



# EFOS

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



NGO with Consultative Status at the U.N.

# EFOS NEWS

# 1

# 2026



**English edition**

## European Federation of Older Students

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**From the editor:**

*In this edition, we would like to reflect on the 35 years since EFOS was founded on the work that has been done, and especially on the members who have all supported EFOS with dedication, enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility. Many of them are no longer with us, and to them, too, we extend our heartfelt thanks.*

*'Excellence should be sought primarily in our people. ....' – the Rector, Assoc. Prof. Ladislav Janíček, presented awards to outstanding members of the academic community. Among the laureates was also our friend and EFOS representative Lenka Shromáždilová. We all offer our warmest congratulations.*

*Happy 90<sup>th</sup> birthday – Dr Rosemarie Kurz*

Thirty-five years of the European Federation of Older Students in Universities  
Words of the EFOS President – *Nadezda Hrapkova*

The new longevity: Challenge and opportunity  
*Katarina Grunwald*

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*Nadežda Hrapková*

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

April 2026

Katarina Grunwald

**EFOS News**

Publication of the  
European Federation of Older  
Students in Universities

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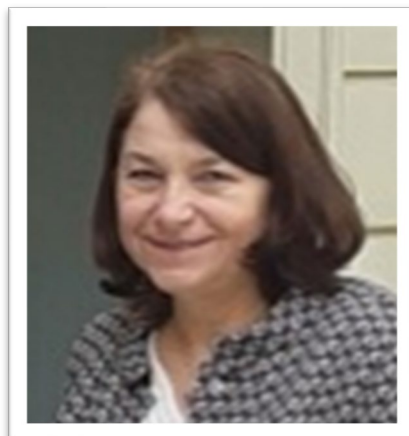
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## Words of the EFOS President.

*PhDr. Nadežda Hrapková, PhD., EFOS president*



### **Thirty-five years of European Federation of Older Students in Universities** (*Report of EFOS president 2025*).

The year 2025 was a year which started for our members new era in the projects Erasmus+ focusing on the Accreditation of the EFOS members and mobilities. There are of course many other important activities and events in EFOS federation, therefore I'd like to focus on:

1. The EFOS 35th anniversary and our memories; 2. New challenges and opportunities for our work and Erasmus+; 3. Activities in 2025.

**35th anniversary of EFOS The first initiative back in 1990 was taken at the University of Innsbruck.** The Austrian senior student, Leopold Auinger, created within two years with Horst Leonhard and other friends a network of senior students and university professors in Belgium, Italy, Austria and Switzerland and together they established a European organisation in Brixen - Bressanone (Italy). 1991 in Basel: Dkfm. Leopold Auinger and Dr.iur Adrien Veillon discuss collaboration between AIUTA and EFOS. The goal of both organizations: „Ensuring quality of life through university education in old age.” was the same.

**1992 Approval of the EFOS statutes in Brussels. June 11, 1992, Freiburg im Breisgau: Start of cooperation between EFOS, AIUTA, and BAG** (Federal Working Group "Opening Universities to Older Adults"). Participants: DKfm. Leopold Auinger, DKfm. Horst Leonhard from EFOS, Prof. Frentz, Prof. Snijders, Dr. Veillon of AIUTA and Bernd Steinhoff of BAG. **February 27, 1993, Joint Resolution of AIUTA/EFOS/BAG on Cooperation and Mutual Support.** For AIUTA: Jacques Lefevre, for EFOS: Horst Leonhard, for BAG: Bernd Steinhoff.

### **Chronology of the meetings:**

Many universities slowly joint the EFOS and organised regular EFOS meetings (in bold for the first time). First meetings – in Vienna 1994, Klingenthal 1994 (France), Bratislava 1995.

**15. Sept. 1993: Constituent meeting of the EFOS in Belgium (Wavre-Nord)** EFOS meetings: **March 1994 Vienna, October 1994 Castle Klingenthal, France; April 1995 Modra, Comenius University, Slovakia;** November 1995 Castle Klingenthal; August 1996

Vienna; November 1996 Castle Klingenthal; **April 1997 Berlin, Humboldt University;** October 1997 Bratislava, Comenius Uni; **April 1998 Innsbruck; November 1998 Linz; April 1999 Graz, Austria;** November 1999 Bratislava.

**May 2000 Brunn /Brno Masaryk University, Czech Republic;** November 2000 Vienna; April 2001 Berlin, Humboldt University; **September 2001 Namur, Belgium; April 2002 Pilsen, Czech. Republic;** November 2002 Bratislava; April 2003 Wien; **October 2003 Groningen, the Netherlands; May 2004 Magdeburg, Germany; November 2004 Brno Technical University; April 2005 Dresden, Germany;** November 2005 Magdeburg; **June 2006 Wroclaw, Poland;** November 2006 Vienna; March 2007 Groningen; September 2007 Wroclaw; **April 2008 Uppsala, Sweden; October 2008 Kiel;** April 2009 Graz; October 2009 Groningen; April 2010 Brno; June 2010 Wroclaw; October 2010 Bratislava; April 2011 Dresden; November 2011 Wien; May 2012 Magdeburg; October 2012 Wroclaw; April 2013 Bratislava; October 2013 Dresden; April 2014 Graz; October 2014 Groningen; April 2015 Brno; **September 2015 Alicante, Spain;** April 2016 Uppsala; November 2016 Magdeburg; **June 2017 Chemnitz, Germany;** October 2017 Groningen; **April 2018 London, UK;** October 2018 Bratislava; April 2019 Wien; October 2019 Wroclaw; September 2021 Dresden; March 2022 Magdeburg; September 2022 Wroclaw; April 2023 Brno; October 2023 Bratislava; **April 2024 Liberec, Czech republic;** October 2024 Alicante; **April 2025 Zagreb, Croatia; October 2025 Barcelona / Calonge, Spain.**

**EFOS members:** 28 Institutional members (12 countries), 19 Individual members (7 countries), 2 honorary members (from Austria) 13 European countries together.

**EFOS programs supported by EU:**

- EFOSEC - EFOS Enlargement and Co-operation
- VECU project - Virtual European Cultural Centre
- EduSenNet - Educational Senior Network: research on the methodology of learning, motivation and barriers of seniors (4,000)
- SELID – Seniors Learning in the Digital Society: improving learning opportunities in Digital technologies, (4,800 seniors involved in 2019-2022)
- 2023 – 2027 Erasmus+ Accreditation and mobility programs - to fulfil EU strategies and the EFOS action plan.

There are yearly 1-2 issues of **EFOS News** during the 35 years of EFOS existence. We presented and described the study systems, good practices and experience of the EFOS members' universities, the methodological and research work realised according to the EFOS projects and the personal views and experience of the individuals. For many years we have published the EFOS News in two language versions – German and English. **Booklets from the EFOS conferences** and the realised projects, we have published gradually in the occasion of the EFOS 20 years anniversary, project EduSenNet and SeLiD, when currently we are preparing the booklet in the occasion of the EFOS 35 anniversary.

**Collaboration with the Associations:****a) International Associations:**

- International Association of UTA – AIUTA
- DANET

**b) National Associations:**

- BAGWiWa
- Czech Association of UTA
- Slovak Association of UTA
- Spanish Association of UTA
- Third Age Trust in the UK

**EFOS was awarded:**

- by Comenius University on 27. June 2014 (95th anniversary)
- by Wroclaw University on 4. July 2016
- by Malaga University in May 2025

**The EFOS membership at the Committee on Aging at UN Organisation in Vienna** is very active during last 20 years. It was not only the collaboration and participation of the chair in the conference in 2010 in Bratislava, but also the active participation in the UNECE conference in Viena in 2012, conference in Lisbon 2017 , active preparation of the IDOP Days in 2022 - 2025 as well as the meeting of the Committee in Bratislava at Comenius University to support intergenerational collaboration and institutional participation. Very important role plays our Secretary General Katarina Grunwald who is in the position of the Secretary of CoA and regularly takes part in the committee meetings and events together with the EFOS president Nadežda Hrapková.

Very important and fruitful work is visible via the **European projects Erasmus+** (Socrates and Grundtvig if the previous years) where the EFOS members took the active participation and realised concrete international European collaboration since the year 2006, when we started our first common *project EFOSEC (EFOS Enlargement and Cooperation)*. Second project *VECU (Virtual European Cultural Centre)* focused on the cultural exchanges, topics with the cultural background and the interest to find out the appropriate way how to transfer traditions on young generation. Excellent idea and intensive collaboration brought us the collection of 167 proverbs in four languages, exchange of the family traditions within our international teams and presentation of the yearly traditions, housing traditions, recipes and music art treasures. New era started in 2014 with the realisation of three years project Erasmus+ *EduSenNet (Educational Senior Network)* and the participation of 8 partners from EFOS. This project was very successful with the involvement of 4.000 seniors and research on the methodology of learning, motivation for studies and barriers in the senior life. It was awarded by two special marks from European Commission 1. Success stories and 2. Good practices. Very useful and needed project was also the project *SeLiD (Seniors' Education in the Digital Society)* during the time of the pandemic (2019 – 2022), when seniors found out, that the

digitalisation in their life and usage of Digital technologies belong to their daily life and help them to be active and well informed.

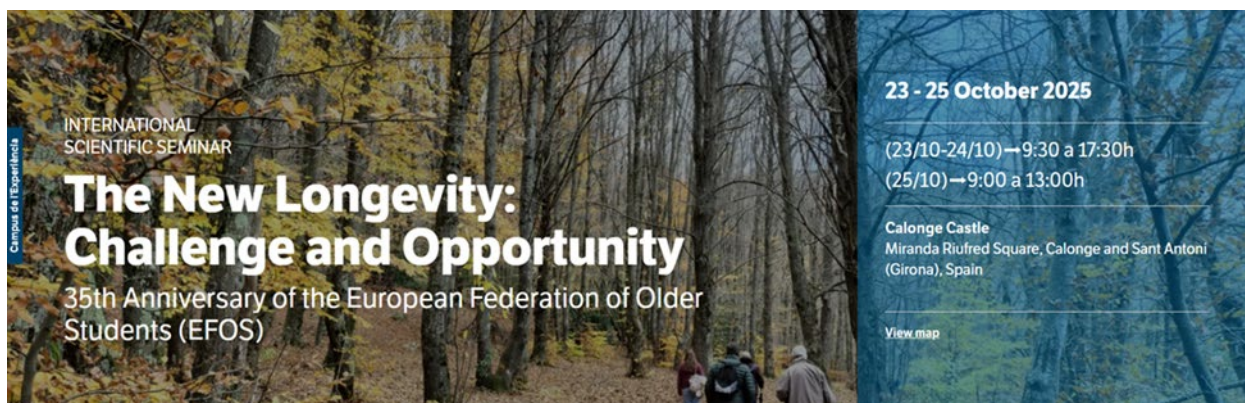
Erasmus+ Call in 2023 opened possibilities for the institutions to submit the proposals for getting the **Erasmus+ Accreditation** in the sector of Adult Education. Many institutional EFOS members took this opportunity and put into a practice the interests to realise mobilities of staff and learners from the Seniors' programs. Staff exchanges as the job shadowing, lessons from the host experts, training programs and the learning activities for the older learners became the supported interests for our members.

**Last year, the year 2025** has been fulfilled by the meetings at new places of our new members in Zagreb (Croatia) and in Barcelona (Spain). It was really my pleasure to be a part of the events, which have had the excellent organisation, topics for discussion and presentations of the members. Both institutions are private institutions and showed us big interest and large offer of the educational programs for the students of all ages. I appreciate very much that after many years we could meet our very enthusiastic and valid persons Rosemarie Kurz from Graz and Carmen Stadelhofer from Ulm. The conference in Spain in Calonge followed the regular EFOS meeting hold by Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (UIC Barcelona) on the topic "*The New Longevity: Challenge and opportunity.*" The conference was prepared in the occasion of 35. anniversary of EFOS with a big support of the municipality, big involvement of the university staff and other participants from the Spanish universities and other institutions from the communities and different educational projects.

### **What is in front of us in the year 2026?**

1. Mobilities abroad realised by the members to Czech Republic (Liberec), Poland (Wroclaw), Slovakia (Bratislava), Dresden (Germany) and Ireland (Dublin);
2. Erasmus week for staff and older students from Spanish universities in Bratislava in May 2026
3. The 50. anniversary of UTW Wroclaw, conference and EFOS meeting in Wroclaw (9. – 11.6.2026)
4. Conference and the EFOS General Assembly in Dublin (21. – 23.10.2026)
5. New issue of the EFOS News
6. Booklet in the occasion of the 35. EFOS anniversary.

At the end of my report, I would like to thank all members for their active cooperation, initiative and enthusiasm in preparing EFOS meetings and implementing our joint projects. I am used to saying that every organization is only as good as its members. Successes are not just the successes of some members. Our successes are the result of collective work, mutual respect, good cooperation, friendly atmosphere and relationships. I believe that this will continue to be the case, because the potential of EFOS members brings new challenges, new directions and new goals. I thank you all for your trust and support and I look forward to further cooperation. With respect



## **The new longevity: Challenge and opportunity**

*Dr. Katarina Grunwald*

The international academic seminar ‘The New Longevity: Challenges and Opportunities’ took place from 23 to 25 October 2025 at Calonge Castle (Girona, Spain). The event analysed the challenges and opportunities associated with ageing in a world where life expectancy is steadily rising, with direct implications for the sustainability of the socio-economic system.

The concept of “new longevity” has led to a redefinition of old age, which is now divided into three distinct phases: older but not yet old, the onset of frailty, and the loss of independence. This seminar focused in particular on the phases preceding the need for care and the necessity of rethinking the contribution of older people to society. The importance of solidarity between generations and the communal dimension of active ageing was highlighted.

The event brought together researchers, educators in the field of senior citizens’ education, professionals, policy-makers, social actors, entrepreneurs and senior-year students interested in exchanging research findings and developing initiatives that contribute to improving the quality of life in old age. The discussions focused on the training needs of professionals, educators and family members, as well as the need to develop innovative strategies for the public and private sectors.

Among the guests of honour was our EFOS President, Dr Nadezda Hrapkova.



The programme included keynote speeches, round-table discussions, academic presentations and cultural visits, thereby providing a space for exchange and collaboration between the various stakeholders involved in shaping a more inclusive and sustainable future for older adults.

The programme has been divided into four thematic areas:

- **Meaning and quality of life in old age:** The relationship between meaning and well-being in this life stage. Interventions that give purpose to the lives of older adults.
- **Society, relationships with, bonds, and social prescription:** Strategies to foster meaningful relationships in old age. Social and medical prescriptions: new experiences.
- **Transmission of values and Erasmus+ mobilities as a tool for cultural exchange:** The role of values in intergenerational education. The impact of travel on adult learning.
- **University programs for older adults:** Evaluation and analysis of educational models in different universities and institutions. Best practices related to the „new longevity.“

One of the speakers was our EFOS general secretary, Dr Katarina Grunwald, who spoke on the topic:



**Title: Empowering Older Adults through Lifelong Learning: A Case Study of the University of the Third Age at Comenius University in Bratislava from the view of a senior student.**

**Abstract:**

This paper evaluates a case study of the University of the Third Age (U3A) at Comenius University in Bratislava. Within the context of the "new longevity," driven by public health advances, medical science, and social development, there are challenges and opportunities for older adults worldwide. The study examines how UTA promotes active ageing and social inclusion through non-formal, interest-based education.

Longevity as a phenomenon of current life has a very strong connection with many important activities, which encourage its existence. One of them is new technologies, which influence our daily life by their Digitalisation process and have become a central theme in senior education, empowering older adults to thrive in a changing world. Digital skills are essential for seniors to remain connected, informed, and autonomous in their life. These programs help bridge the digital divide and foster inclusion, especially for those who are alone or isolated without social contact. We don't want "to leave one behind" and must develop many ways for bringing new technologies to people with disabilities, as well as for the diversity of people in rural areas. For these tasks, older people need to make themselves more visible as decision makers.

If seniors want to understand an increasingly digitised world, they must expand their technological competencies to keep pace with social, financial and economic changes. This transformation is supported by educational programs, online courses, PC workshops, libraries, and senior citizens' clubs that serve as spaces for intergenerational learning, community engagement, and active aging in an age-appropriate environment.

This was also important for me, and therefore, I decided to participate in the special project to support my digital skills. I already had experience from the project Erasmus+ SeLiD, but I needed to be more flexible in my IT activities....

\* The statement "**Leave no one behind**" comes from the United Nations (UN) **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. It was adopted by all UN member states in September 2015 and is the central promise of this global development agency.

Barcelona, EFOS-Meeting 21. – 22.octobre 2025



## **"Learning in Old Age" implies that the ability to learn is age-dependent, or rather, that learning yields different levels of success at different stages of life.**

**Mag. Dr. Rosemarie Kurz,**

**Austria has one of the oldest populations in the world with**

People aged 65 or older are over 1,884,026, approximately 20% of the total population).

Very old: Currently, around 1,700 people aged 100 or older live in Austria, with women making up over 85% of this group.

Younger than 20 are 1,754,187 and decreasing

Pensions are currently financed with 30% of the total budget. This figure is rising! Austria should reframe the issue of migration. (see JOANNEUM RESEARCH CareMed, SENovation Styria 2025).

**The life phases of old age have also changed in our time.** Today, we speak of several generations in the post-retirement phase of life. This can encompass a period of more than 25 years. This part of life is as long as childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood combined.

### **Subgroups of Older People**

**65-74** After retirement, people begin to think about aging.

**75-89** generally like being old and want to make the most of their circumstances.

**90 and older** are diverse. Some think realistically about what might be good for them. Some may demand too much attention from their offspring! Death and dying are often not discussed!

**To create living conditions that are fair to all age groups,** a change in thinking is needed, along with the voluntary relinquishment of so-called vested rights. Furthermore, it is essential to recognize that older people should not be seen merely as a burden on society. It is crucial to acknowledge that they are still capable of contributing to solving societal problems and are willing to do so.

**Lifelong learning and education for older adults play a vital role in ensuring participation and equal opportunities.** Learning should be understood as an opportunity for personal development, enabling individuals to acquire or expand qualifications for volunteer work; to constructively manage the new challenges that arise, particularly during this phase of life (see Kurz 1999). Coping well with daily life including numerous innovations with technological advancements and the currently challenging digital developments.

### **What factors can positively influence intellectual performance?**

- \* Acquiring methods for thinking, learning, and remembering.
- \* Continuous practice in thinking and drawing conclusions.
- \* Insight into one's own abilities, strengths, and weaknesses.
- \* Intellectual curiosity.
- \* Lifelong mental activity.
- \* Overcoming fear of failure.
- \* The more practiced a person's thinking and the richer their knowledge, the less they are likely to experience decline in old age.
- \* Viewing tasks as challenges.

### **Factors that determine intelligence!**

Crystallized intelligence encompasses qualities of presentation and expression. It involves vocabulary, expressiveness, detail, and an eye for essentials. The characteristics of crystallized

intelligence are influenced by education and environment. It is knowledge acquired over a lifetime and hardly diminishes with age. Knowledge can be expanded!

Fluid intelligence is the genetically determined ability to spontaneously grasp meaningful connections. Speed of thought and rapid, flexible information processing are aspects of fluid intelligence. Age-related decline occurs in this area.

### **What are the potential consequences of declining fluid intelligence?**

When thought processes slow down, action processes consequently slow down as well. Coping with everyday life becomes more difficult, and the risk of dependence on others increases. In road traffic, it is essential to process information quickly in order to react appropriately.

### **How can one recognize creativity in old age?**

- \* Ability to allow oneself to change one's mind.
- \* Ability to connect one's own life experience with general philosophical thought.
- \* Ability to make personally gained and rare insights generally and immediately accessible.
- \* Ability to reconcile contradictions.
- \* Ability to simplify without becoming one-sided.
- \* Ability to tolerate uncertainties in perception and judgment.
- \* Access to one's own wisdom gained through the courage to embrace "late freedom"; this means breaking free from societal communication constraints.
- \* Confidence in choice and directness of form or language.
- \* Distinctiveness of one's own lifestyle.
- \* Individuation as the development of hard-won distinctiveness.
- \* Information asceticism – the elderly person knows that they no longer need to know everything.
- \* Intellectual and existential risk tolerance.
- \* Openness to new experiences and situations.
- \* Self-affirmation.

**The wealth of cognitive and emotional possibilities** that can unfold in old age could be viewed through the lens of wisdom gained with age. However, not everyone has the prerequisites or even the inclination for wisdom and tolerance in old age.

**Aging competently means possessing knowledge and skills** relevant to everyday life. Informative events on age-appropriate technologies are offered at **Haus Esther as part of the lecture series "Technology Inspires."** Experts speak on topics relevant to everyday life for seniors and their families. In addition, technologies that support a self-determined and independent life at home will be presented.

**I myself am entering my tenth decade** and can describe from self-observation that my fifth and sixth decades were the most intellectually productive, and I was able to draw on a wealth of resources compared to today. In contrast, today the same intellectual output can only be achieved if I take extended breaks and employ learned strategies.

To fill my "[website generation.at](http://www.websitegeneration.at)" with interesting issues is one of my daily challenges!

**Website [www.generationen.at](http://www.generationen.at)** is an easy-to-use website that provides simple answers to important questions about a fulfilling life in old age. It can facilitate the integration of older and very old people in the digital sphere.

By establishing this specific website, which supports intergenerational collaboration, societal goals such as strengthening neighbourhoods and supporting the development of caring communities can be promoted. The internet opens up new spaces for encounters, dialogue, and exchange between people of all ages. It's about providing effective impetus and creating practical solutions online, offering activities and content that contribute to the integration of

older and very old people. This **Website GENERATIONEN** was created through the **"TWO AND MORE"** funding program of the Styrian County and aims to contribute to a society for all ages.

**The Albert Schweitzer Institute for Geriatrics and Gerontology (ASIGG)** is the research and development (R&D) department of the Geriatric Health Centers. It scientifically addresses the challenges and issues of a society with a large aging population. These are prioritized in various projects.

The Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE project **"DigiCare4CE"** (lead partner: Deggendorf Institute of Technology, Germany) is investigating the digitalization of long-term care in collaboration with partners from Central Europe. Recommendations developed through peer review visits are intended to facilitate the digitalization process for future challenges.

The FFG-funded project **"DemiCare"** (lead partner: Austrian Institute of Technology) has developed a mobile app, personalized using health tracking, to support family caregivers and assist them in interacting with people with dementia.

In the FFG-funded project **"SmartAktiv"** (lead partner: Joanneum Research), virtual reality experiences were developed in 2024 using VR headsets and tablets to promote memory in older adults. **The goal is the early detection of cognitive deficits based on biomarkers** (including eye tracking via VR) and the development of an innovative, engaging, and efficient training environment.

The FFG-funded project **"3WINpA"** (lead partner: Gesundheit Österreich GmbH) addressed the diverse burdens placed on family caregivers by the climate crisis and their caregiving responsibilities. To this end, a socio-technical solution is being developed to help family caregivers lead healthy, socially integrated, and climate-literate lives.

**In conclusion**, I would like to address continuing education in old age on the one hand, and maintaining competence in old age on the other. Retirement usually opens time for activities that one previously couldn't pursue due to lack of time. People who, up to that point, have been in a position that fostered learning have a significant advantage. Thus, the aging of younger cohorts, who had access to essential educational resources in their youth, will differ from that of today's 80- and 90-year-olds, for whom higher education was not generally available. The new world of digitalization is of particular importance.

**This year, Dr Rosemarie Kurz, our dear EFOS colleague and friend, is celebrating her 90th birthday. We wish her all the best, plenty of energy in her work, and the very best of health.**



EFOS-Meeting, Zagreb 9. – 13.04.2025



## **Third Age University Uniwersytet Trzeciego Wieku**

**The University of the Third Age at the University of Economics in Wrocław (UTW UEW) has been operating within the structures of this university since 2008 and currently has 250 students.**

The activities of the University of the Third Age focus on the education and activation of older people, offering them the opportunity to continue their education, develop their interests, and maintain social and intellectual activity, which is in line with the “Third Mission of the University,” i.e., creating relationships between the university and its environment, popularizing science, and supporting social development.

The UTW offers its students a wide range of programs, where everyone can find something interesting. These include weekly lecture series, English, German, and Spanish language courses, memory training, and workshops teaching new technologies and digital skills. The UTW promotes health prevention and physical fitness through water gymnastics, gymnastics to music, corrective spine gymnastics, gym, yoga, and Nordic walking.

UTW students have the opportunity to develop their passions in numerous interest groups: Haiku Poetry, Apasjonata Choir, Logic Games, Origami, Tourism, Live Word and Word-Music Section “Zielono Nam” and many others.

The activities of the UTW serve to integrate and improve the well-being of its students, confirming that activity is a psychological and social need at any age, and that lifelong learning, which is the idea behind the UTW, has many different forms and colors, even in mature age.



## ***Beata Winnicka:* Oxford Debates**

The University of the Third Age at the University of Economics in Wrocław had a great opportunity to participate in Oxford Debates, in which young people could test their skills in presenting topics, arguing, asking, and answering questions.

I would like to briefly explain the definition of Oxford Debate: it is a highly structured, formal argument format with two teams (Proposition and Opposition) debating a precise motion, characterized by strict time limits, alternative speeches, and audience participation. A jury composed of U3A listeners had the honor of evaluating the student's presentations. It was a big responsibility due to the fact that the points awarded influenced the course completion.

But above all, it was a very interesting experience and an example of intergenerational cooperation.



## University of the Third Age at Palacký University in Olomouc



Education doesn't have to end when you retire. In fact, for many, it can be the start of an exciting new chapter full of discovery, inspiration, and new experiences. The University of the Third Age (U3A) at Palacký University in Olomouc is living proof of this. Founded in 1986, it is one of the oldest institutions of its kind in the Czech Republic. It is now a dynamic educational platform for seniors, connecting the academic environment with active life in later years.

U3A is designed for individuals receiving old-age or disability pensions who wish to expand their knowledge, skills, and social connections. Studying is not just a leisure activity; it takes place within the Continuing Education Department at Palacký University, and participants are registered on the Lifelong Learning Portal. Their academic achievements are recorded in a standard university transcript. Ceremonial events such as matriculation at the beginning of studies and graduation at the end underscore the academic dimension.

In the 2024/25 academic year, a total of 2,295 people attended U3A in Olomouc and its branches, demonstrating the extraordinary public interest and trust.

### A wide range of programs across faculties



One of the greatest advantages of Olomouc's U3A is the variety of its programmes. Programmes are run at all eight faculties of Palacký University and include various types of study courses.

Five four-semester specialised programmes allow for deeper, more systematic study of selected areas. Examples include Psychosocial Studies, Protection of Individual Rights,

Movement – The Path to Health, Archaeology of the Central Moravian Region, and How to Live Happily and Take Care of Your Health.

There are also fourteen two-semester specialised courses, offering thematically concentrated study in subjects ranging from the history of fine arts and Czech and world history to digital photography, European culture, music, and nature as a source of inspiration.

Single-semester programmes that address current topics and student interests are also popular. Popular "proven staples" include Brain Fitness, Tiffany-Stained Glass, Internet Without Fear, Tai Chi, Archery, and courses focused on mental health. New programmes are being prepared in the fields of psychology, genealogy, and sustainable gardening.

Language courses (English and German) and healthy lifestyle courses, such as yoga for seniors and line dancing, form an integral part of the programme.

### Study with an active conclusion



Studying at U3A has a clear structure. Specialised courses are usually held once every two weeks and comprise six to eight meetings per semester. Students are required to prepare a final written paper, which is then evaluated. Single-semester and language courses usually take place weekly and conclude with a colloquium, test or practical exam. Active participation by students is expected.

However, U3A is not just about lectures. Extracurricular activities and residential programmes also play an important role. For instance, the 'With U3A to Loučná' educational programme offered block teaching in subjects such as psychology, art history, and yoga.

Cultural and educational stays in Uherské Hradiště combine historical, cultural, psychosocial and physical activities and also include international cooperation — in 2025, for example, students from Poland participated too.

Other activities include excursions, exhibitions, social gatherings and participation in film shoots (e.g. *Kvarteto*, directed by Miroslav Krobot). These events foster a sense of community and belonging.

## Cooperation and regional dimension



U3A collaborates closely with several institutions, including the Regional Museum, the Art Museum, the National Heritage Institute, the Scientific Library, the Olomouc City Council, and the Municipal Police. This provides participants with access to experts in the field and authentic educational experiences.

As well as Olomouc, the University of the Third Age operates in Uherské Hradiště and Šternberk. The main campus and its branches are connected through joint excursions and academic ceremonies.

## Active aging as a value





U3A at Palacký University shows that old age does not have to be a time of decline but can be a period of new beginnings. It provides opportunities for intellectual growth and creative development, as well as promoting physical and mental wellbeing and building interpersonal relationships.

At a time when life expectancy is increasing and there is a growing emphasis on active ageing, the U3A at Palacký University in Olomouc is a prime example of how a university environment can support lifelong learning openly and systematically. Its long tradition and current range of activities confirm that the desire for knowledge knows no age limits.

Written by: *Klára Tesáříková*

## Gallery of distinguished EFOS members Lenka Shromáždilová



### **Brno University of Technology (VUT) Honours Lenka Shromáždilová who was a Long-Time EFOS Representative**

At the 26th Academic Assembly of Brno University of Technology (VUT) held on 18 September 2025, on the eve of the university's 126th anniversary, the Rector, Assoc. Prof. Ladislav Janíček presented awards to outstanding members of the academic community. Among the laureates was also our friend and EFOS representative Lenka Shromáždilová recognised for her exceptional achievements in education and organisational work.

### **A journey began in Vienna**

Lenka's first encounter with EFOS dates in 2003 when we held the event at the University of Vienna. "I arrived timidly, but with a strong desire to join the EFOS work and projects," she recalls. Supported by former Rector of VUT Prof. Peter Vavřín, she soon became actively involved in international cooperation, including the first common European project EFOSEC in 2006.

### **Building Bridges Through Meetings and Conferences**

VUT Brno has hosted several EFOS meetings under her coordination — in 2004, 2010, 2015 and most recently in 2023. Thanks to the support of EFOS President Dr. Nadežda Hrapková, Lenka also contributed to the activities within the Danube network DANET in Ulm and represented VUT in the international association AIUTA.

She is very glad to mention time, when we presented our results and teamwork in cities such as Alicante, Bratislava, Dresden, Groningen, Chemnitz, Magdeburg, Uppsala and in Wrocław.

### **Research, Innovation and ICT for Seniors**

Courses on ICT and the survey about senior education has always been a driving force for her project work. She participated in numerous EFOS projects supported by EU such as projects Socrates, Grundtvig, Erasmus on the name EFOSEC, VECU, EduSenNet and SeLiD.

Together with her colleague Michal Vojkuvka, she significantly contributed to the creation and development of technical programmes and education in ICT for senior learners. “It was enriching work that expanded our international contacts and helped us develop our own programmes at VUT,” she says.

### **Supported by Family, Connected Through Languages**

Behind her professional dedication was strong family support. Her precision and commitment often required overtime work, but her family always stood by her.

Friendships within EFOS grew naturally, especially thanks to her fluent German, once the main working language of the network. Colleagues from Vienna, Dresden, Groningen, Alicante and Bratislava became close partners and friends.

### **Looking Ahead**

In October 2025, Lenka decided to conclude her professional career at VUT in Brno. However, she will continue in EFOS as an individual member. “It wouldn’t be right to break all the ties I have. I have beautiful memories and experiences,” she says. At the same time, she looks forward to spending more time with her husband, sons and grandchildren.

### **Words from the Rector of VUT**

Rector of VUT, Assoc. Prof. Ladislav Janíček emphasised the importance of people in achieving excellence:

*“Excellence should be sought primarily in our people. Their talent and abilities give real meaning to the concept of university excellence. Without motivated people and their wish to achieve the best results, any development strategy becomes a simple utopia.”*

Lenka Shromáždilová’s long-term contribution to EFOS and VUT is a clear example of such excellence.

*Written by Nadežda Hrapková  
President of EFOS*