

FERPA
Mid-term General Meeting
13, 14 and 15 May 2025, Paris, France
Words of welcome

Dear comrades,

The 6 French organisations affiliated to FERPA have asked me to welcome you to this mid-term General Assembly. It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to this historic building and, of course, to this city, a few months after the Olympic Games. You will have the opportunity to hear the representative of the Mayor of Paris and the Vice-President of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council who are hosting us. So I won't go into too much detail about what falls within their remit.

We do hope, however, that in the course of our work you will have the opportunity to enjoy and visit Paris and its monuments. My colleagues and I will be at your disposal for any information you may require or if you have any problems.

However, we will have to work on the situation of pensioners in Europe and on our concerns. These concerns are no less acute in France, which, like many other countries, is under threat from the rise of conservatism and the extreme right. A law on pensions, adopted without a parliamentary debate or vote, seeks to extend the working life of all employees by two years, despite the opposition of all the trade unions and the rejection of three quarters of the population and all employees in this country.

In the year 2025, we are preparing to celebrate the ^{80th} anniversary of the creation of social security in our country. Just a few years ago, a representative of the employers' association set himself the goal of dismantling everything that the programme of the Conseil National de la Résistance had built up at the end of the 2nd World War in 1945. The ordinances passed at the end of the war established the institutions we still know today.

It is therefore the desire to call into question the entire social system of this country. And employers are obviously recommending the development of a funded system as a solution.

There is no doubt that the international situation has been worrying since the American presidential elections, and the General Secretary will certainly come back to this. We all condemn the wars underway in Ukraine, Gaza and everywhere else, as the FERPA resolutions have reaffirmed, because it is always the people who suffer, but we also condemn the internal war being waged against social systems throughout Europe. There can be no social peace without social justice!

But as we all know, these issues are not just a Franco-French matter, they affect every country in the European Union.

European governments are currently discussing European defence. This is not without risk for future investments or social spending in the Member States. This must not lead to budget cuts in all public services: health insurance, hospitals, transport, retirement homes and, of course, the level of pensions paid to retired people.

In France, for several months now, the most indecent proposals have been multiplying, such as the abolition of a tax provision favourable to pensioners, which serves to reduce the taxable amount of pensions. There are also proposals to increase certain taxes on pensioners. All of this is accompanied by propaganda aimed at pitting young and old, employees and pensioners, in what is known as ageism.

We don't want any of this. We maintain our rejection of longer working hours and will defend the social security system that protects us against illness, helps families with children, insures against accidents at work and occupational diseases, and guarantees resources for the elderly. To do this, we are counting on the support of FERPA in our actions, support that it gave us during demonstrations against the law on pensions.

Thank you for your attention, and the French organisations of FERPA wish you all the best in your work!