

## Dear colleagues,

The year 2011 is drawing to a close, a time for retrospect and contemplation. I would like to single out several highlights from the association's activities and developments this year, milestones that have increased our options and let our voice be heard:

One major step was the adherence of the Swiss organisation CURA-VIVA. With 1,500 members the group is now the largest association in the E.D.E. The fruits of our international work are visible through our involvement in various European projects. Worth mentioning are E-Qalin Transfer, SAVE AGE and the WeDO project (European Partnership for the Wellbeing and Dignity of Older People). The aims and functions of these projects are dealt with in detail on our homepage.

Of course the 12th E.D.E. Congress also deserves mention. The event took place from September 29 to October 1 in Prague and received exuberant feedback from speakers and participants alike.

I would also like to express my thanks to all of the members of the Executive and General Boards for the honorary work they accomplish with such commitment. I wish you all a peaceful Christmas season and a healthy, creative start in the new year.

Yours,  
Wilfried Schlüter

## E.D.E.: A great opportunity for growth!

It is with great pleasure that I share my personal experience as member of the European Association for Directors of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly. The E.D.E. provides an important opportunity for growth, both for those who participate directly in its activities and for all members of national associations. In recent years I have spent much time building up relationships with colleagues within and outside our national territory, using the E.D.E. as a starting point for nurturing these bonds.

With the help of our colleagues Ole Mørk Nielsen and Erik Lehm from Denmark, we organized a benchmark visit to some facilities on the outskirts of Copenhagen in 2010. Our group comprised a dozen colleagues from different professions – from care home directors to the President of the Association, from the Nursing Coordinator to the physiotherapist and care workers. It was thrilling to get hands on experience with the well-organised social and healthcare services of a country that has always placed much value on the strong organisation model of its welfare system.

We saw for instance an "Alzheimer's Emergency Room" established in a home for the elderly. This room can be used in particular emergencies within an institution to stabilise behavioural disturbances that could otherwise generate not only uncomfortable feelings for the person being cared for, but also for all those he or she comes in contact with. Another precious experience for me and my Italian colleagues was learning about the organisation of residential commu-



*Daniele Raspini and Boris Koprivnikar with his colleagues from Slovenia during the visit in Centro Residenziale Martelli in Figline Valdarno (Italy)*

nities for elderly people in Denmark, where the word "community" holds multiple meanings.

In 2011, besides an E.D.E. General Board meeting in my town of Figline Valdarno on March 26, I can report three other important events. In May we received a delegation of about 30 colleagues from Slovenia headed by Boris Koprivnikar. In September, a delegation of about 50 colleagues from the Czech Republic led by Jiří Horecký visited care homes in Tuscany. And between these two moments, in June Dr. Stanka Vauh, director of the Slovenian care home "Dom Starejših na Fari", came to Figline Valdarno with members of his staff. They visited our care homes, talked with our staff and shared their impressions. We spoke about the differences between Slovenia and Italy in the field of services for the elderly.

Then in July we made a return trip to Slovenia, where we were able to see with our own eyes what we had discussed in Italy. There were nine of us from all areas of care services. Visiting care homes during their daily activities enabled us to see how the institutions are organized, how they function and how strengthening the dynamics of work groups can be useful in the daily life of the institution. This vast network of relationships has definitely facilitated the spread of different organisational models, the exchange of experi-

## E.D.E. Vision 26

*This is the 26th issue of the newsletter. E.D.E. VISION. It will inform you about current developments in the field of long-term care services for the elderly in Europe as well as about projects of the E.D.E. and its member associations. The E.D.E. will also give its views on current questions of European policy in the context of long-term care.*



*Prof. Dr. Wilfried Schlüter*

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ence among peers and the strengthening of a bond of friendship that goes beyond our profession.

I remember with pleasure during the visit to Slovenia the happiness of the old man who had created an art work which our Slovenian colleagues gave to us during their visit to Figline. He was so astonished when he heard that his work was now in Italy. These are certainly important moments, and I must add that they have been made possible only thanks to the E.D.E. I hope that many of our colleagues will feel motivated to get involved, take some steps outside their reality

and get to know new models and organisational systems that allow growth both in professional and human terms.

I would appeal to all members of the Association to benefit from this opportunity, to learn from each other and develop new friendships and mutual respect, so as to disseminate good practices that otherwise would not be known.

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## Elderly care in Romania

At present one fifth of Romania's population is comprised of people 60 years of age or older, and in all likelihood their number will continue to rise. The National Council of Elderly Persons, a non-profit organisation with an advisory function, states in its report for 2010 that a large portion of the elderly in Romania do not have the financial means to lead a dignified life.

In 2011 36.6 % of pensioners had less than 100 euros per month at their disposal. In general the monthly existential minimum for pensioners in 2011 is estimated at 120 euros. 45.69 % of pensioners had this much, while 53.31 % had somewhat more but less than 150 euros per month. This amount is considered sufficient for what is termed an "adequate living standard". Most elderly people in Romania, primarily all those living alone, care for their homes and gardens and seek in this way to fulfil their basic needs. Attitudes to organised elderly care depend on a family's economic status. The old mentality that children should look after their parents is still widespread. For that reason politicians have paid little attention in recent years to Romania's public homes for the elderly and the social services they must provide.

67 homes for the elderly caring for 4,057 residents are under municipal supervision. 56 facilities with 1,833 residents have non-profit organisations as service providers. In addition 17 homes for the elderly with 849 residents were established in the context of the special state programme "Development of a Network of Elderly Care Facilities". The residents in these homes have few health problems, so that for example medical visits only take place when explicitly requested.

Gradually the homes are being regarded as important institutions for the elderly. The term "asylum" is still used today. Some – unfortunately still too few – of those who feel left out by society are cared for in part by the Romania social services. These services see to basic needs, although the real needs of those cared for often remain pressing. A large step toward modernising and diversifying the services provided has been made possible by partnerships between Romanian homes and those in Western Europe. Care home directors have learned much from impressive practical examples provided in this context.

Recently most homes have been modernised and new services offered with the help of state or European financing. European standards must be met and respected in the future. Private homes correspond to European standards and fulfil most requirements; nevertheless high costs make them unaffordable for average citizens. Recently the Orthodox Church has also established homes for the elderly although, as opposed to the Catholic and Protestant Churches, it had not been involved in social projects in the past.

Nursing homes are for the most part intended for elderly people with impairments, that is who suffer from various psycho-physiological disorders (mostly dementia). The living and care standards for these facilities are legally defined and the services are subject to professional supervision. These services also cooperate with doctors on an ongoing basis.

Personnel problems constitute a major obstacle to further positive developments in care services. Either nursing staff decides to emigrate to Western Europe, where salaries are on average ten times as high as in Romania, or the necessary jobs are frozen as a consequence of the economic crisis.

Beneficial at the moment would be a comprehensive programme for ensuring and promoting the social integration of the elderly, based on a parliamentary resolution. In compliance with the EU a law on social services was passed recently, stipulating among other things the rights of the elderly as a social group. How it will be implemented in practice and in what way

is dependent on the representatives of the Romanian Association for Directors of Elderly Care Services ADIV giving the process their undivided attention. They will come back to the E.D.E. with more details on this matter in the future.



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<http://ec.europa.eu/social/ey2012.jsp>



For the Wellbeing and Dignity of Older people

<http://www.age-platform.eu/en/wellbeing>

## SAVE AGE:

### First pan-European workshop shows impressive energy saving potentials



Prague, 28 September 2011 – SAVE AGE project partners from 10 European countries gathered in Prague to present the first findings of their work. Only 15 months after the project started, the audience was informed about the results of measurements and analyses. The main message of the workshop is: every care home should check their energy saving potentials. At the opening of the workshop, Prof. Dr. Wilfried

Schlüter, President of the E.D.E. (European Association for Directors and Providers of Long-Term Care Services for the Elderly) emphasized the importance and potentials which result from the work of the SAVE AGE project team. Technological advances and changes of behaviour can open the way to energy and cost cutting measures.

Darko Ferčej, SAVE AGE leading project partner, underlined the importance of energy efficiency in care homes because of their increasingly significant role in view of growing energy needs and the rising number of elderly people requiring nursing care. Mr Ferčej pointed out that funds for investment are limited, meaning a change of behaviour is all the more important. The strategic goal of the SAVE AGE project is to achieve 5 % of energy savings and reductions of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in participating care homes between May 2010 and May 2013. 540 employees will also be trained during the project.

Pedro Esteves, project partner in Portugal, presented the results of energy performance measurements. An adapted computer-based benchmark tool was created to measure different energy consumptions, revealing that heating is the biggest energy consumer. The importance of energy efficiency and legal conditions also differ from country to country.

Boris Koprivnikar, project partner in Slovenia, reported on an energy management information system in senior homes in Slovenia, supported by an external expert. An industrial tool for measuring heat, water and energy consumption was adapted to analyse and compare care homes' energy consumption and reduce costs. The results

show great differences in costs, for example 30 % for electricity and even up to 100 % for heating.

Miren Iturburu, project partner in Spain, reported on behavioural analysis regarding energy efficiency in 100 participating care homes. According to her findings the commitment to energy efficiency shows extension potential. There is a lack of information and training on energy efficiency in care homes; and apart from that there is a great need to make energy wasting more transparent.

Kent Anderson from Sweden summed up a study on 3,000 employees in care homes. He stated that a concept to motivate and increase awareness of the employees, with clear roles and responsibilities, can achieve measurable results and even secure more jobs.

Sandra Langer of the department for energy management in Stuttgart presented the approach of internal contracting, regarding for example new controls for heating, ventilation or lighting, insulation of walls or top floors. This model results in a revolving fund. The pay-back time for the thermal insulation of top floors was only 4.4 years.

Kostas Zapounidis, project partner in Greece, gave practical recommendations with his report on a strategy and action plan for energy efficiency in care homes. He pointed out the opportunities and the potential of changes in behaviour and investments, based on measurements and analyses of all participating care homes. Even minor changes of behaviour result in 5 % savings, low investments in 10 %, and high investments in 25 % savings. These savings can start immediately; experiences from the audited buildings show that there is great potential for saving.

170 participants of the workshop gained experience in multiple aspects of energy efficiency, and their positive feedback was the acknowledgment that the project work is a valuable contribution to the reduction of energy consumption.

**Further information: [www.saveage.eu](http://www.saveage.eu)**

## Change in the E.D.E.'s Executive Board

On October 1, 2011, Martin Dürer of the Czech Republic left the Executive Board of the E.D.E. Colleagues from many countries thanked him for his many years of work in support of the European Association for Directors of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly, particularly for successfully helping to integrate the countries of Eastern European and the Baltic region into the Association.

As his successor in the post of secretary to the Executive Board, Franziska Rahmel, the delegate from the German Association of Directors of Care Homes for the Elderly and the Disabled (DVLAB), was



**Martin Dürer**



**Franziska Rahmel**

elected by the members of the E.D.E.'s General Board.

Franziska Rahmel has occupied leadership positions in various areas of patient care since 1993. Between 2001 and 2006 she was head of residential care services at TERTIANUM home for the elderly in Berlin, where she has served as director since 2007. Apart from her membership in the DVLAB she belongs to the German Nursing Council and the International Club of the German Foreign Office.

Franziska Rahmel is married and has two adult sons. She lives in Berlin (Contact: [f.rahmel@berlin.tertianum.de](mailto:f.rahmel@berlin.tertianum.de)).