



Report on the FERPA Mid-Term Assembly Athens, 27 and 28 June 2013



FERPA's Mid-Term General Assembly held on 27 and 28 June 2013 in Athens was attended by around 75 delegates from some 35 organizations in 18 countries of the European Union.

The Assembly was opened on 27 June 2013 by the President of FERPA, **Robert RACKE**, who greeted the participants.

Representatives from AGSEE (**Mr Moulinos**), OSTOE (**Mr Pliakos**), POPS (**Ms Baltzopoulos**), the Athens regional authority (**Mr Sgouros**), and Athens City Hall (**Ms Eva**) then welcomed the members of the FERPA.

FERPA's General Secretary, **Bruno COSTANTINI**, reported on economic and trade union developments and FERPA's activities between the Venice Congress and the Mid-Term General Assembly. He focused particularly on the political and general aspects of the ECI (European Citizen's Initiative on long-term care and the rights of persons with increasing care needs / dependency) that FERPA will be launching in the weeks ahead.

The General Secretary then handed over to FERPA Advisor **Henri LOURDELLE** for a detailed PowerPoint presentation – to be sent out to all organizations in English and French after the meeting - on **the ECI process** and the different stages which FERPA's member organizations must work hard at in order to see it through successfully as per their consensus decision at the Venice Congress in May 2011.

A debate ensued in which **Carla CANTONE** (SPI-CGIL Italy); **Dominique FABRE** (CFDT France); **Gilbert LONNOY** (FGTB Belgium); **Isabela LEMOS** (CGTP Portugal); **Panayotis KARAVAS** (SEK Cyprus); **Juan GASULL** (UGT Spain); **Werner THUM** (OGB Austria); **Robert CHIRAT** (UNIR France); **Justo SANTOS** (CC.OO Spain); **Hrvoje DUSPER** (SUH Croatia); **Pierre PRAVATA** (CSC Belgium); **Didier HOTTE** (FO France); **Vladislav MIHAILOV** (FPEP Bulgaria); **Françoise VAGNER** (CGT France); **Agostino SICILIANO** (UILP Italy); **Armando STACCHINI** (FNPS CDLS San Marino); **Luigi FORCELLINI** (FUPS CLSD San Marino); **Anna BALTZOPOULOS** (POPS Greece); and **Maria TRENTIN** (FNP-CISL Italy) all spoke.

The first item on Day Two was FERPA's 20th Anniversary celebrations. Two video messages of greetings and thoughts on pensioner trade unionism in Europe were sent by **Georgios DASSIS** (President of the European EESC's Group II) and **Emilio GABAGLIO** (ETUC General Secretary at the time FERPA was founded in 1993).

Luigina DESANTIS (FERPA General Secretary 1999-2007) and **Bruno COSTANTINI** (current General Secretary) spoke. A head-to-head panel discussion between the two charted FERPA's journey from its origins to the present which they both shaped and witnessed. Luigina recalled that FERPA had "a voice" but "no vote" in ETUC governing bodies. Bruno also mentioned issues with the German unions with which contacts had to be kept up. He ended with a call for members to stand united.

Then, **ETUC General Secretary Bernadette SEGOL** addressed the FERPA General Assembly, citing the previous day's European Council at which - exceptionally for such a Council - she had been given a hearing. She reviewed the ETUC's big agenda points - the need to prioritize investment and jobs and have a real "social contract". She voiced her concerns about the big question mark currently hanging over the European blueprint, and how it was playing into the rise of soapbox oratory which could have practical outcomes on the next European Parliament elections in 2014.

Bernadette stressed the great commitment of the ETUC and its member organizations, which includes FERPA, to battling the crisis hitting workers in the EU, particularly the young, old and unemployed.

She also said that some ETUC member organizations had asked the last Executive Committee for the ETUC to launch its own ECI on "investing in jobs"; she was at present canvassing them on their ability and commitment to engage with it...

Turning to the FERPA ECI, she said that *"the ETUC stands with you"* and that political opportunities (ETUC Executive Committee) would arise to make member organizations aware of the importance of the FERPA initiative.

The ETUC General Secretary then answered questions from **Pierre PRAVATA** (CSC Belgium); **Werner THUM** (OGB Austria); **Dick DE GRAAF** (FNV Netherlands); **Attilio RIMOLDI** (FNP CISL Italy); **François THIERRY** (CGT France); **Dominique FABRE** (CFDT France); and **Justo SANTOS** (CC.OO Spain).

The general debate was also informed by contributions from **André CLAVELOU** (UNSA France) and **Ioannis MYLONAS** (OSTOE Greece) who spoke about the difficult social situation in Greece in the current crisis.

The 28 June session concluded with the unanimous adoption of a **political declaration** by the General Assembly (*sent to member organizations separately*).

Having been informed about the serious situation in Greece, the delegates also adopted a political declaration of support (*attached*).

As specified and called for in the document adopted by FERPA's February Executive Committee, the Assembly discussed the situation of the **FERPA Women's Committee** and elected its new Chair. The Secretariat having received only a single candidacy within the deadline set, delegates voted unanimously by show of hands for **Françoise VAGNER** (France), who was therefore elected as the new Chair of the FERPA Women's Committee. Françoise thanked the delegates and presented her outline work programme as called for in the policy document adopted by the FERPA Executive Committee.

The meeting concluded with a report by FERPA's **Financial Audit Committee** (*attached*) on FERPA's mid-term and mid-2013 financial position and accounts.