



Ceremonial address of the LAZARUS UNION president

Excellencies,
dear Postulants and Knights of Honour,
dear Guests, dear Officers and Comrades!

In 2006, when the LAZARUS UNION was founded under the name "Lazarus Hilfswerk Niederösterreich", later „Lazarus Hilfswerk Ostarrichi“, not even in my dreams did I think that this organisation, now named LAZARUS UNION, would have more than 18,000 registered members and again that number as "affiliated members" world-wide in 2015.

Not even in my dreams I would have thought that the LAZARUS UNION would be represented on all continents in more than 80 countries, with the organisation „Swords of Freedom“ even in more than 120 countries.

Not even in my dreams I would have thought that the LAZARUS UNION would one day become an organisation accredited with the United Nations.

Nor would I have even dared to consider that the LAZARUS UNION would play an active role in UN conferences.

For a year now all these dreams have become reality and the LAZARUS UNION indeed managed all that.

Effective from May 1st, 2014, the LAZARUS UNION has been awarded "SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS" with the United Nations ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council).

I want to once more explain what the meaning of this "special consultative status" means for the Lazarus Union. I keep doing this just because it gives me so much pleasure.

It means, among other things, seven delegates accredited by name to the United Nations! Seven delegates each in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

These delegates not only are allowed to follow all UN ECOSOC meetings but do have the right to pipe up, file own proposals in the name of the Lazarus Union and look for allies with other UN delegations. The delegates have their own seats with name tags in meetings and conferences and may also use offices and conference rooms to prepare for meetings and conferences in the three cities named.

All Lazarus Union delegates with the United Nations possess a "UN ground pass" which gives them permission for unlimited entry to the UN buildings. In 2015 we do plan to make use of this especially in New York, the UN seat of ECOSOC. In Vienna we use this option almost on a monthly basis.

Not even the biggest optimists (including myself) had thought that the Lazarus Union got awarded this international status by the United Nations so fast and without major problems.

I want to thank all here who participated in this success. First and foremost I thank the late secretary general Chev. Erich Josef Kadlec, who died suddenly last year and who was the inspirational driver for our UN application, also doing all the necessary research and who is now

among us, symbolised by this picture. Thank you, Erich, in my name and in the name of the LAZARUS UNION!

The Lazarus Union as such can be compared to a “group holding organisation” as the Lazarus Union members are the various local Lazarus Union organisations and the various groups and unions affiliated with the union. Every one of these groups and local organisations possesses ONE vote at the general assembly. To this the members of the chair and the board of management, all nominated by name, are added so that the fate of the Lazarus Union is directed and guided by approximately 120 members entitled to vote.

As the Lazarus Union asks neither for admission fees nor for membership fees from its members, the administration of the local members is in the responsibility of the local commanders or groups and unions affiliated with the Lazarus Union. Membership numbers are reported (rather) informally to the Lazarus Union HQ and are not verified.

Only when a member wants to be in uniform and to carry rank and insignia of the Lazarus Union it is necessary to send an extra personal application to the Lazarus Union for the chair to decide upon acceptance as an extraordinary member. The union commander then confirms the “rank” suggested by the local commander or changes it as he sees fit.

In other words, the “invisible” membership number is definitely to be considered higher than the official figures suggest and, according to my conservative estimate, definitely thought to be more than 40,000. All members from organisations affiliated with the Lazarus Union as “group member” are accepted and counted as “affiliated members”, even when not (yet) known by name. They also will be granted the right to be in uniform, if applied for. As of now more than 6,000 members officially are in uniform and registered by name.

Also for the Lazarus Union it is not that important how many members there are as the Lazarus Union wants to communicate an attitude based on tolerance, piety, charity, and altruism and not on “collecting membership fees.”

Important is the pursuit of our mission, not the money!

Because of this absolute voluntariness is emphasised. NOBODY must be forced into doing something. Only personal honour may compel someone to carry on with a duty taken over until either a successor is found or the member is released from the duty again.

Nobody is compelled to go in uniform! Nobody is compelled to buy devotional objects! Nobody needs to buy wearable distinctions! There merely is the RIGHT to do so if one WANTS to do it and the preconditions are met! This seriously distinguishes the Lazarus Union from (many) other organisations, something that also has to be stated with clarity. And the profit coming from all those items sold goes 100% into our various projects. Expenses are waived from all members, as is stated in our statutes.

We spend no money for representative offices, cars, furniture, or “trips by officials.” All members pay for their personal expenses themselves. Even telephone bills for duty calls from private mobile phones.

ALL officials, unions, and groups being members or associated with the Lazarus Union must follow this principle or leave the Lazarus Union. On this issue there is absolutely no tolerance from my side!

The Lazarus Union is proud that as a result of these strict guidelines less than 2% of the official budget are labeled “administrative cost.” Most of those are for paper and ink for printing of various documents. More than 5,400 membership certificates, rank certificates, legitimations, and award certificates have been printed by the secretary general’s office in 2014 and almost 50% of all awards have been awarded WITHOUT insignia fees.

It shall also be noted that all expenses are checked by “10 independent eyes” and a monthly statistical analysis is performed as well as a financial statement covering all receipts and expenditures. Receipts and expenditures are also done as well as booked by different persons! Full transparency is a very important and essential concern to me!

Finally I thank all commanders and comrades in all countries where the Lazarus Union is active for their dedication. I thank our board of management for their valued contributions. But especially I thank my chair and the extended supporting circle who together with me have done the main work for the Lazarus Union in the past year. I count on this and I trust you!

To this effect I also ask you to forgive me if I seem to be a little brisk and gruff occasionally and call a spade a spade. I am not perfect but I work on it and I wish us all more successful and creative activities for our fellow humans and all the power and endurance necessary.

Everyone can do something! Let us create new perspectives together!

Thank you for your attention!

Wolfgang Steinhardt
President