



ESU-Information

70 years European Showmen's Union



This year marks a special anniversary: The European Showmen's Union (ESU) is celebrating its 70th anniversary. Since its foundation in 1954, the ESU has played an important role in promoting and representing the interests of showmen and showwomen throughout Europe. This anniversary is not only an occasion to celebrate, but also an opportunity to look back at the significant history and future challenges.

The history of the European Showmen's Union is closely linked to the development of fairgrounds and Christmas markets, which have been part of European culture for centuries. In the 1950s, a time of reconstruction and economic recovery after the Second

World War, the need arose for an organisation to represent the interests of showmen and showwomen at European level. Under the leadership of visionary personalities, the ESU was founded to promote cooperation between the member countries and to create a common voice for the fairground industry and the future of the fairgrounds as a cultural asset.

The range of topics is complex and extends from the demand for a reduction in bureaucracy, transport and safety issues, standardisation, safety standards, education, tax relief, food law, labour shortages through to the recognition of European fairground culture. In discussions with those responsible in politics and administration, whether in Brussels, Strasbourg or the national member states, it is always important to emphasise the demands. Through continuity and dialogue "at eye level", the ESU representatives have gained a high level of acceptance and appreciation over the past decades. 70 years of the European Showmen's Union means 70 years of cooperation and cohesion among Europe's showmen and showwomen in order to continuously improve the framework conditions for our profession.

Through its work, the ESU has helped to preserve and promote the diversity and richness of European showman culture since its foundation. Nevertheless, showmen's businesses in Europe are constantly facing new challenges. Staff shortages, changing consumer habits and increasing regulatory requirements - to name just a few examples - present the profession with new questions and demands. In the knowledge that a modern professional organisation can only face up to industrial, economic and social change through unity and unity, the European Showmen's Union will continue to face these challenges with energy and determination in the future.

ESU at the annual reception of ArGe NRW in Bocholt



Annual reception of the ArGe NRW with (from left) NRW Fair Queen Pauline I, ESU Vice President Atze J. Lubach-Koers, Bundestag President and winner of the "Golden Carousel Horse 2024" Bärbel Bas, President Albert Ritter.

Since October 2021, SPD politician Bärbel Bas has been President of the German Bundestag, the second highest office in the state. On 16 February, the Duisburg-born politician was awarded the "Golden Carousel Horse" by the Association of Showmen's Associations in North Rhine-Westphalia (ArGe NRW) for her services and commitment to the preservation and promotion of fairground culture. The presentation of the award, also known as the "Kirmes Oscar", was the highlight of the annual reception of the NRW showmen's associations, hosted by the Bocholt Showmen's Association at the Bocholt Textile Museum. Vice-President Atze J. Lubach-Koers, among others, attended the annual meeting on behalf of the European Showmen's Union.

In a rousing speech, Albert Ritter, President of the European and German Showmen, called for more support from guests from politics, business and administration to safeguard fairgrounds and the showmen's trade in Europe.

Whether rising energy costs, labour shortages, excessive GEMA fee demands or bureaucratic burdens - President Ritter made it impressively clear to the political guests, including Karl-Josef Laumann (CDU), Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of North Rhine-Westphalia and Rainer Schmelzter (SPD), Vice-President of the NRW State

Parliament, which issues are currently burning under the nails of the showmen and showwomen.

The annual reception of NRW showmen was traditionally opened with a flag-raising ceremony led by the ESU flag. Since the first reception in 2002, the European Showmen's Union and its national associations have regularly taken part in the large showmen's meeting, during which there is ample opportunity to discuss current showmen's issues.

Impressions of the annual reception:



Beaming faces after the presentation of the "Golden Carousel Horse" to Bundestag President Bärbel Bas (2nd from left).



The ESU delegation marching in the flag.



The "Golden Carousel Horse" is awarded every year for special services to the fairground as a cultural asset.

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