

Minutes of the FERPA Steering Committee meeting of 7 February 2019

Present:

Lajos Mayer, (SZEZ), President; Agostino Siciliano (UIL-UILP), General Secretary; Angeles Briaes (UJP-UGT), Deputy General Secretary; Mireille Paume, UCR-CGT, President of the Women's Committee; Dick De Graaf, FNV; Didier Hotte, UCR-FO; Jeannine Martin, CSC-ACV; Livio Melgari, SPI-CGIL; Hubert Schwind, UCR-CGT; Werner Thum, ÖGB.

Apologies for absence:

Tino Fumagalli, FNP-CISL, Treasurer; Metka Roksandic, SUS

Also in attendance at the meeting:

Jessica Montiel and Henri Lourdelle from the FERPA Secretariat

Lajos Mayer, President of FERPA, opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and the interpreters, and presented the agenda for the meeting, which was adopted. He proposed that, given the importance of the items on the agenda, the interventions be limited to five minutes. He then gave the floor to the General Secretary.

Agostino Siciliano, General Secretary of FERPA, presented the first item, which related to mobilisation activities and first of all **the campaign involving “postcards”**, which would be sent to candidates in the European Parliament elections (in response to a question asked, the postage costs would be borne by the member organisations). Three specific demands would be made to them (proposal presented in Italian):

- The right to secure, fair and decent public pensions for women and men
- The right to quality public healthcare, guaranteeing the independence of older people
- The right to active ageing for older and retired people, overcoming age-related discrimination

Subject to the changes necessary in French and English, while retaining the meaning, the text was adopted by the members of the Steering Committee. The French and English language versions were to be sent to Henri who would forward them to the General Secretary.

The text, in its various language versions (Italian, French and English) would be placed on the FERPA website from where the member organisations would be able to download and print it for dispatch to the candidates.

The President stressed that the postcard was a good start for mobilisation and if member organisations spoke with one voice, the impact would be greater.

The General Secretary then presented the **ETUC demonstration** which would take place in Brussels in the week of 23 to 26 April next. As decided at the last Steering Committee meeting of 6 December 2018, FERPA would join this event while ensuring its own visibility. Then he mentioned the last **ETUC Executive Committee** meeting of 18 and 19 December 2018, the detailed minutes of which were sent to the FERPA member organisations. In the interventions made on behalf of FERPA, he recalled that the ETUC had been asked to pay attention to the situation of retired people, which was deteriorating in Europe. FERPA's right

to vote was also mentioned, bearing in mind that this remained a long-term endeavour, from that point until the ETUC Congress in May 2019.

Following that first presentation, the President, Lajos Mayer, opened the floor for **discussions**.

Regarding retired people, some people were wondering whether they were mentioned in the ETUC Congress documents. Others referred to the pensions issue by saying that FERPA had to focus on the point of pensions that were sufficient to be able to live. Others still spoke about the working documents in the area of responsibility, which the General Secretary had assigned to them. Some stated that they had sent a document and they were surprised that it had not been distributed to the entire Committee. Several interventions related to the recognition of FERPA within the ETUC through the right to vote and the critical visibility of the organisation. This had to be a priority.

The President referred to the meeting of the Hungarian Pensioners' Parliament which would meet in his country. Since the General Secretary had been invited and was not available on the specified date, he had asked him to represent FERPA at the meeting. He believed that this was also an opportunity to raise the visibility of the organisation.

In his **response**, the General Secretary, Agostino Siciliano, pointed out that the trade union demonstration would take place in Brussels, with that of the ETUC: FERPA did not have the resources to organise a demonstration in each European capital.

As regards reference to retired persons in the ETUC Congress documents, he explained that they were mentioned and that FERPA had also proposed (see the last Steering Committee of 6 December 2018) amendments to the ETUC action programme, which had been incorporated, emphasising in particular the deteriorating situation of retired persons in all countries.

The following organisations participated in the discussion: CSC-ACV, ÖGB, SPI-CGIL, UCR-FO, UCR-CGT, FNV

The President, Lajos Mayer, then gave the floor to the General Secretary, Agostino Siciliano, to present the next item on the agenda relating to the **ETUC Congress**.

FERPA was entitled to 10 representatives, including the President and the General Secretary. To form FERPA's representation, the General Secretary proposed that priority be given to the other members of the Steering Committee, on the basis of one person per Member State. The Italian and French members, of whom there were two per country, came to an agreement, which resulted in the following:

- The President, Lajos Mayer
- The General Secretary, Agostino Siciliano
- The Deputy General Secretary, Angeles Briales
- The President of the Women's Committee, Mireille Paume
- Dick De Graaf
- Didier Hotte
- Jeannine Martin
- Livio Melgari
- Metka Roksandic

- Werner Thum

It was recalled that the costs of attending the ETUC Congress were borne by the participants, with the exception of those of the President and the General Secretary.

FERPA will have a stand at this Congress, under the responsibility of Henri. Werner confirmed that he would provide FERPA with a small team of three or four people to help with:

- the setting up of the stand on Monday 20 May
- the dismantling of the stand on Friday 24 May
- the running of the stand, with Henri, from 21 to 24 May.

The General Secretary returned to the issue of FERPA's right to vote and recalled that in the period of time that remains before Congress, it was necessary to convince the organisations that abstained or voted against.

He would speak with these ETUC organisations and the ETUC General Secretary to ask for his support.

In the discussion following this presentation, several organisations stated that they had already met with their Confederation (or would do so) and had led them to change their vote. A reminder was also provided of the organisations that voted against or abstained, which gave the following results: out of 177 votes cast:

- 113 were votes in favour
- 30 were votes against
- 34 were abstentions.

In order to achieve the required two-thirds majority, i.e. 118 votes in favour, 5 votes were missing. It was requested that this list be sent to the organisations.

The following organisations participated in the discussion: FNV, ÖGB, SPI-CGIL, CSC-ACV, UJP-UGT

The President then gave the floor to the General Secretary to discuss the next item on **the functioning of FERPA**.

As he had proposed at the last FERPA Congress, the General Secretary had decided to assign responsibility to each member of the Steering Committee for a specific issue relating to FERPA's demands. This proposal was approved at the last Steering Committee meeting of 6 December 2018. He said that the rules were therefore important. He recalled that the General Secretary was the "manager". This rule ensured the smooth functioning of the organisation and of the Steering Committee Management, without overlap.

As regards the "activity sheets", Henri was coordinating them in close cooperation with the General Secretary. They therefore had to first be sent to him and to Henri for initial review. They were then sent to the FERPA member organisations.

These sheets were therefore not "dossiers". They had to indicate what needed to be done based on the priorities selected and what tangible actions were to be implemented. It was important not to be limited to analysis and questions, but to consider actions.

Following these clarifications, the **discussion** began, in particular and first of all on how to proceed. Some people had circulated their documents, while others had not. In other words, the question was when they would be discussed and with whom?

Others also asked about the recipients of the demands.

In response, the General Secretary said that it was necessary to proceed carefully on this. Fundamental change was being undertaken. It was necessary to put all the subjects together so that at the next Executive Committee meeting, it would be possible to explain the main aspects of each of these issues and to indicate which were the most important issues. In other words, it was necessary to be able to say: “This is what needs to be done over the next 4 years to achieve the goal”.

The issues being dealt with by members had to become FERPA’s issues.

The following organisations participated in the discussion: FNV, CSC-ACV, UJP-UGT, UCR-FO

The President, Lajos Mayer, then gave the floor to the President of **Women’s Committee** who presented her work proposals. With regard to the previously existing “select committee”, she stated that she did not have a predefined position, but that she would discuss it in the Committee. By 8 March, she would coordinate with the ETUC and was considering producing an attractive poster on retired women, which would address their visibility.

In **other business**, the Secretary General made two points:

- Regarding the **next Executive Committee meeting**, the agenda would be sent in the coming days. The work plan for the next four years would be submitted. A decision would also be taken on the launch of the issues. The ETUC General Secretary, Luca Visentini, would speak at this Committee meeting.
- Regarding **communication**, the new website would be presented (UILP-UIL had renewed the licence for the software). A photo of all the Steering Committee members would be placed on the website so that members know who they should contact when they wanted to communicate on the issues in the FERPA work plan.

Then, two organisations (FNV and ÖGB) asked whether a review would be carried out of the last FERPA Congress, in particular the procedures and concerning Cyprus’ position on the constitution.

The General Secretary replied that, with regard to Cyprus, it was not possible to go back on a unanimous vote of the Congress on the constitution.

The Secretary General, Agostino Siciliano, concluded: “We now have to move forward!” Given that all the agenda items had been dealt with, the President congratulated this Steering Committee on its success as he deemed it because it had been possible to have an in-depth discussion on all the items.

He thanked all members for their active participation, as well as the interpreters for their work and their effective assistance. He indicated to or reminded members that:

- The next **Steering Committee meeting** was scheduled for **Thursday 6 June 2019** from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- The next FERPA **Executive Committee** meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 20 and Thursday 21 March **2019**.

Henri