

Report of the EGS Board meeting

from 10.08.2026

Present: Christa, Kirsten, Pirrko, Erwin, Gaby, Robert (draft minutes).

Absent / unable to attend: Irmgard, Henk, Rodica.

1. Preparation for EGS participation in the EGP congress in Warsaw

1.1. Content. We present the **Friendship Bench** as a central theme and visible element. With that concrete, recognizable campaign tool, we can connect broader social and political themes. The Friendship Bench provides an accessible entry point for conversations about loneliness, social exclusion, intergenerational solidarity, housing and the position of the older people. All age groups benefit from an age-friendly living environment. We explicitly link the Friendship Bench to the broader concept of age-friendly cities and communities and to the UN Convention on the Human Rights of Older Persons.

This connection is important: with the EGS presence in Warsaw, we not only want to present the campaign, but also strengthen our political influence. We want to encourage national green parties and their delegations to be more active with regard to the position and rights of older people. This is also important from a demographic point of view: the 55-plus voter groups are much stronger in terms of numbers than the 18-30 age group.

Possible substantive connections are: loneliness and social exclusion, age discrimination, intergenerational solidarity, housing and independent living, the presence and accessibility of facilities, climate and heat-resistant public spaces, age-friendly cities and communities, and the rights of older people. With the Friendship Bench as a concrete example, we can make larger political themes understandable and visible.

The EGS presence in Warsaw must be more than just an information stand with leaflets. We aim for an interactive presentation where participants engage in conversations with other conference visitors around a Friendship Bench. And biscuits from different countries can facilitate contact.

1.2. Elaboration of the Friendship Benches presentation

Practical elements:

- A recognizable sign with the text "**Friendship Bench**".
- Large photos of existing Friendship Benches.
- A poster with a short text, preferably on reusable fabric.
- Leaflets about the Friendship Bench.
- Biscuits from the various participating countries, with flags to show their origin.
- Leaflets and information about the European Green Seniors.
- The green EGS caps.

We want to reuse campaign material as much as possible. We ask the EGP staff in Brussels to bring the previously used banner and standard to Warsaw.

1.3. Member recruitment and network development. The presence in Warsaw is also important for strengthening the EGS network. We are looking at whether we can still use the existing leaflets with three reasons – five might be too many – to become a member of the European Green

Seniors. We will address potential interested parties personally. In order to prepare contacts effectively with a view to strengthen the EGS network, we are trying to gather as much information as possible about the composition of the various delegations before the congress. We are thinking in particular of the Greens from France, Denmark, Spain, Italy and Greece. But we know that the Green parties in the Southern European countries are not so strong ...

As an aside, it is noted that Danish senior citizens may be so happy with the Danish policies and the stance of the Danish Green Party (SF) that they do not need their own green senior citizens' organization. This provokes a brief discussion about the necessary two-track strategy: working within the broader Green party and also organizing themselves, by analogy with women's and other emancipation movements.

1.4. General meeting. The EGP limits the number of available meeting rooms and meetings. We will therefore keep our (formal) general meeting short and continue to focus on a substantive program that is open to interested parties.

The formal general meeting of the EGS and the substantive part are clearly distinguished from each other. The main item on the agenda of the formal meeting is finances. This will be prepared in October by Christa, Gaby and Robert. We will discuss the issue before the Warsaw Congress in an online board meeting.

We have chosen the Friendship Bench as the substantive theme. We will look later at how we can further shape and develop this in relation to age-friendly cities and communities and the UN Convention.

Housing, care and social cohesion. During the meeting, we also talked about the living environment of the older people. An important principle is that older people want to live independently for as long as possible in the place where they have built their life and social network. New forms of housing can help with this. The conversation touches, among other things, on tiny houses: flexible, temporary homes that can be quickly set up or moved, and that are reusable.

Attention is also paid to the risk of social isolation in new residential areas and to the position of the older people in residential facilities. It is precisely in this context that the Friendship Bench can contribute to meeting people and strengthening social contacts.

In addition, attention is drawn to the accessibility of care and facilities. Increasing scale can be efficient, but for older people in rural areas it can also lead to greater distances and dependence on transport.

Housing, accessibility and social cohesion are relevant themes for the further political positioning of the European Green Seniors.

1.5. Reimbursement of participation costs. All participants in the Warsaw conference book their travel and hotel individually. The reimbursement by the EGP – two nights in a hotel (at a maximum of 80 euros per night) plus transport costs – is arranged by the EGS. Participants send their supporting documents such as bookings, boarding passes and hotel invoices to Robert. He will gather everything together and submit it to the EGP. It seems advisable not to wait too long to book transport and (especially) the hotel.

The EGP is acting on behalf of the EGS for six participants. The EGS itself will cover the two least expensive packages.

2. UN Convention on the Human Rights of Older Persons

This morning, before the meeting, Robert sent two notes to everyone: a report on the AGE debriefing on the intergovernmental working group for the drafting of the convention (13-17 June) and a brief overview of the degree of commitment to this process by a number of EU Member States (and the respective Green parties). The second note seems a bit too optimistic and will be revised. We will discuss the progress in the next meeting.

3. Miscellaneous

- Fight against the far right. We reflect on the election campaign in the German states of Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The AfD is polled at 40 % or more. Their campaign seems to be based on free currywurst and, above all, fake news via social media. Young people in particular seem receptive to their fake messages. On the left, some still expect a ban on the AfD, but how do you ban a party that gets 40% of the vote? What solace could meeting places like the Ehrenorte (as in Münster) offer? Would it be possible to influence the algorithms?
- In mid-October, Christa will take part in a panel discussion in Brussels during an AGE event on global warming. We use that opportunity to sort out the mandate on the EGS bank account for Christa. Christa, Gaby and Robert are also trying to meet in person with the EGP and the European Green Group in the EP on strengthening political coordination. And they are also preparing the agenda item on finances.
- What place do we give to new people interested in the EGS, such as those from Norway and Bulgaria? We propose that they participate in our meetings, albeit without voting rights. (But in fact, our decision-making never comes to a vote.) We are also looking at what our statutes stipulate about expanding the board.
- The Swedish Green Seniors have now also paid their membership fee to the EGS. Thank you for that.

4. Follow-up

We will meet again on Monday September 22nd at 12:00.

Possible agenda items:

- UN Convention: state of play in Geneva, position of the EU Member States and the European Green parties.
- Further discussion of how we specifically address the Friendship Benches in Warsaw, in relation to the age-friendly cities and the UN Convention?
- Which national green delegations are we trying to target in Warsaw?
- What do the EGS statutes stipulate with regard to co-option and the size of the board?
- What campaign materials are actually available and who will take them?

Minutes: Robert