

Minutes of the FERPA Executive Committee – ZOOM- December 1 and 2, 2021

Once the technical information had been given and the ETUC code of conduct had been recalled, the President of FERPA, Lajos MAYER, opened the meeting by welcoming all the members. He asked if there was any other business to add to the agenda. It was proposed to add the report on the activities of the ETUC Working Group, of which the President was a member, concerning the Conference on the Future of Europe. With this addition, the agenda was adopted as well as the minutes of the FERPA Executive Committee meeting of 16 and 17 June 2021.

The Women's Committee meeting then opened. Hubert began by excusing the absence of the President, Mireille PAUME, who had been given new and important responsibilities within her French organisation, the CGT, and who was therefore very busy with the preparations for the big demonstration to be held in France the following day. The General Secretary Agostino SICILIANO thanked Hubert for this information, but pointed out that the behaviour of the President of the Women's Committee was not respectful towards her colleagues in FERPA, nor towards herself. She should have alerted the General Secreta beforehand, even though it seems that at the last minute, i.e. that very morning, she sent an e-mail to the President to inform him of her unavailability to attend the meeting. Concerning the Women's Committee, the question is how to animate it? Several FERPA members complained that what had been done so far was not the right way to proceed.

After these introductory exchanges, the President opened the debate

First of all, the French speakers said that they were sorry, as French trade union organisations, about what was happening. The question was whether Mireille, with her new responsibilities, would be able to continue her work as President of the Committee. All the organisations that then intervened also expressed their deep disappointment at Mireille's absence. Several also pointed out that this was not the first time she had not attended our meetings. Some also suggested that a change in our working methods should be addressed. Others also said that this morning we should take stock of what we can do together, by making an inventory of the main subjects on which we could agree. Several people insisted that we should at least have a bureau to make up for the President's absences. This bureau should be composed of 5 representatives from different countries. But if we don't get organised, we won't work. There is no shortage of topics. For example, the question of women "carers" was raised, their isolation, their lack of protection and the denial of their recognition, and even the lack of understanding of those around them. It is therefore necessary to set up a real organisation, as provided for in the texts. It is necessary to get out of this impasse, which is embarrassing for everyone, he added. The question was also raised as to what means were available to the Women's Committee to be able to meet virtually.

The General Secretary intervened to react to these interventions. First, he said that he just wanted to listen to the members, but he agreed that there was an urgent need to improve the functioning of the Women's Committee. The revival of FERPA that he had initiated after his election had been confirmed at the last Mid-Term Assembly: FERPA now had a Manifesto and the members of the Executive Committee had committed themselves.

FERPA is not just about the Secretary General, but around him there are good people who are committed to FERPA. We have to see how to make the best use of our resources and technologies.

We also need to put our concerns on the table of the ETUC, we need to integrate more the FERPA Women's Committee in the ETUC. The work done is not well known outside.

FERPA needs the Women's Committee. Mireille had asked to give a hand to the Women's Committee, and this is what Jessica has done. For example, as far as the poster is concerned, it was she who gave ideas to the Secretariat and after discussion they agreed and so this year's campaign poster was proposed. But in reality, and this is her responsibility, it is up to the President to make working proposals. A meeting took place over a year ago between the Secretariat and the President. She indicated that she wanted to set up a "working group" and she was to suggest how to do it. But nothing has been done since then... The General Secretary added that he had not been happy with the fact that the President had not informed him of her absence that day. The General Secretary is not a mere spectator. He announced that he would meet with the French organisations as soon as possible, a proposal that was supported by the members. Finally, the UCR-CGT representative indicated that he would pass on all these observations to his colleague, Mireille.

The following organisations took part in the debate: UCR-CFDT, UNIR-CFE-CGC, UILP-UIL, UCR-F0, SPI-CGIL, FNV, CC. OO, UNIA, UCR-CGT.

The President then gave the floor back to the General Secretary for his communications.

He began by emphasising the difficult context in which this meeting was taking place, particularly with the appearance of the new variant, which was having a major impact, especially in the northern countries. However, he noted the positive point that vaccination is progressing well, particularly in Italy. Vaccines are still useful to avoid the serious consequences of the virus. However, it is important to be able to vaccinate in other continents, especially in Africa. We need to convince people to get vaccinated to protect everyone's health and to boost the economy.

Another important topic for the General Secretary was also discussed: the labour market. In some countries the labour market is in great difficulty, despite the efforts and good will to revive the economy. Some sectors are closed. He reminded the meeting that the Financial Committee had not been able to meet and therefore it had not been possible to adopt the 2019 and 2020 balance sheets. But a virtual meeting will be organised.

Looking back at the Mid-Term General Assembly, he felt that the work done had been of high quality and that it had been carried out efficiently. The Manifesto was adopted, even if he regrets that due to the opposition of one organisation, all the names of FERPA member organisations could not be added. The guidelines had been defined and it was now time to work on implementing them.

The General Secretary of ETUC, in his intervention at the GA, said that he greatly appreciated the work done by FERPA and he insisted on the quality of our website.

He then reported on the ETUC Mid-term Conference, held in a hybrid format in Lisbon on 8, 9 and 10 November 2021, which he attended together with President Lajos MAYER. The meeting was very interesting, we wanted to have a debate in a positive spirit. The President put on the table the problems faced by retired people in this post-COVID economy. The Secretary General, for his part, took part in the meeting organised by the ETUC Youth Committee the day before the opening of the Conference. He met many positive echoes from the youth side. But the most important point for FERPA was the debate on the ETUC statutes and FERPA's voting rights.

The words of the General Secretary at the opening of this debate seemed encouraging. In particular, he spoke of a more inclusive ETUC, based on solidarity between all its members and on the possibility of expressing different opinions...

With regard to the modification of the statutes, and the question of the "majority" in the votes cast, the question raised was that "abstentions" should not be taken into account in the final count, and above all that they should not be considered as negative votes, but as neutral votes. The General Secretary of FERPA took part in the discussion, which was important, supporting the position of the General Secretary of the ETUC, stressing in particular that it was a question of democracy within the ETUC. The amendment was however rejected, as abstentions are still considered as negative votes. The other point under discussion concerned the voting rights of FERPA. The General Secretary proceeded in a different way in his intervention. He mainly talked about inclusiveness. He asked to rethink the ETUC in an inclusive way, as FERPA wants to share its work in the service of retired people. However, the result of the vote was very sad for FERPA: it obtained fewer positive votes than on previous occasions and did not even reach a majority (199 positive votes, i.e. 45.75%, 117 votes against, i.e. 26.9%, 119 abstentions, i.e. 27.36%). This was the first time that electronic voting was used and it was clear how the organisations positioned themselves in this vote. However, with sadness, surprise and questions, the result of the vote shows that Confederations whose pensioners' organisations are members of FERPA, or even of the Steering Committee, either "abstained" (CC.OO, CSC, FGTB) or voted against (CFTC, CGT, CGTP, Solidarnosc, ÖGB, TUC). And despite what the ETUC General Secretary had said, concerning the ETUC Secretariat's support for FERPA's right to vote, Isabelle SCHOEMANN of the Secretariat voted against. This result shows that many organisations do not support what FERPA is doing and asks several questions: Why don't we meet them directly? They don't believe in us. We need to think seriously about this problem. We need to resubmit our application automatically. How do we prepare for the next ETUC Congress? How do we go about solving this problem, starting with ourselves? Participating in FERPA means sharing a European approach. You have to listen to others and then do your best. We talk for hours, but we don't listen to each other and we can't determine a real European policy. We need to start a new method to go to the Congress. We are at the beginning of a long battle

However, the General Secretary noted points of satisfaction, such as the work carried out, particularly with the Manifesto. In Rome, there was a big demonstration, organised by the three Italian confederations, which had a lot of visibility and the FERPA Manifesto was printed in a thousand copies and distributed during this demonstration.

Following this intervention, the President opened the debate.

Most of the interventions, after thanking the General Secretary for all the information received, came back to the issue of FERPA's right to vote in the ETUC bodies, expressing their real dissatisfaction. Some wondered whether this was a "political" issue. Others insist that this refusal is a sign of a total lack of understanding of the place and role of older people in society. Several analysed this refusal as a serious discrimination within the ETUC, taking the example of the Women's Committee or the Youth Committee, which have the right to vote. Some even questioned the usefulness of remaining in an organisation that ignores one of its own. Without going that far, some organisations are wondering whether the ETUC can do without the opinion and influence of a large part of the population, such as young people, women and the elderly. We need to get this ETUC position across to our activists in order to move forward and be recognised. In some organisations, it has taken time for pensioners' unions to be recognised as such.

Are the organisations afraid of being overtaken by retired people? We have to be clear and tell them and make them understand that we are not here to 'take over'.

Others pointed out that FERPA is part of the ETUC structures. The fact that we do not have the right to vote, although we have the right to speak, is certainly a negative signal. But this does not mean that we cannot influence the ETUC. Some organisations remain locked into their national and stupid problems, which does not allow them to have a broader vision. Should we waste our time working with them? Let's work within our own structures first. We need to be able to make a diagnosis, or even create a small working group to take stock and then consider what we can do. It is important to coordinate and not to work in isolation. Some people say that they are going to work within their organisations to change things.

In addition to the issue of the right to vote, some organisations came back to the Manifesto, which they said was the main activity of FERPA. It is a good tool to make ourselves and our demands known, especially since in some countries, some reforms are underway to postpone the retirement age. Some people were surprised that FERPA organisations were opposed to their logo appearing at the bottom of the Manifesto, even though it had been unanimously adopted. Finally, others referred to the debate on vaccination in their country and indicated that some organisations do not consider vaccination as essential.

In his response, the General Secretary said that it was still necessary to think about what to do. Regarding FERPA, a number of organisations think differently, but first we have to convince "us". There are alliances to be made. We need to set up a strategy for 2023 and have an internal debate with the ETUC General Secretary to find a solution. We need a good calling card and the organisations that voted against did not provide any explanations. We need to get up. There is a piece missing in the ETUC puzzle, we must not take a decision in a hurry. In order to be determined, the General Secretary indicated that he needed the organisations. He concluded by saying that you win when you make proposals, but first you have to convince at national level.

The following organisations took part in the debate: SPI-CGIL, UNIR-CFE-CGC, FGTB, PA.SY.DY, ÖGB, FNV, UCR-CFDT, UNIA, UCR-FO, UIL-UILP, ÖGBL, CGTP-IN

The President then gave the floor, for the next item on the agenda, to Henri LOURDELLE, FERPA's Special Advisor, to deal with the follow-up to the Manifesto.

Henri began by recalling that the Secretary General had asked him to "introduce" the debate on the follow-up to the Manifesto. He insisted on the word "introduce" because he said that it was the participants who would have the floor to present and discuss their proposals and initiatives concerning the dissemination of the Manifesto. Already this morning, in the previous debates, there were echoes of what could be done. Henri reminded us that this Manifesto was adopted unanimously, which means that it is the tool of the whole organisation, of the whole FERPA. He indicated that he would make three points in his speech:

- The graphic presentation of the Manifesto and the choice of photos
- What is planned for its dissemination at European level
- What the members plan to do at the different levels, national, regional, local

Jessica contacted the graphic designer with whom FERPA usually works and who prepared the mock-up that we will see together.

However, Henri reminded us that the aim was to produce a document that would look good and give a dynamic image of FERPA and retired people, hence the need to include some illustrations/photos. He also specified that it was a draft, and therefore a discussion, not on the text which had already been adopted, but on the graphics, essentially on the choice of photos.

Concerning dissemination at European level, the General Secretary also asked Jessica to contact the ETUC Press and Communications Department, with Luca's agreement, for the dissemination of the Manifesto to the European media and journalists. It will also be sent by the ETUC to all its member organisations, whether or not they have a trade union organisation for retired people.

It will also be sent to the heads of the European Institutions, together with a letter signed, if the members agree (but this will be part of another debate led by the Secretary General), with the name of the FERPA member organisations and the name of their head. However, it is clear that the logo on the last page has no other ambition than to give visibility to FERPA by indicating concretely which organisations are members. These logos are already on the FERPA webpage.

At the national level, it will be up to each organisation to ensure the dissemination and popularisation of the report among their members, but also among political decision-makers, at all relevant levels, but also among their MEPs.

Other actions could be taken locally, regionally, and Henri asked members to share their proposals and wishes, including at European level.

He then thanked the Executive Committee for its attention and indicated that the General Secretary would certainly come back to the question of the signature of the accompanying letter by the trade union organisations.

The President then opened the debate.

All the members thanked Henri for the clarity of his presentation, which had been pleasant to hear. Concerning the choice of photos, several remarks were made, such as the photo showing a person wearing a mask. It was too "factual". Others would prefer a photo showing people involved in intergenerational activities rather than one showing elderly people playing cards. It goes against the images we are fighting against, some added. Photos should be chosen that are related to FERPA's demands. Others, referring to the "right to image", wondered whether it was possible to put photos of people without their prior agreement. Concerning the dissemination of the Manifesto to the European Institutions, some organisations indicated that it is not enough to send it, but it is necessary to meet them and organise a European event. We need to start preparing the October event. Before 1 October, there are steps to be taken and meetings to be promoted. Concerning the question of signatures, some organisations indicated that they had expressed reservations because this question had not been discussed beforehand within their organisation, but since then they have withdrawn their reservations. Many of the interventions said that they did not understand the refusal of the CGTP-IN to sign the letter or to have their logo appear at the end of the Manifesto. It was important, he stressed, to project an image of unity of the organisations that make up FERPA.

In his reply, the Secretary General first thanked the Secretariat for the work done on the Manifesto. The possibility of putting photos of people on the Manifesto would have to be checked. Contact would be made with the ETUC Press and Communications Department. Regarding the position of the Portuguese Confederation, which refused to sign the letter based on the Manifesto, he said he did not understand it. But he added that the most important thing was the text that was written.

He concluded by indicating that all the remarks made would be taken into account. As for the proposal to organise a European event, it was a good idea, but we would have to analyse our possibilities and capacities.

The following organisations took part in the debate: UNAR-CFTC, FNV, SPI-CGIL, Nat.Fed.Pens. CNSLR "Fratia", USO, UCR-FO, UNIA, FGTB, UCR-CFDT

The President then welcomed Liina CARR, Confederal Secretary of the ETUC, for her speech.

The General Secretary welcomed Liina first of all by thanking her for her involvement. He pointed out that the Manifesto had become the "common heritage" of FERPA and, returning to the issue of FERPA's right to vote, he recalled that the ETUC had insisted on the importance of inclusion and that he did not understand why older people could be excluded.

The Confederal Secretary of the ETUC then took the floor, referring to the ETUC's Mid-term Conference, and said she was very frustrated by the negative vote in Lisbon. It was necessary, she said, to analyse the negative votes very closely: who and why? and then work on a strategy. Similarly, the ETUC Secretariat was not supported in its amendment to the Constitution concerning the non-counting of "abstentions" as negative votes. Returning to the Lisbon meeting, it was a question of taking stock of where we were in implementing the resolutions adopted at the last Congress and looking to the future, in particular to examine where our actions needed to be updated and "reboosted". The ETUC's objective is to have a fairer economy for workers at European level and to relaunch the post-COVID economy. We also need to think about how to increase our membership and improve our communication. She then went on to discuss recent measures adopted at European level, such as support for wages or provisions relating to health and safety at work. We have to deal with the crisis which begets another crisis. We have recovery and resilience structures to fight it. But despite the doses of vaccines and their effectiveness, the endemic nature of COVID is growing with its consequences for society and the economy in general. Six months ago, we thought we could overcome the crisis. We are now facing incredible uncertainties with the emergence of the more contagious omicron virus: what will be the consequences for our health systems? The Conference also focused on the Future of Europe and democracy, taking up the ETUC's catalogue of priorities. The preparation of the next Congress in May 2023 was also discussed. In order to strengthen social Europe, attention was also paid to

- the implementation of the European Social Rights Framework with three objectives: employment, training and the fight against poverty

- and the UN Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals.

As far as European "indicators" are concerned, we must go beyond GDP alone.

We must also be attentive to the democratic, environmental and digital transitions that will have an increasingly important impact. We need to create quality jobs to replace those that are disappearing and we need to support workers facing these problems... We need to tackle the issue of people and demand a minimum pension, as well as universal social protection for everyone, whatever their age. We must have minimum standards and safety nets. This means monitoring the implementation of the Recommendation on minimum standards of social protection and having a strategic monitoring of care at European level, especially for the elderly. We must also fight for sufficient resources for social protection by combating tax evasion. Finally, we must be ambitious in the reform of European governance.

The President then opened the debate, after thanking Liina for her speech, which gave rise to some reflections and reactions.

Several people insisted on the precariousness which, they said, was the greatest enemy of growth and of workers who could not train because they changed jobs every month, with miserable pensions at the end. Under these conditions, what about a decent pension? The ETUC should place more emphasis on the close link between good wages and a good pension.

Returning to the question of social protection, some others recalled the importance of obliging employers to finance social protection systems through contributions based on wages. In some countries, trade unions are very attached to this. Their attachment to pay-as-you-go pension systems was recalled. For very old people who are in very difficult situations, it is important to ensure that their benefits are regularly upgraded. Others returned to the issue of ageing, which had been underestimated. And some made the link with the issue of migration, which is essential for the demographic future and in particular the reception of migrants: the ETUC had not addressed this issue sufficiently, they felt. The ETUC had not addressed this issue sufficiently, he said. And with regard to women, young people and the elderly, there should be no question of "assistance", as these were investments. The issue of tax justice was also raised, as well as the need to fight against vaccine patents, otherwise not everyone can be vaccinated. More specific questions were also put to Liina, such as

- why, in the Executive Committee debate in October 2021, the DGB and CGTP-IN abstained on the excellent ETUC report on "Ageing with Dignity"?
- or what is the ETUC's position following the European Court of Justice's ruling, in the context of the Social Dialogue, of September 2021, on the appeal lost by EPSU and giving the Commission the final say in the implementation of agreements concluded between the social partners?
- Or will there be new proposals on social protection during the French Presidency of the EU?

Finally, several questions were raised about the ETUC's support for the FERPA Manifesto, including the possibility of joint campaigns with the ETUC to support it.

In her answers, Liina first went back to the Manifesto and how the ETUC could support it. She admitted that she had not yet read it, but she would continue to support FERPA's demands. Concerning the European Socle of Social Rights, she recalled that half of the principles are within the competence of the Member States for their implementation, hence the use of "Recommendations" which are more flexible than a unanimous vote. In this respect, she mentioned the desire, within the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe, to modify the decision-making rules, particularly in the areas of social protection and taxation, in order to move from the unanimity rule to that of qualified majority voting. It recognises that precariousness is an increasingly important issue, which is why the ETUC is fighting against precariousness. It is also fighting for a first pillar of social protection financed by a fairer tax system. She added that companies should continue to finance social protection systems, including pensions. To answer more specific questions, she said that

- Regarding the DGB's abstention, the reason given was that the document on "Ageing with Dignity" did not address crime against the elderly. As for the CGTP-IN's motives, they were unclear: they did not understand.

- As for the CJEU decision on social dialogue, the Commission will publish a communication on the subject, on which the ETUC and the employers are working with the Commission. The employers do not want to "get rid" of social dialogue.

Finally, Liina said that there had to be adequate representation within the ETUC, so it was necessary to sit down around the table to examine this question and that of institutional issues and the minimum pension, and also to plan the use of the Manifesto.

The following organisations intervened in the debate: SUH, CGTP-IN, UCR-FO, SPI-CGIL, FNV, UIL-UILP, FGTB

The President then gave the floor to Dick DE GRAAF, Head of the Working Group on Statutes to present the working procedures of the restricted group on statutory changes.

Dick, with the help of a PowerPoint presentation, reminded the meeting that a new Restricted Working Group had been set up at the FERPA Executive Committee meeting on 16 and 17 June. He said that even if changes had already been adopted at the last Congress on 16 and 17 October 2018, all new proposals could be accepted. He also recalled the procedures concerning changes in the texts governing FERPA:

- If they concern provisions relating to the "statutes" of FERPA, only the Congress, which will be held in 2023, will be competent to adopt or reject them;
- If they concern provisions relating to the Internal Regulations, the Executive Committee will be competent.

The following timetable is then proposed:

- January 2022: a letter is sent to FERPA organisations inviting them to submit their proposals for amendments.
- June 2022: closing date for receipt of applications
- July-October: meeting(s) of the Working Group, to discuss the proposals
- November 2022: Working Group lists the proposals made and formulates "recommendations" to be sent to all members
- February 2023: the Steering Committee endorses the proposed changes and recommendations of the Working Group, which will then be submitted to Congress.

Following this presentation by Dick, the President opened the debate

All speakers thanked Dick for his work and agreed to the proposed timetable. However, some wondered what form the Group's meetings would take: face-to-face or virtual? Other organisations recalled that they had already sent in writing what they considered to be shortcomings because they felt that the Statutes needed to be modernised. They were therefore very satisfied with the setting up of this working group.

In his reply, Dick thanked the members who had intervened and welcomed the broad agreement that had been reached and said that he was now awaiting the proposals. The meetings would in principle be held face-to-face, although it seemed premature to take a definitive position on this issue at this time. It also depends on the number of amendments that are proposed. If there are very divergent positions, it will be possible to deal with them in virtual meetings, or even by e-mail exchange.

The following organisations intervened in the debate: UGTE, UCR-CFDT, PA.SY.DY

The President then gave the floor to the Treasurer of FERPA, Tino FUMAGALLI, for the presentation of the provisional budget 2022.

On a split screen, the Treasurer presented the budget forecast table.

Following this presentation, the President opened the debate.

While recalling that the 2020 balance sheet had been approved with reservations by the Executive, all the speakers were surprised that a provisional budget could be presented in deficit, when it should be balanced. They were also surprised that they did not have the 2020 budget at the same time to be able to make comparisons. We should systematically have it, to be able to compare it with 2022. We should also have the auditors' report. Some people think that there are still misunderstandings about the terms used and others would like to see an accounting presentation technique when we discuss the budget and financial issues, i.e. to have at the same time, for example for this year:

- The 2020 balance sheet
- The 2021 budget
- The 2021 balance sheet
- The 2022 forecast,

to see the discrepancies between the forecast and the actual. Some would also like to have graphs on the evolution of the different expenses.

Some even mentioned the possibility of a 10% increase in membership fees

Finally, it was felt that certain things needed to be clarified - which should be done at the next Executive. Union budgets must be transparent and it is essential to ensure this transparency. We need to have a very clear idea of how to proceed and how to present the budget.

In his reply, the Treasurer first of all provided some clarifications.

He wondered whether this was the right time to propose an increase in dues. Possibly, it could be proposed when the final 2020 budget is available. He also reminded the meeting that this budget had not been validated by the Financial Committee, which had not been able to meet because of COVID. As for the 2021 budget, it had not yet been closed.

The Secretary General then wished to speak before the adoption of the provisional budget. First of all, he said that it was necessary to be able to distinguish between the budget and the balance sheet in order to be able to compare the situations between 2020 and 2022 and to be transparent. It should be remembered that we have been through a complex situation, especially in the last two years. The COVID epidemic has changed the way we work. We have had fewer meetings. So we have made savings and we have reserves. But we must also bear in mind that the Manifesto does and/or will lead to additional expenses. There are also 5 organisations in FERPA whose countries are not part of the EU and therefore not supported by the Commission. It is FERPA that contributes from its budget to their travel expenses to statutory meetings. We need to rethink the way we work and think about the activities we want to organise, while evaluating their costs. We need to spend the money that FERPA has in the right way and limit our expenses, which we are doing. We need to think and work together on these things. We also need to be patient.

We will do our best to provide the information requested and we will devote a meeting of the Executive Committee to clarify and resolve any problems and see what we can do with the reserves.

All this being said, the President asked for a vote on the adoption of the provisional budget. It was adopted unanimously, minus one abstention, that of UCR-CFDT, which nevertheless wished to explain that it had abstained not because it was questioning transparency, but because it was waiting for the promised clarifications.

The following organisations took part in the debate: UCR-CFDT, PA.SY.DY, UNSA, FGTB, SPI-CGIL, OGB-L, ÖGB

The floor was then given to the Secretary General to set the dates of the next statutory meetings for the year 2022, while specifying that FERPA is dependent on the setting of the dates of the ETUC meetings.

The dates retained for the time being are therefore :

- For the Executive Committees: 9 and 10 March 2022 and 30 November and 1 December 2022
- For the Management Committees: 23 February, 9 June, 8 September and 10 November

The last item on the agenda was other business.

First of all, the President, Lajos MAYER, reported on the meetings of the ETUC Working Group on the Conference on the Future of Europe, which he attended on behalf of FERPA.

First of all, he noted from the information given by the Secretary of the ETUC that this Conference was rather badly organised, especially the working group "local citizens' platform". There was talk of young people, sport, everything but... unemployment. ETUC representatives are present in all the groups. The final Declaration is envisaged, if possible, between March and May 2022. The President was also very critical and made this known, because, as had been said, everything was being discussed except the interests of retired people, who represented almost a quarter of the European population. Nor was there any mention of FERPA's concerns, such as the minimum pension or health care. As promised, ETUC representatives will try to bring these concerns to the fore as much as possible. All interests should be carried by the Working Groups.

The FNV representative then expressed surprise that Liina had said that she had not yet read the Manifesto. She was told that, of course, at the ETUC Lisbon Conference, the President had spoken and presented the Manifesto with our demands. But it was agreed that we would not send anything until the final version of the Manifesto was adopted. The ETUC has also agreed to send it to all the organisations. We will then see who supports it or not.

In conclusion of this Executive Committee, the Secretary General underlined the extraordinary work that has been done through this Manifesto. It is useful to support this work, especially through the FERPA website, as this is the place where information can be shared and one should not hesitate to go there. He concluded by stressing that we need to defend our rights together and achieve collective unity. Through vaccines, we must defend our health and that of our children.

Finally, the Secretary General thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for listening. He also thanked Julianne and the ETUC staff for their assistance and technical help, as well as the interpreters. The President, after thanking the Secretary General, closed the meeting.