

Minutes of the FERPA Steering Committee meeting of 6/12/2018(7th floor ITUH Brussels)**Present:**

Lajos Mayer, (SZEFE), President; Agostino Siciliano, General Secretary; Angeles Briaies (UJP-UGT), Deputy General Secretary; Tino Fumagalli, FNP-CISL, Treasurer; Mireille Paume, UCR-CGT, President of the Women's Committee; Didier Hotte, UCR-FO; Jeannine Martin, CSC-ACV; Livio Melgari, SPI-CGIL; Metka Rokсандic, SUS; Hubert Schwind, UCR-CGT; Werner Thum, ÖGB

Also in attendance at the meeting:

Jessica Montiel and Henri Lourdelle from the FERPA Secretariat

Apologies for absence: Dick De Graaf, FNV

Lajos Mayer, President of FERPA, opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and interpreters and congratulating the members of the Steering Committee for their election.

Before adopting the agenda and dealing with the first item, he suggested that the Committee observe a minute of silence in memory of our friend and colleague Georges Maloteaux from the CSC, who passed away recently and was a staunch European activist and pillar of FERPA, having been present practically since its inception.

Then, after briefly presenting himself, the President asked the Committee to adopt the meeting agenda, which was done after a question was asked as to whether an initial review of the Congress would be carried out during this meeting. As this item was not on the agenda, it was proposed that it be included among the miscellaneous questions.

The Committee having given its approval, the President then gave the floor to **Agostino Siciliano, General Secretary of FERPA**, to present his **proposals for the organisation of FERPA's work**. The General Secretary first stated that it is important to establish rules and guidelines for the next 4 years, in accordance with the decisions made at the Congress. He added that it is important to look at how we operate. He also stated that following his election as General Secretary of FERPA he has resigned as National Secretary of UILP-UIL.

He stressed his hope of working together with everyone.

First of all with the two members of the Secretariat, Jessica and Henri, whom he meets and coordinates with every week...

But also, and above all, with the members of the Steering Committee in the hope that each one will be involved in the handling of a dossier related to our demands. This is why he would like each member to take responsibility for one of the dossiers constituting the main focus points of our demands, as voted for at our last Congress.

To this end, the General Secretary provided each person with an explanatory note for the handling these dossiers. He will send this document to all FERPA organisations.

In this context, the General Secretary specified that he proposed that Henri coordinate the work on the dossiers with each member of the Committee and that Jessica coordinate the activities of FERPA and the General Secretary.

After this preliminary presentation by the General Secretary, the President, Lajos Mayer, opened **the discussion**. This mainly concerned requests for clarification, such as:

- the need, in a second phase, to properly establish the road map;
- the important relationship between taxation and pensions; and
- that taking on these dossiers implies a long-term effort that must result, for each dossier, in a document of two pages maximum that summarises the issues at stake and establishes a working plan.

The President confirmed, in addition to this last point, that the document will indeed need to set out the meaning of the action and the content of the action.

Following the necessary clarifications provided by the General Secretary, the Committee members **accepted** the proposals submitted to them.

The General Secretary thanked the members but nevertheless specified that:

- the expenses incurred in this context will be borne by the organisations represented on the Committee;
- for translations, we will get organised to find a way to do them...

The following organisations participated in the discussion: UCR-CGT, ÖGB, SUS and SPI-CGIL.

The President then asked the **General Secretary, Agostino Siciliano**, to introduce the next item relating to the **FERPA Day of Action**.

First, the General Secretary mentioned **the meeting he had had**, along with Jessica and Henri, a few days ago **with ETUC Confederal Secretary Thiebaut Weber and his Advisor, Ignacio Doreste, who oversee the ETUC Youth Committee**. During this meeting, reference was made to the Protocol drawn up and adopted by FERPA and the Youth Committee which is still, as the General Secretary said, in the making and must be made a reality. He also stressed the relationship between work/employment and pension amounts. While referring to FERPA's voting right, Agostino recalled and thanked the Youth Committee, which voted in favour of this voting right. A first avenue of work - to be confirmed and clarified - was quickly sketched out on what "intergenerational solidarity" actually means. It was also decided that a meeting should be organised between the President of the Youth Committee and the General Secretary.

Having provided this information, the General Secretary addressed the **FERPA Day of Action**.

The General Secretary proposed a dual approach:

- Firstly, drafting and sending to all parties and candidates in the upcoming European elections **a postcard**, with the FERPA logo, setting out our three main demands. A space must be left on each of them to include, if necessary, the more specific demands of the national organisations and their logos.
- As for the **demonstration** itself, the General Secretary proposed taking part in the one that ETUC will organise in April or May 2019 (the date is to be confirmed at the next ETUC

Executive Committee meeting on 18 and 19 December). It is important that FERPA be present in numbers and with substantial visibility.

In the **discussion** following this presentation, while welcoming the principle of holding such a demonstration and even though some might have preferred a specific demonstration, the members insisted above all on FERPA's visibility. Others pointed out that this participation in the ETUC initiative is a good illustration of the principle of solidarity between employees and pensioners, as both face the same difficulties. This is how several people came to mention the problems encountered in their own country and/or the actions taken, which is the case:

- in France, with the “yellow jacket” movement, a protest movement in which many pensioners are participating. Here it must be recalled that throughout Europe pensions are under attack and that, as ETUC General Secretary Luca Visentini said at the last Congress, “the social crisis underpins the political crisis”;
- in Austria, where the ruling Conservative Party does not want to work with the trade unions;
- in Hungary, where the trade unions protested against the reform of the Labour Code;
- in Belgium, where the trade unions (CSC and perhaps FGTB) will organise a special day of study, in March, on the European elections during which the candidates for the elections will be invited to participate.

With regard to the “postcard” initiative, all the speakers welcomed this along with the three specific demands of FERPA. However, the Committee asked for this to be clear and explicit and for the “postcards” template to be sent to organisations early enough to allow them to make arrangements.

In response to these comments, the General Secretary shared in the concerns expressed regarding the importance of FERPA's visibility during the demonstration.

With regard to the “postcard”, the General Secretary proposed moving the next FERPA Steering Committee meeting up to **7 February 2019** so as to be able to work on this subject. As for the languages used on the “postcard”, if the cost of the translation is not too high FERPA will have it translated into 5 languages (French, English, Italian, Spanish and German); otherwise it will be limited to 3 languages.

He also indicated that the “postcard” will be posted on the FERPA website, as will the organisational chart of the different activities taken on by the members of the Steering Committee.

The following organisations participated in the discussion: UCR-FO, CSC, ÖGB, SUS, UJP-UGT and the President.

The President of FERPA gave the floor again to the **General Secretary** to report on the **latest ETUC Steering Committee meeting** of 20 November 2018, in which he took part with Henri and the minutes for which have been sent.

He stressed in particular that FERPA “also feeds on ETUC activities”. As regards the organisation of the ETUC Congress which, he reminded members, will be held in Vienna, Austria from 21 to 24 May 2019, and as regards FERPA's voting rights, he will send members a list of organisations which abstained during the ETUC Mid-Term General Meeting. The remarks FERPA had prepared on this subject during the ETUC Executive Committee meeting of 23 and 24 October will be sent in full to the members of the Executive Committee for the meeting to be held on 18 and 19 December.

He also stated that FERPA would run a stand, as at each ETUC Congress, and that he was counting on the help of retired Austrian colleagues to support the FERPA Secretariat in running and manning this stand.

The General Secretary then asked **Henri** to provide additional information on this Steering Committee meeting.

He first spoke about the **delegations to the ETUC Congress**, specifying that FERPA is entitled to a delegation of 10 participating delegates (including the President and the General Secretary) at the expense of their organisation. It should also be noted that the makeup of delegations must reflect the gender distribution of their affiliates. Specifically, this means that each gender of each delegation must not exceed 1.

Another point was also raised: **finance**. Both ETUC and FERPA have organisations that are lagging behind in paying dues, sometimes for several years. The Steering Committee is opposed to these dues being recognised as “non-value”, i.e. “passed through profit and loss/non-payment”, as they say in French. This is out of consideration for organisations which also face serious cash flow problems due to the financial crisis in particular, but which nevertheless make efforts to pay their dues. If these organisations which have not paid their dues wish to remain full members of ETUC, they are asked:

- to pay their dues for 2018;
- for those due in arrears, to establish a repayment schedule for their debt in agreement with ETUC.

Having provided this information, the President gave the floor again **to the General Secretary** to present the **amendments** that FERPA would like to submit for the ETUC Congress Draft Resolution. Agostino Siciliano insisted that, in these amendments, we must stay within our field, that is, acting as representatives of pensioners and speaking on their behalf and, furthermore, we must respect the rules of ETUC (amendments submitted in English only and limited to 100 words). The amendments were adopted as they stood, after a short discussion on:

- the term “dues” (reserved for public pension schemes) instead of “contributions” (reserved for private pension schemes) (note: distinction between “cotisations” and “contributions” in French) on the one hand; and
- the desire for members to have more time next time to discuss the amendments to the Congress Resolution, on the other.

The General Secretary stated that, for the delegation to the Congress, the FERPA delegation consists, in principle, of the members of the Steering Committee (and thus gender parity is respected). However, finding a male or female replacement within the organisations represented on the Steering Committee is possible if a member of the Steering Committee is not available. Concerning the FERPA stand at the Congress, it must be attractive in the style of FERPA and feature photos, the history of FERPA, etc.

On another matter, he reminded members that FERPA still does not have a provisional budget and that it is up to the Treasurer to draw one up. As for the role of the Financial Audit Committee and its President, it is to check whether the expenses incurred correspond to the planned expenses and to the estimated revenues. If necessary, it must point out to the Executive Committee any anomalies or distortions observed so that the latter can take up its responsibilities.

The following organisations participated: UCR-FO, FNV

Several **miscellaneous questions** were submitted to the Steering Committee.

- First, regarding the letter received from the **Cypriot trade union PA.SY.DY**, which is not happy with the decisions taken regarding its amendments, namely consisting in refusing any specific representation of women within FERPA (gender equality in the committees, existence of a FERPA Women's Committee, etc.), it was noted that both the Working Group on the Revision of the Constitution and the FERPA Congress recognise that these positions are not in line with the values of gender equality defended and advocated for by FERPA and ETUC and that, as written, these proposals are not acceptable. The (unanimous) vote on the constitution by the Congress is sovereign and there can be no question of appointing a new working group on this point. The Steering Committee hopes that PA.SY.DY, notwithstanding this difference, will continue to play the positive role it has played so far within FERPA.
- Regarding the **Congressional process**, this point will be taken up at the next FERPA Executive Committee meeting in March. However, it was noted that the General Secretary of FERPA must not continue to be elected by acclamation, as was suggested by the chair of the Congress. This is neither democratic nor in accordance with the constitution that has just been adopted. With regard to the vote by acclamation, the General Secretary of FERPA, Agostino Siciliano, wished to recall that the chair, before proceeding to the vote, had indicated that everything was ready to hold a secret ballot. However, he added that if no one opposed it, a vote could take place by acclamation. Since no opposition was expressed, the vote took place by acclamation.
- Regarding **membership applications** in FERPA from other organisations (KOSOVO, for example), to date the Secretariat has not received any new "formal" membership applications.

The following organisations participated: ÖGB, UJP-UGT, FNV, SUS

Finally, the next meeting dates of the FERPA committees were set:

- **Thursday 7 February 2019: FERPA Steering Committee**
- **Wednesday 20 March and Thursday 21 March 2019: FERPA Executive Committee**

As all the points on the agenda had been dealt with, the **President of FERPA, Lajos Mayer**, thanked the members of the Steering Committee (and the interpreters) for their active and productive participation. He then wished everyone happy holidays.

Henri