

Brussels, 31 May 2018

Minutes of the Steering Committee meeting held on 29 May 2018

(7th floor room, ITUH)

Present: Michel Devacht, President of FERPA; Dick De Graaf, FNV; Angeles Briaes Gonzales, UJP-UGT; Ron Douglas, TUC; Gilbert Jerome, CFDT; Jeannine Martin, CSC; Tino Fumagalli, FNP-CISL; Ana Martinez Lopez, President of the Women's Committee; Jasna Petrovic, SUH; Alois Schlager, ÖGB; Agostino Siciliano, UILP-UIL; Simone Welti, UNAR-CFTC; Livio Melgari, SPI-CGIL

Also present at the meeting: Henri Lourdelle, FERPA Political Advisor, Jessica Montiel

Apologies for absence: Lazslo Juhasz, MASZSZ

Given the importance of the agenda, the Steering Committee meeting was held over one day.

The President, Michel Devacht, opened the meeting with a tribute to Robert RACKE, President of FERPA from 2011 to 2015, who died recently. He stated that he had sent our condolences on behalf of FERPA to the family and the trade union organisation, OGBL, of which Robert was a member. He also stated that there had been no delegation from FERPA to Robert's funeral in order to respect the wishes of the family for it to take place in the strictest privacy. A minute's silence was observed in his memory by the Steering Committee.

1) Preparation of the 8th FERPA Congress

The President - who was also assuming the role of General Secretary as decided by the FERPA Executive Committee meeting of 13 and 14 March 2018 (see report) - addressed the first item on the agenda concerning the preparation of the 8th FERPA Congress.

After a discussion, the Steering Committee decided on **the dates**. The Congress would be held in the Auditorium of the International Trade Union House (ITUH). It would take place over **two days**, on **Tuesday 16 October** and **Wednesday 17 October**, even though, at the last Executive Committee meeting in March, the prospect had been envisaged, depending on the possibilities, of holding the Congress over two and a half days.

Two considerations led to this decision:

- First of all from a financial point of view. It turned out that FERPA had budgeted a provision of €20,000 for the Congress. However, it was important to note that the use of the Auditorium (negotiated price) amounted to €990 per half-day. The cost of the cabins was €180 per cabin and since there were nine active languages, this amounted to €1620. The cost of the interpreters was €570 excluding taxes per interpreter, or €5130. And since there were two interpreters per cabin, this amounted to €10,260. Hence, the additional half-day alone would cost a total of €12,870 (excluding taxes)!
- Concerning the time set aside for discussions. During the previous Congresses, a half-day (out of a two and a half-day Congress) was reserved for a cultural visit. No visit was planned for this

one, which left two full days for the debates, i.e. a half-day on the constitution, knowing that the organisations would have received them in early June and one and a half days for the other debates and votes (activity report, resolution, etc.).

Moreover, unlike in previous years, **no exceptional contributions would be requested from the organisations.**

On the other hand, the trade union structures for retired persons **would pay the hotel costs** of the members of their delegation and FERPA would pay the catering costs and those inherent in the organisation and holding of the Congress (texts, publications, etc.).

The organisations would make the room bookings for their members in hotels of their choice, as they already did for the statutory meetings of FERPA.

Since the 8th Congress was being held in place and on the date of the FERPA Executive Committee meeting, the European Commission was paying the rental costs, interpreting costs, etc. as well as those of 27 participating members (in principle one per country) in accordance with the new AGM system. It was therefore recommended that “full” members of the Executive Committee register as soon as they received the AGM documents. However, it should be noted that it was the Commission and not FERPA that decided who would be reimbursed for their expenses.

2) The reform of the FERPA constitution

The President then handed the floor to Dick De Graaf, coordinator of the Constitution Working Group.

Dick recalled the work that had been carried out by the ad hoc Group on the reform of the constitution and that had resulted in the drafting of a coherent draft with regard both to the text of the “Constitution” and that of the “Internal Regulations”. They would be subject to discussion and a vote at the 8th Congress. As he stated, there had been no changes to the key elements, only to the structure of previous documents and to certain formulations, in order to make the documents more coherent and consistent.

However, given the different situations experienced by FERPA recently, but also as had emerged from the discussions within the Working Group, a few points could be added to the draft if the Steering Committee so decided. The Working Group coordinator had summarised them in a note, which served as a basis for debate.

Regarding budgetary issues, for example, what about the 2017 budget? What about the provisional budget for 2018? There was ambiguity about the work that was being requested from the FERPA Financial Audit Commission. Yet, the current texts were very clear. Article 21 specifies that the Financial Audit Committee “**verify** FERPA’s income and expenses and compliance with the decisions taken by the Executive Committee. It **examines** the FERPA’s provisional budget and balance sheet. It **expresses** its observations on them in writing...”. Nowhere was it written that it was the Financial Audit Committee that drew up the budget. That task, which was eminently “political”, should be the responsibility of a Treasurer in accordance with the guidelines provided by the General Secretary and in agreement with him. Yet, that “treasurer” function did not currently exist and it therefore seemed important for the Steering Committee to fill this gap.

Furthermore, FERPA had experienced the absence of the General Secretary on two occasions since the last Congress. In addition, the vagaries of daily life, taking into account the ages of FERPA

members - as had been illustrated by the recent death of Robert Racke, the former President of FERPA - made it necessary to take the situation into account and “to keep abreast of things”, as the President noted in the debate. Would it not be appropriate to create by statute a Deputy General Secretary position - unpaid, member of the Steering Committee - in order to take account of these realities into account and to respond to the various situations that may arise and anticipate them? In the same vein, would it not also be appropriate to create a Vice-President position?

At the end of the debate, three questions were put to the members of the Steering Committee on which they were to vote. The creation of the position of:

- Deputy General Secretary - unpaid: 9 votes “in favour” and 3 votes “against”;
- Vice-President: 9 votes “against” and 3 “abstentions”;
- Treasurer: unanimous vote “in favour”;

At the end of these votes, Dick De Graaf was asked to insert the two positions of Treasurer and Deputy General Secretary, unpaid, into the draft constitution.

But, of course, it was the Congress that would decide on this.

3) Preliminary draft Resolution for the 8th Congress

The President then introduced the discussion on the Preliminary Draft Resolution for the 8th Congress. This text had the agreement of the Steering Committee, subject to a few amendments, which do not call into question the substance of the text, which were discussed and incorporated into the text.

4) The activity of FERPA

The President then gave the floor to Henri to present the various meetings and activities in which Henri and the President had participated since the end of November, to represent FERPA, being:

- In all ETUC statutory meetings (Executive Committee and Steering Committee (6), including the Gothenburg Summit, on 21 November 2017 on the European Pillar of Social Rights in which the President of FERPA participated;
- In the European Economic and Social Committee on the “Future of Civil Society in Europe” and on the “5th ECI Day”;
- In the European Parliament on the next Social Security Coordination Regulation;
- In the ETUC again on the subject of the new Social Security Coordination Regulation and on the “European Labour Authority”;
- In response to the Commission’s public consultation on Gender Equality

Not to mention the participation, on behalf of FERPA, of Lajos Mayer (SZEF), in two seminars organised by the Trade Union Institute of the ETUC, on the implementation of the agreement on “active ageing and solidarity between generations” - an agreement in the negotiation in which FERPA had actively participated.

5) Deadlines

Before closing the meeting, the President of FERPA recalled a few deadlines:

- Concerning the draft Resolution and the draft Statutes and Internal Regulations, the texts would be sent in early June and the organisations would have **until 15 July** to forward their amendments, in **French or English**. They would be made centrally available by Henri (lourdellehenri@gmail.com).
- They would be examined by the **Steering Committee meeting of 12 September**, which would again meet over one day.
- The **working group**, set up by the March Executive Committee meeting, would meet **on 11 September at 2 p.m.** to prepare the work of the Steering Committee meeting the next day concerning the Preliminary Draft Resolution.
- **The application deadline** for the position of **Secretary General** had been **set for 7 September**.

Since the meeting had ended, the President thanked the interpreters and the members of the Steering Committee for the efficient work that was accomplished during the meeting.

Henri