLL)

Agenda 2030 sets out a universal plan of action to achieve sustainable development in a balanced manner and seeks to realize the human rights of all people. It calls for leaving no one behind and for ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are met for all segments of society, at all ages, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable—including older persons.¹

Focal points of EFOS in the forthcoming years

Following the **right of older persons to have access to education it is very important in the EFOS framework:**

- to **protect the interests of older students** in the studies at the institutions concerning the elderly within Europe;
- to secure the **open education tailored to the needs** of individual adults;
- to **cooperate with universities and their students** on a national and European level;
- to **exchange information** about the study institutions including the possibilities for continuing education for elderly learners;

- to **exchange the life experiences** of seniors from their universities, communities, own families, cities and countries;
- to **research on the topics of senior's education** in the European framework;
- to **follow the EFOS traditions and directly involve the elderly** students in the EFOS activities;
- to **encourage** participation of senior students at EFOS meetings to assure meaningful discussion on important topics; and give them possibilities present their own activities and experience;
- to **recruit new institutions that focus on elderly learners** and education. Extend EFOS membership to European countries that are not yet represented;
- to **propagate senior education** in an active way. React to documents and politics of the EU and participate in national and international committees (Committee for Ageing in Vienna, etc.);
- to **build the image of EFOS** in one's own country as well as abroad (by attendance of international meetings and conferences);
- to **keep continuity in the EFOS membership** in one's own institution and find new responsible persons (successors) for the continuity of the membership.

Population ageing together with related lifestyle changes. A fundamental policy and attitudinal shift on ageing and old age is therefore needed to reflect and promote the contributions of older persons to society. Instead of focusing on the negative aspects of ageing, the process of reaching out to older persons – often victims of an overcoming marginalization and intersectional discrimination – requires an integrated and multifaceted approach, including sensitization of power structures, investment in public education and in the enforcement of anti-discrimination campaigns, and changes in the legislation. It's important to articulate in a compelling manner the gains for society if older persons are included in the development process. (Policy Implications for the 2030 Agenda).

We believe that these words will be put in the practice by the national and European politics and implemented in the supportive documents for the promotion of senior education all around Europe.

1. The concept of “old age” is multidimensional, which includes chronological (based on a birthdate), biological (related to human body ability), psychological (concerned with psycho-emotional functioning) and social age (related to social roles such as grandparents).

This brief adopts the definition of the United Nations that uses 60 years or over to refer to older persons, while recognizing the diversity of older persons in terms of their needs, capabilities, lifestyles, experiences and preferences that are shaped by their age, gender, health, income, education, ethnicity and other factors.

My story

Björn Odin

From apartheid to democracy in a nutshell. The case of Namibia.



1993 was the year when apartheid was stopped in South Africa and Nelson Mandela became president. The neighbouring country – Namibia – was not that much in the focus, but here the same sort of revolving change took place and another black man - Sam Noyoma became president.

Namibia had for many years not been an independent state but under the rule of South Africa after a long period as a german colony “German South West Africa”. The black inhabitants of Namibia had for long struggled to be independent from South Africa. The struggle for freedom had its center in Northern Namibia with bases in neighbouring Angola and Zambia.

Sweden had for many years supported the fight against apartheid also by development work in Angola and Zambia. Swedes from Umeå University gave support to teacher education for black students from Namibia in refugee camps and bases in Angola.

After some years as consultant in education in Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan I went for short term consultancies to Zambia in 1988. And a few years later there was a question from Umeå University if I could take on a job regarding Teacher Education in recently liberated Namibia.

The new minister of education in Namibia – Nahas Angula – had met my Swedish colleagues at work during the fight for freedom and found out that the way the Swedes worked was close to the ideas of Nahas how to create a democratic school system and a modern teacher education. Umeå University got the task to support the teacher education reform including the establishment of three new teacher education colleges in areas mainly populated by black people. Before independence there had just been one – situated in the capital – Windhoek – and only for white students. Even this one should now be open for all.

I accepted the job and in the end of 1992 I left for Namibia and joined my colleagues from Umeå. The new program should start just after new year 1993. It was a very special period with the first free elections in Namibia at the same time. We were afraid of sabotage from the white population but everything went in a peaceful way.

All teacher educators of Namibia were at a big conference, just before Christmas to prepare the implementation of the reform. We decided to allocate one Swede as an advisor at each college and two at the Ministry of Education in Windhoek. I took on the responsibility for academical in service courses for teacher educators. At the same time I was going to facilitate the reform at Caprivi College of Education and help the rector to establish the new college in a small town called Katima Mulilo. Katima is situated 1200 km from the capital at Zambesi River and the main city of Caprivi region.

My wife Lena later came to assist me as course administrator. During the terms we supported the work at the new college, its rector and staff. Between terms we organized 10 days intense courses for lecturers from all the four colleges at different locations in Namibia.

For the first time white and black lecturers were supposed to work together. From the beginning there was much of scepticism from white lecturers. By roleplay, groupwork and joint excursions step by step the scepticism disappeared. This happened also during the terms when I in different ways arranged situations when they had to work together.

I have a special memory, how a white female head of science department from the beginning was sceptic to the black female head of language department. They had to work together in the management team which the rector and I established at the college. After about one year the white head came to me and told:

“Björn - Sometimes I forget that Choma is black!”

Such an expression really touched me – a big step had been taken from apartheid to democracy-in a nutshell.

Archbishop Hildebald of Cologne and the cathedral library

A European cultural heritage

Dr. Lothar Speer



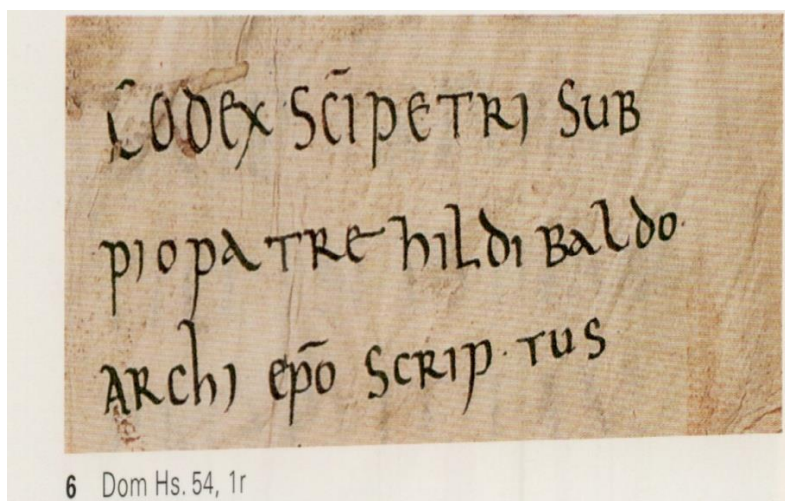
In the winter semester 2021/22, Prof. Dr. Peter Orth, Department of Medieval Latin at the Institute of Classical Studies at the University of Cologne, offered an exercise on medieval libraries in which interested students can gain a good insight into this fascinating topic. Students contribute to the deepening of individual topics through presentations - this also applies to senior students.

The author chose the theme "The Cologne Cathedral Library". Prof. Orth limited the period - so that the task remained affordable - to the time of Archbishop Hildebald (787 – 818) and the library catalogue of 833. The beginnings of the library, which interested readers can visit today at Kardinal-Frings-Str. 1-3, probably go back to Hildebald. It's worth a visit!

The Cologne Cathedral Library represents a unique cultural heritage of Europe and the world, which has been largely preserved due to happy coincidences, unlike the cathedral libraries of Mainz and Trier, the other two Rhenish archdioceses. A restrictive code of use secured the existence from "thieves" until the invasion of the French troops in 1794. Immediately before the French occupation, 200 of the most precious manuscripts were brought to Wedinghausen in Westphalia, and more than 200 more were secured in various locations. As a result of the reorganization of Germany after the Congress of Vienna, the library came into the possession to Cologne with of the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt. The cathedral chapter tried in vain to get the library back by legal means. Prussia's victory in the war of 1866 and the peace treaty with Hesse then brought the library back 191 manuscripts, quasi as a gift of reconciliation to the Catholic Rhine Province.

Likely, the cathedral library was founded by Hildebald, the first Archbishop of Cologne and Archchaplain of Charlemagne. According to the library catalogue, it consisted of 833 books, which can be divided into the following categories:

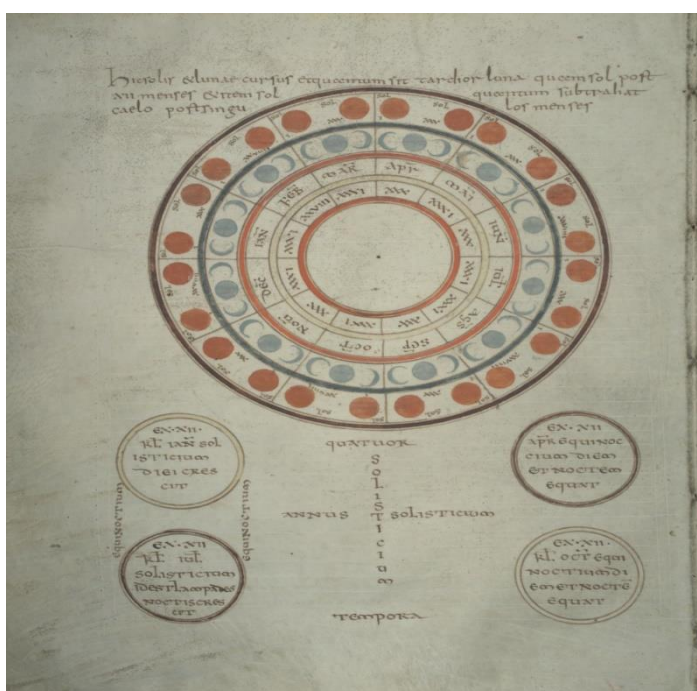
The Bible / Texts on the Liturgy / Church Fathers / Canon Law / Lives of Saints / Works on the Reckoning of Time / Dogmatics and Morals / Medicine / a Code of Civil Law / Ancient Writers / Textbooks for School Teaching. Twelve manuscripts in the cathedral library can certainly be dated to the time of the first Archbishop of Cologne, because they bear the note (reprinted with the permission of the Archbishop's Diocesan and Cathedral Library):



Codex sancti Petri sub pio patre hildebaldo archiepiscopo scriptus (The Book of St. Peter was written under the pious father, Archbishop Hildebald.)

A fine example of medieval book art can be found in manuscript 83 II, a compendium of the era, natural science and celestial science, which can be described as the Cologne Encyclopedia of Early Middle Eastern Astronomical and Temporal Computing Knowledge. It dates from between 798 and 805. Such books were important for the calculation of the Easter holidays and the synchronization of the different time measurements. Thanks to the kind permission of the Archbishop's Diocesan and Cathedral Library, three examples can be shown from this manuscript 83 II:

Sheet 83 v: Illustration of the relationship between the sun and the moon in the course of the year and indication of the months with the respective days. Underneath is a cross-shaped scheme with indications of the solstices (solistitia) and equinoxes (equinoxes). This results in the division of the year (annus) into the four seasons (quatuor tempora).





Sheet 141r: The name of the main and secondary winds in Greek and Latin with assignment to the cardinal points.

Sheet 156v: Allegorical representation of the constellation Hercules. It depicts the ancient hero with the skin of the Nemean lion and the club fighting the dragon guarding the apple tree of the Hesperides.

If you would like to take a closer look at the cathedral library, you should take a look at the exhibition book from 1998, which contains a wealth of information and can be borrowed from the Cologne University Library. (Plotzek, Joachim M. (ed.), Faith and Knowledge in the Middle Ages – The Cologne Cathedral Library, catalogue of the exhibition, Cologne 1998 .

Readers will quickly see why this library is so unique. You can get a deeper impression by clicking on <https://digital.dombibliothek-koeln.de>. Then select the "Manuscripts" button and you will find yourself in the middle of the treasures of the cathedral library. Have fun on your journey of discovery!



Bright moments of late adulthood age'

Ewa Alfut

I'm opening the window. It is a beautiful, sunny day. I'm looking at the local garden square. There's a bench under the spreading willow. The tree kindly shares its shadow on two elderly ladies. I recognize them as the residents of a nearby apartment block who spend their free time on leisurely conversation, calmly, without any haste. They don't seem to be bored, for them it's just one of these days which need to be filled with anything. One can finally find some time in retirement to calmly sit on such a bench (unless there are grandchildren to be taken care of, then the bench located next to the playground is most suitable).

I'm thinking, 'it could be me'. Fortunately, it's not, but to be honest, I sit on such a bench from time to time. Sometimes I do...

I'm closing the window, getting ready to leave.

On the tram, I'm thinking about the upcoming future. I remember the day I had to decide what to do with myself on my retirement.

And the retirement took me by surprise, unexpected. I felt satisfied at work, loved being a teacher, and looked forward to many years yet to come. The news of the permanent closure of middle schools came out of the blue, which was hard to believe.

I could have stayed, but...

Retirement. How to fill so much free time? How to resist loneliness and a pessimistic mood? 'A man can live alone but needs meetings' - these words kept ringing in my ears. Television cannot be one's only friend; that's a fact.

Sometimes one regrets making a wrong decision wishing to turn back time. However, some decisions are perceived as the best in one's life. In my case, such a great decision to sign up for the Third Age University (TAU).

Third Age Universities are conducted at numerous universities. Still, the choice was clear to me: it could only be the University of Wrocław, from which I had graduated in the past.

Even though everyone was friendly at the interview, I will never forget how nervous I was then, as well as I'll never forget the overwhelming joy of being accepted. That was the first step to a friendly relationship, also with myself.

Time flies, unfortunately. Although after signing up for the Third Age University, I hardly even notice it. All the excitement regarding the beginning of the academic year, getting a student ID card and index, participating in lectures, and undertaking assignments. All of this was so creative, cheerful, friendly to me.

There we were, I (a lady in her late adulthood), with new friends in a university auditorium as students. How ennobling was that, how joyful to spend inspiring days filled with varied activities, meetings, new acquaintances, and new possibilities.

I shall always remember the overwhelming task of choosing classes from an educational offer which gave me a headache. If only I could split, be in a few places at once, if only...

It's been four years, partially seized by the pandemic. Time deepens the wrinkles on one's face but smoothes the marks in heart and soul. Days go by, filled with what I like, what makes me happy, brings fulfilment, allows me to explore talents deep beneath my needs, overwhelm my shyness and explore new fields.

Here, at Third Age University, with the help of kind professors, I can create, write down stories that have been patiently and timidly waiting for a long time to be brought to light.

What a joy is to see the printed effects of one's work. How great it is to present it to the children, who are proud of their mother's active attitude (instead of nagging and getting bored).

Here I can also perform on a stage, in the cabaret, in a theatre group, which helps me to overcome my fears and complexes step by step. I can associate with poetry, music, movies, theatre...

I can share my experience and knowledge with others.

Despite silver-coated temples and years passing by, I say 'I love you life' or Faustian 'Linger a while - thou art so fair!' more and more often.

A killjoy can state that one doesn't need to study at the Third Age University to be active. It may be true, but being active in a friendly group of people with the same interests is much better. Nowadays, more and more people feel lonely in a crowd and perceive the surrounding world as a desert where they cannot find the right track; they lack somebody who would save them from this 'lonely island'. In my opinion, being a member of the TAU community is a beam of light in this fast-paced world, in which, according to the Poet, 'within growing crowds, it is hard to meet a true person'.

When I wander on shorter and longer tracks with my fellow TAU students group, I feel grateful for not being alone, having the opportunity to enjoy views and participating in an excursion. When I contemplate the protagonists' fates depicted on a theatre stage, I can't wait to exchange my comments and observations with others participating in the event.

This sense of community and togetherness intensifies every Monday on holding hands while outloud singing the TAU anthem words 'let's bond a friendly circle, let's sing a cheerful song, until we still have time, until we still have time...'. This is the symbolic way of passing hope and kindness before everyone rushes to chosen classes, activities and joys; being happy that they still can do so.

Even if it's impossible, there are days when one wants to shout, 'Cruel time, hold, turn back.' Every day I see myself in a mirror - a lady with few new wrinkles and hair which lost its old shine. However, while meeting young students in the university's corridors, I don't think about evanescence. On the contrary, if I listen carefully, these dusty corridors echo my own evergetic footsteps from old times. Then I feel as time turned back.

Young students don't treat us as intruders but greet us with welcoming smiles. One can feel good relations and a friendly atmosphere.

I am about to enter my TAU, I am a part of it.

And it feels good.

I agree to a publication under my name and surname.

‘You've asked for a story... so the story you shall hear... the story about good and bad relations in our community’.

by Małgorzata Derkacz

Let's start with a story, then. Once upon a time, there was a magnificent kingdom ruled by the grim king and the queen of gentle look and shy smile, with courtiers who terrified all the folk. There was also a treasury of knowledge hidden somewhere in the kingdom, with different paths leading to it. One path was dedicated to people leaving their old occupations behind, quitting their posts and looking for new challenges. Those individuals who chose the second path were filled with energy and a particular drive typical for adventurer seekers and wanderers. The third path was crowded with people who couldn't stand their loneliness and hoped to find friends during the treasure hunt. The last path was filled with pairs and groups of people who had known each other for a long time and wanted to preserve their bonds.

So, there they were, wandering, so diversified that it seemed almost impossible for them to cooperate, not to mention finding the treasure. Then, out of the blue, the guards appeared, giving orders, asking around, forbidding and permitting this and that. And - as in every fairy tale - a dwarf occurred, talking to the Wanderers about cooperation, mutual influence, presence, bonds, closeness, and something called *con tactus*. The last notion was a challenging one. What does it even mean to keep in good contact, to share positive relations within a group? Does it mean to be together? Is it as simple as that?

Everyone understood the notion differently. Some say: 'we have to work on finding the treasure, but not too hard, in other case we'll get weary', 'we have to share one plan', 'let's choose the leader to guide us'. Not everyone was happy with these joint actions, as few Wanderers, with rebellious attitudes, were tired of constant discussions. They were even concerning going back! It would have happened if they didn't listen to each other points and understood that their lives truly mattered. And so, day by day, the Wanderers of different paths started to bond, respect and listen to each other, they shared joys and sorrows. Naturally, there were also 'annoyers' trying to cut in the speakers and interrupt the others.

One day they saw the familiar dwarf sitting on a diamond chest. 'That must be the treasure we desire!' everyone thought. The dwarf just looked at them, scribbled something with a quill pen and said: 'I've been observing you for a while and noticed that you cooperate better and fight less. You help the weak with a smile on your face. And yet, let me give you a few pieces of advice. First, don't be afraid to face your private demons and shadows, try to bond with them. Second, stay open-minded towards your travel companions. Third, create a communication system which enables you to meet needs more efficiently; to build and introduce common space. As you've already noticed, you will gradually become more aware of established ties, new relationships bonded, and your strengths and weaknesses; only then you do understand the true meaning of 'we'. Remember this, a good relationship may only be built on love and mutual respect. If you meet all the conditions, you'll get the key to the treasury of knowledge'.

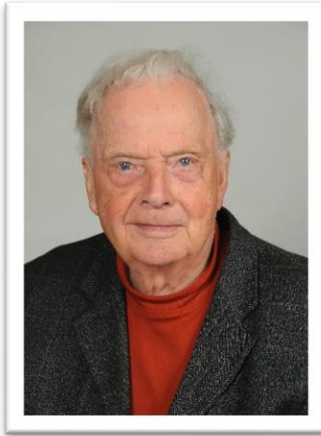
You've asked for a story... there's your story... perhaps not quite the one you have expected. The real protagonists of the story are students of the Third Age University (TAU) at the University of Wrocław, who have been searching the knowledge, just like the Wanderers have

searched for the treasury. We join TAU as strangers who are getting to know each other during offered classes. There are conflicts, of course, but we are better at solving them from day to day. With the help of our tutors and group leaders, we learn how to create good relationships and bonds. Just like in the story, our path is not an easy one. We are getting closer to each other by recognizing similar interests and participating in chosen lectures, sessions, workshops and sports activities. We've learnt how to share our opinions and experience; we support each other in various situations. As a rule, we don't tolerate 'annoyers', notorious critics and malcontents. We don't make friends with everyone, but it is natural in a group of people with different personalities, life experiences and expectations. Yet it is essential to remember that the treasure is one step ahead and a smile may be the only medicine we need cause it opens hearts and helps create good relations.

I agree to a publication under my name and surname.

Experiences with the occupying power from 1945 to 1994

Jürgen Loeschke



The Second World War was coming to an end. After the devastation of Dresden on 13 and 14 February 1945, my family had moved to Malter, or rather fled, to our weekend property there. I was about 4 years old, but the events got deeply engraved in my memory. It was a beautiful warm spring in 1945, so we were able to play outside a lot, relatively carefree. We heard almost nothing about the worries of the adults living with us. Our grandmother lived with us after losing all her belongings, as did another lady friend of hers who was also bombed out in the same house and had lost everything. Then there were my parents, my sister and me as the "nestling".

Suddenly they said, "The Russians are coming!" My sister, who was 10 years old at the time, was hidden by our parents with a friend in the cellar of a neighbour's house. Then the Russians were at the door and confiscated our weekend house for their chief of staff, of all things, which was again a "fortunate" circumstance, as the handover took place in a relatively civilised manner after two hours. There was no additional harassment of anyone present. We were able to bring a few belongings, especially food from the property, I rescued my teddy bear. Then we sat behind the garden fence for quite a while and watched the Russians go about their business. I remember a Russian with a gun hanging across his chest who was talking in a broken German but friendly way to the lady who lived with us, and I was innocently standing next to him!

Afterwards, we could watch soldiers with their caps on their heads and "jackboots" on their legs dragging furnishings out of the house and leaning them against the trunks of the fruit trees. It was only 70 years after the end of the war that I learned that at the same time (8/9 May) the centre of Altenberg, not far away, was reduced to rubble. It was the second time after the bombing of Dresden that we had been relatively lucky. We then lived in emergency quarters until we returned to Dresden, as our house was also spared from bombs during the attack on 17 April.

After our return, there were sporadic encounters with Russians on bicycles with several watches on their arms. Once our doorbell rang and a Russian soldier stood at the door wanting to be let in looking for scattered soldiers. He inspected every room and looked under the beds and kept calling out soldier, soldier? When he wanted to leave, he mixed up the doors and wanted to leave the flat through the toilet door, which amused me, the little boy.

The next close encounter took place on 17 June 1953 in Dresden. Two comrades and I were curious about the events because we listened to RIAS at home. So we went to Münchner Platz, where the district court stood. Russian tanks were lined up there. We took a closer look (brave and clueless, eh?). The Russians asked us to get schnapps at the nearby store. We refused and continued to the Postplatz, where Russians were lying behind piles of bricks with rifles at the ready and demonstrators were being loaded onto Russian trucks. One comrade scolded us, "What do you want here, you should go back out where you belong!" When we arrived on

Würzburger Straße near our home, I saw my sister walking towards our apartment building with a Russian running behind her with a rifle at the ready. While distributing an invitation to the "Young Parish", she had been asked by the Russian for her identity card, which she had forgotten at home. In any case, the Russian came with her to the flat and asked to see her identity card. He then disappeared again.



It was not until 1965, when I moved to Königsbrück, a small town north of Dresden, that I again came into contact with the "Red Army", which had established the commandant's office in the former district court on the market square in 1947. We also lived on this side of the market a few buildings away and had a direct view into the courtyard of the commandant's office, which later led to the Russians raising the wall to us by one metre "the Russian way", but we still retained our view. This was a highlight for our many visitors from the western part of Germany, especially since the market was also usually "decorated" with military vehicles. The Stasi (State Security of GDR) therefore also had an eye on us (military espionage!).

One day, shortly after our wedding in 1965, we had just gone to bed and the whole house shook. We ran to the window on the market side and saw a Russian truck backed up against the wall of the house. Half-dressed, we ran down the stairs to get there before the "Mushik" could make a run for it. Apparently the brakes had come off and so the truck rolled down the somewhat sloping market and rammed into our house with corresponding plaster damage. We reported this to the commandant's office. Sure enough, the next day a "specialist" arrived at our house to repair the damage. It was worth seeing, especially as it was ashlar plaster. We had to look at the "plaster monument" until 1970. Then we had the façade renovated all over again.

Since Königsbrück had been a Russian garrison town since 1945 with 15-20000 soldiers and officers including civilians, the next encounter in 1968 with the events in Czechoslovakia was particularly intense. Tanks with white stripes on their sides constantly rolled through our town, making the walls shake. In addition, there was lorry traffic loaded with crews. The entire area

of the Wagenberg next to the town in the direction of Kamenz was occupied by soldiers of the "Red Army". We were under voluntary house arrest, so to speak. However, my company bus to Cossebaude took me safely to my work and my wife had to go to school in Schwepnitz by public bus. We didn't have our own car until 1970, although that would have been life-threatening in that situation.

My father-in-law, who was elected mayor with an LDPD mandate in the last free elections in 1946, was permanently busy in the commandant's office and always had to "credibly" avoid the offered vodka. At that time there were still serious incidents up to and including rape, also theft, especially mouth robbery in the orchards. Fortunately, this had changed positively, except for the "mouth theft".

Königsbrück was surrounded by barracks that had been built during the imperial era since 1893. To the south were the "Suche Bator Barracks" (former Prince Georg Barracks, 20 ha), to the west directly at the castle park the "Old Camp" from 1893 (6.5 ha) and to the north the "New Camp" from 1907 with approx. 200 ha (tank and truck garages, living quarters, drill grounds and an officers' casino from the time of the German Emperor) with an adjoining military training area (MTA) with an area of over 7000 ha. By the way, this became in the meantime the Nature Reserve Königsbrücker Heide. I moved to this military structure in 1965. Our radius of movement was very restricted by the military presence. It was better not to move near the barracks. Personally, I didn't have to make any major negative experiences, on the contrary, because after we bought our car (an used Skoda MB 1000), I occasionally received cheap petrol from soldiers in the command. One such canister stood in my garage until 1990, empty though. But I didn't trust the quality and soon stopped the trade. There is also a report of a relief operation by Soviet soldiers who rescued a boy from his predicament who had climbed out of a skylight in the city centre and was now stuck in the snow guard.



One day, it was winter, dark and cold, I took the bus from Dresden to Königsbrück and fell asleep and only woke up in the next village. Then I had to make my way home on the country road, which was not without danger and meant walking 10 km. Suddenly a Russian truck

stopped behind me and I was offered a ride to the entrance of the "New Camp", which I gratefully accepted. I think I thanked them with some money.

Since 1969 we had West German television with a high antenna (Sender Freies Berlin), which was occasionally disturbed by running truck engines on the market. Then I went to the "Mushiks" and asked them to turn off the engine, which meant heat deprivation for them while they waited. But most of the time they did me the favour.

Then came the political change with candle demonstrations at our market following the peace prayers in our church. At the same time, there were more and more shooting exercises on the MTA, which worried the people in the neighbourhood very much. Our pastor Anys was very active during this time and had many a talk at the commandant's office in order to find a remedy, especially as large areas of ceiling plaster had fallen down in our church during a major detonation on 8 September 1991. There were no direct confrontations between members of the army and our citizens. Only once in 1972, during a dance at our pub "Eagle", did a scuffle break out with Russian guests, which led to loud protests in front of the commandant's office with police intervention and later convictions of 4 young citizens. Resistance to the still prevailing shooting regime was particularly strong in the northern outskirts of the MTA, as practice ammunition hit there from time to time, fortunately without major damage. The last shell hit Cosel-Zeisholz on 11.03.91 without causing any damage.

In the meantime, there were changes at the government level and finally an election date was set for a free parliamentary election on 18.03.1990. The topic of "German Unity" became more and more present after the slogan "We are the people" changed into "We are one people".

With the first free elections on 18.03.90 and the local elections on 06.05.90, my life changed completely. When I was elected mayor, after the 2+4 negotiations, I was confronted with the retreat preparations of the "Red Army", later the CIS Army, as a "side-entrant". Officially it was agreed that all occupying forces would leave Germany by 1994 at the latest. In Königsbrück, the garrison had been left without major difficulties by the end of September 1992. During this time I had permanent contact with the commandant's office, whose head since 1989 had been Colonel Andrei Shgiliov. A second commander was responsible for the MTA, his name was Chomutow. These two were a stroke of luck for us because both were Gorbachev supporters. Thus our requests were usually listened to, although we did not know the exact command routes from Wünsdorf (military headquarter), especially as far as the shooting regime was concerned. Together with the head of the Public Order Office in Kamenz (a brother of the painter Baselitz) we had many discussions about reports from citizens about surprising "finds" in the area, such as used oil in a dredged pit or found ammunition on the edge of the "New Camp", which we guarded until a "Natschalnik" came and gave the order to remove the "finds". The oil, for example, had to be filled back into barrels by a "mushik" with a hand pump, standing in the oil of the pit.

Our citizens demonstrated again and again on the market and demanded the early evacuation of our "Old Camp" at the Castle's Park. We were thus often in negotiations with the officers responsible for this and indeed the "Old Camp" was cleared by 31.12.90 and I was the first to be allowed to enter the cleared area and was appalled at the state of the grounds. A Lenin relief was still standing in the entrance area, but it disappeared a short time later. Perhaps it will surprise us again one day, like so many other things that were thought lost. But it would take until 2005 before subsidies were available and ownership of the area was transferred to the town. Today we call the area VIA REGIA - Park.

Since the contract with the "Red Army" and, from 1991, "CIS troops" stipulated complete clearance, there was a temptation to bury a lot. As a result, a group of workers supported by the employment office was formed to keep a watchful eye on all the activities of the soldiers and to map the environmental sins with the approval of the commandant's office.

The man in charge of the removal of men and material, named Alexeyev, once said to me, "How are we going to move all this?" Everything worked out perfectly and goods train after goods train left our little town loaded with tanks and trucks.

A few incidents still need to be described. Through our then Volkskammer deputy, Egon Krenz's Lada was given to the city administration for further use as a company car. Then an officer, probably mediated by the commander, showed interest in the Moskwitsch, owned by the town, whereupon we made a deal and he bought that car from us for 500 DM.

Our carnival club was particularly active in the "haggling" of Russian "souvenirs" during this period. There were also quite a few technical freaks who bought whole jeeps and trucks for little money, but also uniforms, medals, boots, caps and much more. These "rarities" are on display at some events, including today by an army fun club in renovated rooms of the officers' casino in the "New Camp".

On 3 October 1990, we celebrated the day of "German Unity" at our market. The rumour spread via the district administration office that youths wanted to storm the Russian's commandant's office, which was fortunately a rumour only. Nevertheless, we supervisors were wide awake until the early morning. Shortly after 24h, after our trombone choir had intoned the new national anthem, I invited some citizens to the town hall for a drink. We couldn't believe our eyes, because suddenly Commander Shgiliow was standing in the room with his interpreter Galina and congratulated us on this day. A great gesture, because the future of all the soldiers and officers stationed here was very uncertain until now. I thus got to know the occupying power in all its years as occupier (1945) to supplicant, but also well-wisher until the end of September 1992.

On 21.08.91, the coup of the old cadres took place in Moscow, where Boris Yeltsin entered the stage of history with his tank speech. In the run-up, we had achieved through permanent talks also with representatives of the Russian garrison in Dresden that the shooting regime had been greatly reduced. As a precaution, I went to the "new camp" with the Public Order Office in Kamenz to inquire whether there were any new shooting orders. On the camp street, Commander Khomutov was discussing with a tall officer from Dresden with a red bulbous nose and red stripes on the sides of his trousers, who asked him to let them shoot again. We now stood questioningly in front of both officers, but from Chomutow's looks towards us we gathered that he would not change the shooting regime, which we noted with satisfaction.

On 07 November 1991 I was invited to the ballroom of the officers' casino in the "New Camp", sat in the VIP box and took part in the celebration of the October Revolution. I think I was greeted on command with a triple cheer from the "mushiks" with their expressionless faces. In the pre-Christmas period of 1991, a parcel initiative was started on the initiative of the district administration office to bring joy to the soldiers in the Suche-Bator barracks.

On 23.12.91 the time had come. Our Prime Minister Prof. Kurt Biedenkopf came to Königsbrück and took part in the action. It was two days after the Soviet Union was laid to rest on 21 December 1991 and the Russian flag was raised for the first time in front of the barracks, with our trombone choir playing behind the barracks gate. Prof. Biedenkopf turned to me and said: "I'm glad we can still experience this!"

On 28.03. 1992 our men's choir, which had been founded in 1852, was allowed to celebrate its 140th founding anniversary in the festival hall of the Suche-Bator barracks, which was a nice gesture by the barracks management, because our restaurant's hall had been closed.

Now two more years passed until the complete retreat of the CIS forces. The big farewell ceremony was planned for 30 August 1994 in the theatre at the Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin, to which I received an invitation from Helmut Kohl himself. Unfortunately, I forgot to take my camera with me, which still annoys me to no end. I was given a seat in the aisle directly above the lectern and thus had a fantastic overview of the guests present. So I also saw Lev Kopelyev, who fell out of favour in the Soviet empire with his book about the Russian invasion of East Prussia, in which he took part as an officer and wrote about the atrocities, including rapes. Heinrich Böll then took him in to the Federal Republic. Boris Yeltsin spoke, whether sober or slightly tipsy I cannot judge. Helmut Kohl also gave a speech. Afterwards, buses went to the memorial in Teltow, where another event took place and Russian soldiers and officers did a last military parade on German soil. Familiar faces were seen, from the writer Erich Loest, to Klaus Gysi, Walter Momper, the governing mayor of Berlin, Lothar de Maiziere and Vera Lengsfeld, the dissident of the former GDR, and many more.

My conclusion is that I "received" the Russians in Malter (Osterzgebirge) as a 4-year-old boy and helped to say goodbye to them in 1994 after almost 50 years. In the end, I personally did not have to make any negative experiences, but unfortunately many people were not spared this.

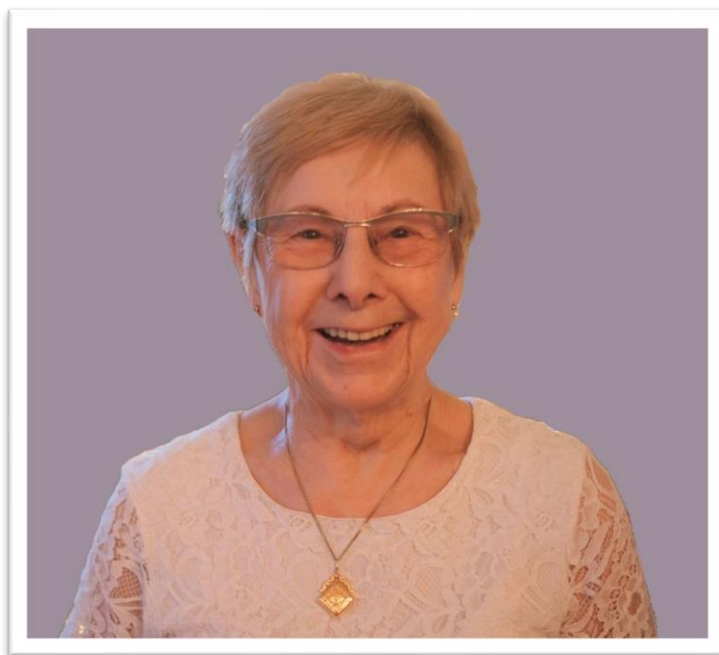
Eight years after the retreat from Königsbrück, A. Shgiliow and his wife visited their old garrison town in 2000 at the invitation of a Kamenzer citizen and were quite astonished at the enormous changes in our town, for which they honestly congratulated us. We presented them with a painting depicting the view of our town hall from his former commandant's office, which delighted him greatly. While walking through the building renovated by the Sparkasse, he said to me that the steps in the staircase can tell many stories. He hugged me goodbye, which was repeated 10 years later during his visit. There I was also able to proudly show him the renovated and newly designed "Old Camp". Last year, he sent me his greetings by phone from Moscow. In the meantime, the Königsbrück "Historical Association of the Military Training Area Königsbrück" has opened a museum in the oldest existing military building from 1895 in the VIA REGIA Park (former "Old Camp") with an exhibition on the 99-year history of our garrison town. The same building also houses an architectural exhibition with 40 models of striking buildings along the VIA REGIA from Wroclaw to Saarbrücken.

Jürgen Loeschke, Mayor of Königsbrück from 1990 to 2008

Member of the group "Contemporary Witnesses" of the Dresden Senior Citizens' Academy

Gallery of distinguished EFOS members

Dipl.-Päd. Eveline Rudolph



In our "Gallery of Deserving EFOS Members" section, we present members who have made a special contribution to the continued existence of EFOS in each issue of EFOS News. This time the choice fell on our long-time colleague and now a good friend Dipl.-Päd. Eveline Rudolph. For this reason, I asked Evi to tell us something about her life.

Eveline Rudolph – her life

Born in Berlin in 1940. So a child of war. Attended only 8 classes. I was supposed to go to high school, but my parents couldn't expect me to do that because we didn't have much money.

That's how I completed my apprenticeship as an industrial clerk. During my evening studies at the business school in Berlin, I acquired the prerequisites for studying. In the GDR, the 10-class school was introduced at that time and teachers had to be trained. In 1959, my company delegated

me to the Dresden University of Education to study teaching, which I completed in 1965 after 3 years of direct study and 3 years of distance learning.

I got married in 1964 and moved in with my husband in Dresden in 1965. Unfortunately, I didn't get a position as a teacher in Dresden, so I had to reorient myself.

At that time, computer science was on the upswing in the GDR and I learned programming in an IT company (a forerunner of the Robotron combine). I have written programmes for the various economic areas. From 1972 I worked in software sales and looked after all countries of the SW (Socialist Economic Area). I had to offer the appropriate software for every computer sale.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall until 1994, I sold software for small computers for a successor to the Robotron combine. From 1994 until my retirement in 2000, I was an

administrative manager in a private education company.

Evi Rudolph – as EFOS member

Who did you hear about EFOS from?

As a pensioner, I wanted to keep myself busy in a meaningful way and became a member of the Dresden Senior Citizens' Academy (DSA). From 2004 to 2012 I was a member of the board and was responsible for external contacts and international cooperation as well as for the procurement of funding. The DSA has been a member of EFOS since 2002. With my role on the board, I had made contact with EFOS and participated in all conferences from that time on. Since 2012 I have been a member of the board and elected treasurer.

Have your ideas about the EFOS work been fulfilled?

I really enjoy working at EFOS. The exchange of experience with the European partners enriches the work with the senior education institutions in the individual countries. As a representative of the DSA, I participated with a team in the projects of the EFOS or individually in another country group. The project work has always been successful and has expanded my knowledge.

Objectives of EFOS. Can they be implemented? What is the situation in Dresden?

The DSA identifies with the goals of EFOS. It has a harder time than other members because it is an association and only supports itself through volunteers and does not receive any benefits. It is only through the active commitment of the members of the association that we have survived the pandemic period well and can once again offer numerous events on a wide variety of fields of knowledge.

Which EFOS projects appealed to you the most?

For me, the contacts with EFOS are also very important through the projects. I always felt responsible for their realization. The VECU project "Virtual European Cultural Centre" ran successfully under my direction from 2008 to 2010. I participated in the EDUSENET project as an individual and contributed my results. In the last SELID project, the DSA formed a working group and successfully completed it with my participation.

In Dresden, I organized and successfully conducted EFOS conferences in 2005, 2011, 2013 and 2021. In addition to working on current projects and other

EFOS tasks, the conference participants were also familiarized with the cultural and scenic conditions in Dresden and the surrounding area in their free time.

Your collaboration with your EFOS colleague?

The organization EFOS as a non-profit association is very important. Through the close contacts with the members, friendships have also developed for me privately with participants from different countries that go beyond the EFOS work.

It is important that we try to attract more members to our association, because the educational work with the older generation must become more of a focus. Through new projects, we can prove that the older generation is very important for society and can be very helpful for the younger generation.

I hope that I will stay fit for a long time to come and that I will be able to actively participate in EFOS.

We, all EFOS members, look forward to further cooperation in a friendly atmosphere.

Dr. Katarina Grunwald