

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Executive Committee of FERPA

March 17-18, 2021

- 74 participants

The President of FERPA, Lajos MAYER, opened the meeting by welcoming the members of the Executive Committee and by underlining the important work that has been done by FERPA in the past period.

He then proceeded to the approval of the agenda. The representative of the Cypriot union PA.SY.DY intervened to protest that his request for a discussion on the statutes, which he had sent, had been ignored and he announced that he was leaving the meeting. The President replied that this point would be dealt with in the Secretary General's communications.

The FNV representative said that the minutes of previous Executive Committee meetings had not been approved. And he pointed out that according to the statutes, everyone has the right to propose items for discussion at the Executive Committee, but that it is the General Secretary who decides on the agenda.

All this being said, the agenda was adopted unanimously, minus the two votes against by the Cypriots.

The Women's Committee meeting was then held.

At the end of the meeting, the President gave the floor to the Secretary General of FERPA, Agostino SICILIANO for his Communications.

The Secretary General recalled and justified the campaign for vaccination that FERPA had launched. He insisted on the need for European coordination to ensure that no one is forgotten and to reassure citizens who need to be vaccinated. This is also essential for economic recovery. We must not forget the isolated, hence the FERPA poster.

How to act in this context, he asked. The path taken must lead to concrete results. Investments should not only be made in infrastructure, but also in people to give them back their dignity. Digital technology must be made available to older people, because it has a huge impact on their lives. In addition to the ETUC's fight for a minimum income, we must also fight to obtain a minimum pension above the poverty line throughout Europe. Thanks to the work done by the members of the Executive Committee with the dossiers, FERPA is in a position to respond to the challenges posed at European level. Concerning the Green Paper on demography, launched by the Commission, work has been undertaken at ETUC level, notably on the life cycle. This point is on the agenda of the next ETUC Executive Committee. But FERPA, which of course shares the positions defended by the ETUC, will also make its own contribution. The Executive Committee is invited to send to the Secretariat its contributions, so

that they can be integrated in the FERPA response, on the specific questions concerning the elderly (points 7-10-11, in particular).

On 4 March, the Commission published its Action Plan for the implementation of the European Social Rights Framework. It is necessary to work on this in a concrete way and to obtain that the European Social Rights Base is included in the Treaty in order to force the most recalcitrant Member States to implement it. On 6 May, the Social Summit in Porto will take place, organised by the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council. The Action Plan of the Socle is the Commission's contribution to the Porto Social Summit. On 9 May, Europe Day, the Conference on the Future of Europe will be launched. The ETUC and its organisations intend to be involved in this Conference for a more social Europe. We need to go beyond the Stability Pact to 'boost' growth. The importance of working people must be recognised. The ETUC has created alliances to reflect on European taxation. The Commission announced an initiative on gender pay transparency. A letter co-signed by the Secretary General of FERPA and the President of the Women's Committee, Mireille PAUME was sent. The Secretary General also mentioned the unitary demonstration organised in Rome, in which he participated on behalf of FERPA. He also mentioned the questionnaire sent by the ETUC to its members on "The unity and the future of the ETUC". FERPA had responded to this questionnaire by saying that the ETUC must be more inclusive. Because the questions concern the whole ETUC, and therefore also FERPA. FERRPA insisted on the right to a dignified retirement. He mentioned the FERPA Mid-Term Conference in October, which he hoped would be held in person. If not, it will be in virtual mode, as it will not be possible to postpone it, as the Congress will be held the following year. The Secretariat met with the TUC. It was a very positive meeting. This organisation has paid its debt. It confirmed its wish to remain in FERPA. They committed themselves to participate more actively in FERPA activities and to increase their membership. He then mentioned the resignation of the Slovenian colleague, Metka ROKSANDIC, from the Steering Committee and the Executive Committee, which was sent without further explanation. He then concluded his communications with PA.SY.DY's request concerning the statutes. He stressed once again that all the points raised by this organisation had already been dealt with by the Steering Committee. This same Committee stressed that the Congress had already studied these points and voted, except for the question of rotation within the same organisation. He proposed that a small working group be set up during the Mid-Term Conference on this issue, to be led by Dick DE GRAAF, who had already given his agreement.

The President then opened the debate, pointing out that the time limit for each intervention was 5 minutes.

Some interventions thanked for the information received. The interventions on the FERPA Mid-Term Conference insisted that it should be held face-to-face, although some conceded that if the security measures are not met, it will have to be virtual. The vaccination campaign is generally well received. Vaccination is the solution. But let's face it, it's quite a feat that in 12 months we've managed to

develop such a vaccine. The process of distributing the vaccine is very complex. The distribution key between the Member States is done at European level, but the distribution is done at national level. We have to make sure that the vaccine gets to the people concerned and not the other way around. We need to think about the elderly, who are the most vulnerable and, in some countries, forgotten. Other speakers added that it is important to underline the weight of the laboratories in negotiations concerning the results of their work. The first to be served are those who can pay the most, whereas vaccines should be a common good, accessible to all and free of charge: Europe must be one of sharing and solidarity. Some also point out that in some countries, the pandemic and vaccines are taking centre stage and governments are taking advantage of this to push through their reforms, leading to revolts against the measures taken, often fuelled by far-right movements. A nagging question also comes up in the debate: who will pay the bill for this crisis? We must oppose the fact that it is the workers and the retired. The latter have already contributed: in some countries pensions have been cut, in others they have been "frozen" for several years.

Retired people are entitled to their pensions because they have contributed all their lives. There is a difference between "social assistance" and "right" to a pension. Why not make people pay according to their assets, others asked. These questions need to be considered. Concerning the Green Paper, for many, it is important that FERPA makes its voice heard alongside those of citizens who will also respond, because there are dangerous aspects that are mentioned, such as the lengthening of working life. The Green Paper focuses more on costs than on the rights of the elderly. We need to think about a more "human rights" approach. Today, economic freedoms still take precedence over social rights. We must ensure a dignified life for the elderly and therefore promote human rights in ageing policies and combat "ageism", in other words discrimination on the basis of age, as has been seen in access to care during this pandemic. Concerning the European Socle of Social Rights, the action plan proposed by the Commission is considered very weak. More commitment is needed from ETUC and FERPA and young and older people should be involved in the debates. Older people are best placed to talk about the frailty and vulnerability of older people and health care and its proximity. Therefore, the ETUC must make better and more use of FERPA. It is important to involve the pensioners' unions to be able to provide solidarity-based responses. With regard to digital technology, several speakers stressed that this could be an interesting development. However, they added, it should not be forgotten that the elderly are neither equipped nor trained and that effective support must therefore be put in place. Finally, the Croatian unions thanked the few FERPA organisations that had shown financial solidarity, which had enabled the Croatian union to rehouse two families of retired people. But from all the speeches, one sad observation emerged: that there was a lack of European coordination in the management of the pandemic and of the vaccines, which left a great deal to be desired.

In his response, the Secretary General first thanked those who had recognised FERPA's work during the period. He agreed with the interventions that raised the issue of multinationals in vaccination. We must demand the sharing of patents, as it is a common good, and therefore review the rule of intellectual property. Vaccination must be global. With regard to the Green Paper and the action plan of the European Social

European Social Rights, the concerns expressed are those of the ETUC and FERPA. It is necessary to ensure an adequate pension, which is a fundamental value, and to give dignity to the elderly, who should not be considered as "costs" but as "people". The next meeting of the Executive Committee should address these costs. At the same meeting, the ETUC General Secretary will intervene to explain what the ETUC won at the Porto Social Summit and the Conference on the Future of Europe. Retired people have already paid the bills for past crises. They need to be involved in the economic recovery, including the right to a minimum pension across Europe. Debt over time can be reduced, with development, but the social dimension must not be forgotten. The Secretary General concluded by noting that sometimes he feels a bit alone: it is important to support fundamental rights in each country. He added that it is also important, in the current period, to move forward "hand in hand". He concluded by thanking the Executive Committee for the work done together.

The following organisations took part in the debate: UNIR-CFE CGC, UCR-FO, the President of FERPA, FNP-CISL, FNV, UNIA, the President of the Women's Committee, OGBL, CGIL, ÖGB, UCR-CGT, UIL-UILP, SUH, UJOP-UGT, est CGTP-IN, UCR-CGT, USO

The President, Lajos MAYER, then gave the floor to Henri, who was in charge of coordinating the dossiers, to present the organisation of the discussion.

He reminded the meeting that this was a vast dossier launched by the Secretary General and he wished, first of all, to thank the members of the Management Committee who had accepted the responsibility of leading it and for the work that had been done, despite the difficulties, the pandemic, certainly, but also and above all the difficulty that the members of the Committee had had in gathering the information requested. Indeed, not all the organisations had replied or had sometimes replied very partially. However, he thanked those who had sent in their contributions, which had enabled the work to be carried out.

He then presented the working method that would be followed, as agreed with the members of the Steering Committee:

- Presentation of the dossier by each person for a maximum of 25 minutes, focusing on the demands and proposals for action, without forgetting the gender dimension.
- Then, for 5 minutes, depending on the time allocated by the President, each organisation will be able to intervene and give its reactions, proposals, etc.

- The members of the Steering Committee will then respond
- And Henri will conclude by indicating what remains to be done between now and the next meetings: Steering Committee, Executive Committee and Mid-term GA.

Concerning the issue of taxation and intergenerational solidarity, they appear to be of a different nature. They would be dealt with specifically, particularly with regard to taxation, in conjunction with the ETUC, which had initiated a discussion with other European organisations.

The floor was then given to Dick DE GRAAF (FNV) who had been in charge of the dossier on poverty among older people. He began by thanking Henri for his introduction and presentation. He then indicated that he had only received 7 responses with proposals on this issue, but that this did not seem to him to be sufficient and significant support from FERPA organisations to launch a specific campaign on poverty among older people. Indeed, poverty does not only concern the elderly or retired people, but also families, young people, etc... It had not, therefore, seemed useful to pursue this proposal. As Didier is in charge of the pension file and of pensions that allow people to live in dignity, the separate campaign must be withdrawn and he is ready to join his file and collaborate. We should also not forget the ETUC project, SocialAll, which has involved 12 different countries and in which FERPA is involved. The conclusions of this project will be drawn at the end of May. We will have to integrate them into our work. Concerning the other files, they should benefit from : (triple « A » in french)

- Access to law
- Availability
- Financial accessibility.

In the short debate that followed this presentation, the issue of poverty was emphasised, and not only among the elderly. In some countries, such as Portugal, 30% of workers are poor. The solution is to improve wages to combat poverty and have decent pensions to live in dignity. And Dick wanted to clarify his speech: he did not want to give the impression that poverty did not exist in Europe, but he had stressed that he had not received support for a specific campaign on old age poverty.

The following organisations intervened in the debate: UNIR-CFE CGC, UNSA, FNV and Interreformados CGTP-IN

The President then gave the floor to Didier HOTTE, UCR-FO, to present his dossier on pensions.

Didier began by saying that he had received replies from 10 countries representing 19 affiliated organisations. He did not go back over the analysis but went straight to the demands:

- The freezing of the retirement age: In accordance with the recommendations of the Commission's Green Paper, the horizon is constantly moving backwards, but for FERPA, this is to the detriment of health and being able to enjoy retirement. A balance must be found between the ages.

- Indexation of pensions to guarantee purchasing power through a system linked either to the evolution of wages or to prices. We are experiencing an erosion of the purchasing power of pensions.

- A minimum pension for every pensioner in Europe above the poverty line

-Reduction of the inequality of pensions between men and women by recognising career breaks in the calculation of pensions

- A greater role for pensioners' trade unions in achieving these demands.

One question remains under debate: should a "basket of goods and services" be established?

Didier then moved on to proposals for action:

- To publish a leaflet in all the languages of the EU setting out and popularising these demands.

- Produce a video recording to be distributed on social networks.

- Prepare a press kit for national organisations.

- Decide on a European day of action to inform and demand.

Following this presentation, the President opened the debate.

All the speakers thanked Didier for his speech and expressed their agreement with his proposals, particularly with regard to raising the retirement age or introducing a minimum pension throughout the European Union. However, several of them wished to make clarifications and indicated, for example, that continuing to raise the legal retirement age penalises young people facing unemployment. Account should also be taken of arduous work and older people should be allowed to enjoy their retirement. Others also stressed that there will be no adequate pensions if there are no good jobs, it is a question of intergenerational solidarity. The sustainability of pension systems can only be ensured by good jobs. Others proposed to go further than the demand for a minimum pension above the poverty line: the objective is to reach the level of the minimum wage. As to whether pensions should be indexed to wage trends or to prices, it was proposed that a mixed mechanism be considered.

As regards the introduction of a "basket of goods and services", some see the risk of dealing with the problem in a partial way, while several others recall that this is already a long-standing demand and see it as an important element in defining the minimum pension. Of course, everyone agreed on the need to take into account periods of childcare or care for the elderly in the calculation of the amount of the pension. A proposal was also made to introduce, as is the case in

Belgium, a "reverse mortgage" mechanism, which allows the elderly person to mortgage their house, but at the same time receive the corresponding sum of money. Finally, in some countries, such as Italy, it seems that retired people are taxed more heavily, and there is therefore a call for tax homogeneity. A pension system for all generations should be called for. We should also look at unmarried couples, this concerns both men and women. Finally, if priorities had to be defined between the different issues, pensions should be the priority.

As far as the proposals for action are concerned, there is agreement, particularly with regard to the campaign on social networks by means of a video.

The following organisations took part in the debate: FGTB/ABVV, SPI-CGIL, UNSA, UIL-UILP, FNV, UNIA, USO, ÖGB, Interreformados CGTP-IN, UCR-FO

The President then gave the floor to Angeles BRIALES (UJP-UGTE) to present her dossier on energy poverty.

Angeles began by saying that many measures had been taken in this area, but that more work was needed, as there were many challenges to be met. She recalled that many countries had not responded to the questionnaire sent out, including, in her opinion, those most affected. It would have been important to have the point of view of these countries. The problem was the financial cost of access to energy in some countries and the lack of infrastructure for distribution.

Some demands are proposed:

- Everyone should receive financial support to access energy
- Organise sessions dedicated to energy issues...

as well as proposals for action:

- Identify diseases related to energy poverty
- Intervene in old people's homes, through inspections to check that comfort conditions are respected, because in some of them, hot water is turned down to save money
- Limit fuel poverty by developing education on the subject
- Launch a general campaign to address these issues and gather support from the Institutions.
- Have a strong enough slogan.

The President then opened the debate.

Members agreed that energy poverty is a part of poverty. It was also suggested that we align our demands with Pillar 20 of the European Social Rights Framework on the "right to access to essential services", but with a view to those who cannot afford to access them. For all members, the watchword is "energy poverty must end". The focus should be on families with children and/or elderly people.

In all countries, lower tariffs or bonuses should be introduced for families with the least resources. Attention should also be paid to retirement homes, whose needs have been highlighted by the pandemic. Finally, there is a need to define a minimum benefit for energy supply. More generally, the proposal was made to have a platform summarising our demands to be disseminated externally and an action plan.

The following organisations took part in the debate: FNV, SPI-CGIL, Interreformados CGTP-IN, UCR-FO.

The President then gave the floor to Eliane DE DOBBELEER, CSC/ACV, to present her dossier on health and institutions for the elderly.

For Eliane, today, talking about "health" inevitably means talking about COVID 19. And when we talk about institutions for the elderly, we talk about privatisation, commercialisation, financial profitability, everything that takes precedence over the concern for the well-being of the residents. The development of productivity is done at the expense of care and working conditions of the staff. This increases social inequalities and reduces universal access to care. States must resume their role as social regulators. Moreover, ageism has increased, which has also increased inequalities in access to health care. She added that a paradigm shift was needed.

Eliane then presented several demands:

- Universal access to quality care
- Change the paradigm. In other words, it is not more money in health care that is needed to have a quality of life, but investment in all the other social determinants that have a more global impact
- Fighting discrimination against older people, in the field of care and the pandemic in particular
- Investing in health prevention, buying local, avoiding waste, etc.
- Improving the working conditions of health care personnel, both financially and qualitatively;
- guaranteeing the number of care staff in line with the workload in hospitals and long-term care homes;
- Support the demand for the recognition of Covid 19 as an occupational disease.
- Fight against the commercialisation of the health sector in both care and accommodation and denounce the commercial abuses that increase social inequalities.
- To demand that cancer screening be free of charge and without age limit in all countries.
- Demand that regional planning take account of the elderly.

- A different type of reception and accommodation to offer better quality care and support, more humane, more secure, avoiding the risks of spreading pathologies and better working conditions for staff.
- The reorientation of the offer by limiting the number of acute hospitals in favour of the offer of chronic care for dependent elderly people

It also proposes several actions:

- On International Health Day on 7 April, whose slogan is "Our health is not for sale": participate in and support the actions carried out by the European Network against the commercialisation and privatisation of health. "
- Join the European Citizens' Initiative: "No profit on the pandemic. Rights to vaccines and treatments" and get as many people as possible to sign the petition.
- Launch an awareness campaign: "Let's all eat, eat to live, buy responsibly and respect the environment".
- Support and/or promote campaigns such as the fight against abuse, for healthy food, against global warming...
- Seek and intensify cooperation with organisations working to improve the living conditions of older people.
- Take advantage of the International Day of Older People on 1 October to communicate publicly (leaflets, press conference, communication on social networks, etc.) in relation to the list of demands that has been drawn up in the context of the dossiers.
- And to make proposals in collaboration with the other files without forgetting the specificities linked to women

Following this presentation, the President opened the debate.

It was also suggested to align our demands with pillars 16: "The right to health care" and 18: "The right to long-term care" of the European Social Rights Framework. Everyone should be part of a dignified life, but what does "dignified" mean, it was pointed out. There is broad agreement to defend universal access to health care, without discrimination on the basis of age, as is the case in some countries, where patients are sorted out for treatment on the basis of age. There was agreement that we need to invest in health systems and that the state has a role to play. Some people supported Eliane's comments by saying that perhaps we do not need more resources, but that we must invest in other determinants. There are answers to the problem of dependency, especially for the elderly, so that they can lead a dignified life. This means opposing the commercialisation of residential homes. It is also necessary to set and quantify the number of care staff to counteract "just-in-time" work. Attention must be paid to states that devote little resources to autonomy. The development of home care is a key element in giving older people the possibility to live at home. This also implies fighting against the consolidation of hospitals and medical deserts.

We also need to redefine the roles of nursing homes, which must evolve with the help of new technologies. We must denounce the lobbying of investors, which encourages promiscuity in institutions and leads to deaths. Alternatives to such accommodation must be developed. On a broader scale, housing adapted to the elderly must also be designed and urban redevelopment projects developed. EU funds should be used to invest in locally rooted health systems with "health hubs" and community-based facilities. The pandemic has highlighted the weaknesses and failings of European health systems and shown the importance of public health. The welfare state is a key element of our Europe.

Many spoke out against the use of posted workers to compensate for the lack of staff in health systems, asking that this be denounced because they are hired on a minimal basis, with mini contracts and no training. This practice is real "social dumping" and devalues the profession. We must not forget that health care is linked to regional planning, to the availability or otherwise of transport, etc. When we talk about access to health care, we must also be aware that in many places it is difficult to consult specialists, and there are sometimes very long waiting periods, particularly in certain specialities. There is an urgent need to integrate ageing into public policies. Some people also denounced the fact that in certain Eastern European countries there is a shortage of doctors and/or specialists, because there is a brain drain from the East to the West.

Finally, Eliane intervened in the debate to make it clear that when she spoke of a paradigm shift, she also meant that we should stop investing in acute care but rather in long-term care. This intervention provoked some strong disagreement, citing, for example, the need for investment in resuscitation beds in the case of COVID 19.

The following organisations took part in the debate: FNV, SPI-CGIL, UNSA, FGTB-ABVV, UCR-FO, UIL-UILP, CFTD, the President, CSC-ACV

The floor was then given to Hubert SCHWIND (UCR-CGT) to present his dossier on housing.

Hubert pointed out that more than 80% of Europeans would like to be able to age in their own home. This demand has a major impact on the design and development of housing. In view of this wish, it is absolutely necessary to first adapt existing housing facilities for older people. We must first identify and investigate the different groups of older people who are likely to have different priorities with regard to housing problems, alternatives and solutions. The issue of housing is not, therefore, about building new adaptable housing, but about finding ways to adapt existing housing, by demanding additional allowances to cover the costs of adaptation, as well as for home care. It is necessary to include in the policy debate: the professionals, the representatives of the first concerned, i.e. the elderly, in order to know their situations, their needs and their proposals as well as their financial possibilities before embarking on a project of adapted and affordable housing. And if the elderly person resides in a specialised establishment, it is necessary to provide for appropriate medical care, with

sufficient staff and especially quality care assistants. This must remain affordable and geographically accessible to all. We need to move from a curative to a preventive vision. Housing policy is still too much geared towards yesterday's needs, and not enough towards today's needs, let alone tomorrow's. We also need to change the way we look at older people and help them to change the way they look at themselves. In reality, this housing issue is a cross-cutting one: the inequality of pensions and their weakness sometimes leads to inequalities in housing.

What demands then?

- One main demand: the right to affordable, quality and adapted housing
- Adapting existing housing to the elderly and home support and finding the necessary allowances
- Involve professionals and older people and/or their representatives (trade unions, associations, etc.) to find out about their needs and financial possibilities
- As mentioned above, in institutions for the elderly, there must be adequate medical care, with sufficient staff, including good quality care assistants. These establishments must remain affordable and geographically accessible to all.

What proposals for action?

- Intervene at national, local or European level, with administrations and politicians so that they assume their responsibilities and make the issue of affordable and decent housing a growing and daily concern
- We need to put together press kits and make videos on social networks to popularise our demands
- Consider mobilisations in Brussels or Strasbourg?
- FERPA and its organisations must take proactive action for the right to appropriate and dignified housing for older people.

Following this presentation, the President opened the debate.

On this issue too, it was proposed that a link be made with Pillar 19 of the European Social Rights Framework: "For those in need, access to good quality social housing or housing assistance". Many agreed that housing is also a 'cross-cutting' issue. The gender issue is also important: how can women, when they are alone, continue to live at home and meet their specific needs? One could also consider "alternative" types of housing, with small houses for example, but offering services to the elderly who live there. New housing should take into account the relationships between residents who are of different ages, with shared and private spaces, linked to new technologies: wanting to live together in an adapted and secure environment. It is about a shared social life with the creation of new jobs. It is also possible to think about "intergenerational co-housing" by renting part of the elderly person's home to students, for example.

It is also necessary to think about adapting the interior of housing, respecting environmental constraints, in connection with energy poverty. We also need to facilitate access to social housing for the elderly. However, they are often not given priority. It was pointed out that there is a lack of knowledge about housing rights. It is necessary to demand financial contributions to adapt housing.

The following organisations took part in the debate: FGTB/ABVV, Interreformados CGTP-IN, FNV, UIL-UILP, UNIR-CFECGC, UCR-CFDT, UCR-FO

Following all these interventions, the President gave the floor back to each member of the Management Committee so that they could react to the comments made on each of the dossiers.

Dick first of all said that he shared his file with Didier's and that he was ready to help him.

Didier said that he had noted down everything that had been said, that he would try to integrate as much as possible and that he would rephrase it all in writing. On the question of age, he noted that there was a consensus on "freezing" it.

As for the indexation of pensions, it should therefore be at least "on inflation. Everyone also seems to agree that there should be an EU-wide minimum pension, which should be the same for everyone and at least 110% of the poverty line. There is a great inequality between women and men in terms of pensions and we must find ways of reducing these differences, for example by taking into account periods of pregnancy, child rearing, periods of care for elderly or disabled parents, what are sometimes called "carers" and why not introduce an "educational" bonus, as in Switzerland? In a word, we need to define systems to compensate for the impact on women's paid work. Attention should also be paid to the amount of the surviving spouse's pension in order to maintain the standard of living and avoid falling into poverty. It would seem that the loan on the property (mortgage) should be ruled out. As for the "basket of goods and services", it appears that its content is not sufficiently precise.

To sum up, we must try to have a whole, without focusing on the details, also leaving the organisations a translation in each of their countries.

Eliane said that she too had taken note of the speeches. She noted that the common thread was financing: it was necessary to influence governments' budgetary choices so that people were not slaves to the economy. When she spoke of not investing in acute care, she did not mean that it should be reduced, but that care for the elderly should be developed. She will summarise her presentation and work with Hubert on the common aspects of elderly care.

Hubert indicated that there were proposals that he would integrate and that it was necessary to make the link with the European Socle of Social Rights.

The specific housing needs of women also needed to be taken into account, and he would also integrate students, particularly with regard to access to social housing and the interior design of housing, taking into account new products. There was also a need to rethink the architecture of new buildings.

Henri summarised everything by asking those responsible for the issues to send him their proposals, summarising the demands and being as precise as possible about the possible and conceivable actions. He will synthesise them into a document that will be submitted to the Management Committee and the Executive Committee for presentation and adoption at the mid-term GA.

Other colleagues also asked for the floor to say that they agreed with Henri's suggestions and the proposed course of action (Management Committee, Executive Committee and GA) and asked him to come up with a "platform" that was united and as consensual as possible. It was also requested to insist on the fact that pensions should not be considered as an expense and, therefore, to insist also on dignity. The focus should be on entitlement and not on financial viability: pensions are a conquest and a "social" expense. Continuing the reflection on how to present the results of our discussions, three points are proposed:

- Distinguish between what is feasible at national and European level
- Strike a good balance between the expression of principles and the particular rights of application at national level
- In the declaration of the Mid-term GA, everyone should be able to identify with it.

Many agreed that a distinction should be made between the national and the European level and that it was not necessary to get into "too specific", nor to make any reference to budgetary issues. We must defend pensions based on law.

The following organisations took part in this last short debate: USO, ÖGBL, SPI-CGIL, UNIA, UCR-FO

The President then gave the floor to the Secretary General of FERPA to close the discussion.

He noted that we are building a platform with good opportunities to succeed at national and European level. In other words, to build a platform that can be useful to Europe, that can influence the directives and that can be supported at national level. This is what FERPA is calling for, what we need and what is included in the platform: a minimum pension and "additional" income for retired people in the form of housing, health, transport, etc.

As for taxation, it must be dealt with in conjunction with the European level and the ETUC.

He also returns to two points:

- The "mortgage loan": in Italy, every time, this translates into "putting the hands in the pockets of retired people".
- Intergenerational solidarity: the agreement with the ETUC Youth Committee must be revived.

As far as the revaluation of pensions is concerned, it is a right that belongs to us, he concluded.

The President thanked the General Secretary and added that we were faced with various problems that we had to overcome, as in his country, Hungary, where proposals had been made to improve the situation of the elderly.

The dates of the next FERPA meetings were clarified:

- The Steering Committee is scheduled for 6 May
- The Executive Committee on 16 and 17 June, during which the General Secretary of the ETUC would explain what had happened in Porto and at the Conference on the Future of Europe

The President then closed the Executive Committee meeting held in virtual mode by thanking the members for their active participation and the interpreters and the ETUC team for their help. He also felt that there had been good dialogue over the two days.

Henri