



Chairman's Message



Dear readers,

I am starting to my new duty as ESU Chairman. Like most of people, on 15 May 2010 when I took my new responsibility I felt a huge sense of responsibility and excitement.

My emotions were at the top when all ESU delegates had confidence to choose me for the Chairmanship at the ESU Congress.

My excitements were bloat out as a person who knows very well the importance of ESU for the future of the Syriac people.

Unfortunately, during the last six years that we moved all together, working with great cooperation without any miscommunication, my beloved friend, the former Chairman of ESU Mr. Iskender Alptekin had passed away following a heart attack just after three days that he submitted me his duty.

My balance of excitement and responsibility was wholly broken down after this incident. While excitement starting to diminish, the sense of responsibility has multiplied.

The most difficult period of any institution should be the establishment period. At this difficult period my friend Mr. Iskender Alptekin had sustained always ESU worthily as a Chairman, he motivated all his colleagues during their duties and showed them to perform their works fairly.

During the last six year of the Chairmanship of Iskender Aptekin, ESU had a huge support and sympathy among the people. Thus, during fifteen days of funeral ceremony at Europe as well as in Turkey, Syriac people and religious representatives had manifested their respect to the former ESU Chairman intensively.

Syriac people will never forget those who make the sacrifice and devotion. Therefore, Mr. Iskender Alptekin will be placed as a legend in the history of Syriac people as well as a Hero.

Fikri Aygur

ADIEU ISKENDER ALPTEKIN

European Syriac Union (ESU) first chairman, one of the founders of ESU mr. Iskender Alptekin passed away following a heart attack on Tuesday 18th May 2010, at Zurich, Switzerland.

The legend Iskender Alptekin was born on 29 August 1961 at the Kafro village in Turabdin. He passed his childhood at the village while studying the primary at the same time learning Syriac language. He left his village at the year of 1977 to Istanbul for working as many other people. At the year of 1978 he got married with Ferida Cacan and at the same year he migrated to Switzerland. He was the father of two daughters, Sylvie and Suzan.

Since the year of 1993 on, Mr. Iskender Alptekin adopted the way to work for his people for his community in Diaspora and he became as a professional staff for the duties. He freed his time and consecrated his life for the Assyrian-Syriac-Chaldean people. During his work, he passed at the every stage of work and responsibility. He had been present at the every corner that exist Assyrian-Syriac-Chaldean people, in every country of Europe to Middle East and until America.



As a consequence of his appreciated high qualities Mr. Iskender Alptekin became the first Chairman of newly established ESU on 14th May 2004. At the year of 2007 at the second term of ESU Congress, he had been elected again with unanimity to the chairmanship of ESU. Our beloved Chairman and friend Mr. Iskender Alptekin was enormously appreciated by all his friends and colleagues. As a chairman he had been always the symbol of justice, great example of maturity and patience.

Under presidency of Mr. Iskender Alptekin, ESU had been enforced by all domains, respected organisation within Assyrian-Chaldean-Syriac people and at the international sphere.

Every moment of Mr. Iskender Alptekin was dedicated to his mission, ready to every kind of duty and infatigable to visit every corner of the entire of world to be efficacious to his duty. The decease of Mr. Iskender Alptekin causes great sadness among his family, friends and within Assyrian-Chaldean-Syriac community all over the world.

From the first day of death until the last day of funeral realized in the Turabdin, all people stressed out their support, their chagrin and their condolences to the Mr. Alptekin family and ESU. From the H. H. Patriarch of Syriac Orthodox Church to bishops, from Lebanese President and Prime Minister to political parties in Turkey and to all Assyrian-Chaldean-Syriac parties and organisations whom transmitted their condolences.

The funeral of Mr. Iskender Alptekin had been in his natal village Kafro in Turabdin with the presence of the bishops, priests, his family and friends, local representatives and with the attendance of Syriacs from all villages of region. Mr. Iskender Alptekin left behind him

his wife, two daughters, his grandchildren and ESU friends.



SEYFO activities around Europe

24th April is the day of commemoration and promotion of Seyfo around the world. As every year ESU also this year made intensive activities for the Seyfo. With an appeal that made by ESU to all Syriacs around the world to set on the candles at the night of 24 April to the memory of Syriac-Assyrian-Chaldean, Armenians and Pontiac Greek that killed during the genocide.

For the rest more activities were fulfilled at the different countries;

Sweden

On 17th April, ESU organized a conference at the city of Vasteros. As a speaker Prof. David Gaunt and Researcher Zeki Yalcin and on behalf of ESU Bahiya Hadodo delivered speeches. Around 100 people had been present to this activity and all participants had opportunity to ask different questions to the speakers.

Germany

From 16 to 27 April with the initiative of many organisations also supported by ESU a serial of activities had been organized. With the participation of experts, authors, artists, clergy and politicians with the different activities extensively the Seyfo had been discussed.

Turkey

For the first time in the history a conference about Seyfo had been realized. The conference that held out at the Ankara had been supported from many institutions and scientists.

On behalf of ESU Mr. Tuma Celik, Prof. Baskin Oran and Ismail Besikci were present at the conference among others. The Seyfo theme had been discussed widely. With the speech that he made Mr. Tuma Celik said that, until now a day the Seyfo influence on our people is clear and

we can see these at the every step of Syriac population. Celik added, "1915 incident is not personal, we see clearly that



there is a central decision with the objective of annihilation of Syriacs other groups from the geography. The problems linked to this tragic period are continues until today. The rest of Syriacs are facing different problems of intimidation. Turkey must compensate all minorities and groups that had been killed and massacred during Seyfo".

At the end of his speech Mr.Tuma Celik declared that it does not exist a Syriac, Kurdish or Armenian problem in Turkey. In Turkey there is a problem of Turkish dominance to trying to make everybody Turk.

USA

Subsequently to the acknowledgment of Armenian Genocide by the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs ESU sent a special letter to the Congress members to enlarging the meaning of Seyfo and adding Syriac-Assyrian-Chaldean and Pontiac Greeks at the definition. With the letter ESU welcomed the decision of all members and introduced a demand of adding other victim groups to possible Congress vote on this direction.

Switzerland

On 07th June a committee from ESU and HNB made several meetings at the Swiss Parliament about Seyfo subject. Different sessions organized with Mr. Lucas Reinman from Swiss People's Party (SVP) and with Madame Barbara Schmid-Federer and Mr. Reto Wehrli from Christian Democrat Party. At the end of meetings a proposal had been presented to the Swiss Parliament. All three deputies declared that they will support the proposal at the Parliament.

France

On 18th April a wide conference held out at the Sarcelles, Paris. With the initiative of several organisations a light had been brought about Seyfo issue. The main importance of this conference was the discussion of Syriac-Chaldean-Assyrian question among Armenian genocide. Around 250 to 300 people were present at the conference and huge participation of speakers was scheduled. From the historians to politicians until activist were present for this day. On behalf of ESU Suleyman Gultekin delivered a speech. At the end of conference a film had been showed.

Belgium

On 25th April with the initiative of several organisations at Brussels also a conference had been done. Around 75 people were present also here a film showed to the participants.

Deadly bomb attack on Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian students

On 02nd May a convoy of buses transporting Chaldean-Syriac-

Assyrian university students had been attacked at near the city of Mosul in northern Iraq. Deadly bomb attacks killed at least three persons and injured roundly 144 persons. The injured students had been transported to the hos-



pitals and noting that situation remain

grave. As a result of daily systematic

attacks Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian students

choose the solution of making

daily two-way trip or goings and comings from Baghdeeda, essentially Christian inhabitants, to Mosul University.

Systematic violence, attacks, harassments and bomb attacks make the daily life impossible among Christian Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian popula-

tion densely living in the Nineveh region.

According to the various news agencies the twin bomb attacks targeted mainly Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian population which is the victim of violence. Subsequently to the fall of ancient regime Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian population is living one of the darkest periods in the Iraq.

The main targets are women, student and well-known personalities. Since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, about half of the Christian population, have left the country, according to the U.N. High Commission for Refugees.

The Popular Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian Council had sent a letter to the US President Barack Obama to deliver the situation of the Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people in Iraq especially after this deadly attack on university students.



Turkish Ministry of Forestry spreading terror

Following to the candidacy to the European Union Turkey started to the registration of Syriac properties in the Turabdin.

At the end of 2009 most of the registration works of Syriac villages had been done, however just after lots of Syriac villages had been sued to the courts by the Ministry of Forestry or by the Treasury Secretariat with the objection for the annulment of land registers (deed). For the



moment dozens of lawsuits are in route among Syriac and state authorities.

The Turkish state does anything to find a collective solution for the intensive lawsuits. Identically to the Mor Gabriel Monastery case that continues since three years and that is

at the court of appeal since one year has not any result. With the waiting to the conclusion of Mor Gabriel case Ministry of Forestry had sued the Monastery once more time on 24 May 2010.

Furthermore, although the admission of deeds to Bsorino (Haberli) villagers during last six years recently the action are brought against villagers.

Last year the properties of Kafarbe (Gungoren) village were determined by the Cadastral Directorate and delivered to the owners. On 24 May

2010 the villagers had been sued by the Ministry of Forestry.

Apart of these most of the Syriac villages had been sued by Ministry of Forestry and according to the last information that we have, new lawsuits are in route.



Most of the times, Syrians are forced to pay too much and using bribery ways to own their ancestral properties.

Turkish state does not accept registration of the Syriac properties and turning situation to the politic arena. With the mismanaged law to the Syrians, Turkey sees the demands of Syrians just politically motivated.

As a result to these development intensive purchasing processes is ongoing at the villages around of Midyat for the Syrians properties.

At the seven years of AKP government that wants to make a step for the minorities, it goes backward ten steps. At the constitutive political culture in Turkey, it is tradition to do not trust its own people and percept every demand and law hostile.



Therefore the governments in Turkey are never at peace with their own people.

ESU-Youth 1 Nison Event

During the evening of 10th April we have celebrated the annual cultural event of '1 Nison' in the city Giessen in Germany.

The meaning of this event goes back for thousands of years and it stands for the celebration of the New Year. ESU-Youth saw this event as a tool to get every Syriac youth across Europe united.

The event brought approximately 1000 guests, which are at most from Germany, but also from Switzerland, France, Belgium, Holland and Sweden. They all celebrated this event with dancing and enthusiasm due to the singings of Gaggi and Fadi Komo.

The opening of the event has been made with a speech by Ninva Özdemir. After this the dance floor was constantly full. You could buy your drink and food while this is being served by several youth. The organizational team has set up a nice program to show every guest the meaning of this event with a cinevision, music, speeches and so on.

The cinevision which was being broadcasted with a projector was viewable to every guest and it showed the historical background of 1 Nison.

After this the chairman of ESU-Youth Sargon Aygur held a speech in the Syriac language about the political activities of ESU-Youth, the strategy of ESU-Youth and the activities which are being made at the moment and explained the

meaning of 1 Nison.

Afterwards the representative of ESU-Youth in Germany Christina Bozdemir did the same in the German language. SuroyoTV was also invited to record the event and broadcast it later on TV. This gave opportunity to the youth who could not be able to come to the event could watch it afterwards on TV.

A lot of companies wanted to sponsor the event by giving a present so that this could be given away with the lottery. The prices which could be won were a Laptop, a Plasma TV, bicycles and a lot of sport equipments and items.

Later in the evening the presents were given away to the winners and the event continued till late in the morning 3:00 o'clock. Because all the youth came across Europe they had to get back to their busses in time to get back home in time too.

After all we could see this event as a very successful one without any incidents. All the guests and the organizational team were positive and the atmosphere was super. Next year we will organize a big event too, so we hope that all our guests will come and celebrate it with us with a lot of enthusiasm.



The Voice of the Syriacs

IMPRINT

Information bulletin about the social position of the Syriacs in and outside the Middle East. It appears periodically, published by the European Syriac Union (ESU) in Brussels-Belgium.

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ESU III. CONGRESS

On 14-15th May 2010, European Syriac Union

(ESU) carries out third Congress at Switzerland. With the presence of nearly 70 delegates from various countries, the Congress put forward many changes.

With the opening session of Mrs. Rima Tuzun the Congress started with the one minute of silence to the memory of the martyrs.



The first day of the Congress, all delegates had profited from training and education about last developments and new era and processes within ESU.

At this important education stated the signification of new era. It's highlighted that "the great responsibilities are waiting for us also we have responsibility toward our people and our institutions. We should work and behave properly to be the mirror of our all parties.

Also it's stated that every moment of the work, the different problems occur, for this the education is key element. Every person has the place within ESU. But the importance is to be able understand and concretize politics and visions of ESU.

Mr. Fikri Aygur from ESU Ruling Committee made held a speech about Syriac question within the International Relations. Mr. Aygur said, the Syriacs the lack of legality or official status, harm us during the centuries. Today, we see clearly this point at the every stage of the confrontations.

Additionally Mr. Aygur declared that, with the arrival of Islam our folk had been placed and lived as a second class. It was called certain "Zimmi System". During Ottoman era this system is converted to the "Millet System". Unfortunately, Syriacs were excluded from this. During the history Syriacs with the different periods and under various name and committees had looked after Syriac demands. But the lack of legality was the key element of all these essays. Finally, Syriacs were deprived from all modern rights said Mr. Fikri Aygur.

At the conclusion of his speech Mr. Fikri Aygur said that today we have the demand of autonomy in the Iraq for our people without differences of name and ethnicity. Our demand of autonomy is welcomed by most of the international actors included EU and so on. In Turkey there are new and important developments for the Syriacs. At the new era we should be answer all demands.

Mr. Ayad Mossad form Holland made also a dis-



course about the Middle East politics in the future. Mr. Mossad said that in the near future the great chang-

ing of priorities will be realized in the Middle East Christians. The changes will become more important from the Churches and the work and missions of ESU also are getting highest.



Mr. Ayad stated also the importance of cooperation and sacrifices during the work. He declared that until today the great works are done with the sacrifices of the friends. He point out the importance of Ruling Committee in the future to be more strengthen.

The second day of the Congress took place the election of a new Ruling Committee members and the new Chairman after two terms of Mr. Iskender Alptekin. Mr. Fikri Aygur the Vice-Chairman elected to the post of Chairmanship of ESU with the absolute majority of delegates.

With his last discourse to the ESU delegates Mr. Iskender Alptekin said that "the establishment of ESU was a response to the new conjuncture. ESU is not only a diplomatic organisation ESU is an organism with every aspect of life to be answer to our people's questions. Last six years our organisation has been the centre of gravity among Syriacs in the world. ESU carries out and created public opinion about questions in the international arena. We made several meetings with to understand and make clear our demands. At the future we must work more efficiently to give answers to the new developments".

The new elected Chairman Mr. Fikri Aygur also made a welcome speech to the Congress delegates. Mr. Aygur, first of all he stated his gladness and satisfaction with the approval of his candidacy. He said that "its historic moment for me, ESU is very important for us and for our people. The new processes are beginning and such times the role of Chairman is vital. Our friend Mr. Iskender Alptekin worked perfectly and he shows us too much qualities.



For the future to be able to put a proper work on the table I need your support and your courage as we know every member of ESU has vital importance said Mr. Aygur. Next years the destiny of our people will be brought to the table. There will be great developments especially in our homeland. For these reasons, we have to be aware of responsibilities and work hardly.

Mr. Fikri Aygur also placed the priorities in the next years for the ESU agenda. He said that, creating public opinion about the position of our people in the Middle East, returning back to homeland, Seyfo issue and autonomy project are key priorities of ESU for the future.