

Resolution

Adopted by the 8th FERPA Congress

Retired persons who are united and play an active role in a democratic and social Europe, in order to live with respect and dignity

With its 10 million members in the 25 countries in which it has a presence, FERPA is, by nature, a trade union organisation representing retired and elderly persons in Europe.

As an integral part of ETUC, it adheres to the values reaffirmed by the Confederation in the Manifesto adopted at the Paris Congress in October 2015. FERPA therefore “campaigns for a Europe based on solidarity, equality, social justice and cohesion” as well as for the dignity of persons, irrespective of age and health status, and respect for difference.

FERPA demands and intends to work towards a strong, social and united Europe, the only means of responding to the challenges posed by globalisation and unbridled capitalism. It combats the deception and destructive tendencies of populism. At the same time, it seems that membership in the European Union is being increasingly questioned

The time that has passed since the 7th Congress of FERPA in Budapest, in September 2015, has seen a worsening of the issues that the global crisis had readily brought to light.

The signs of economic recovery that have recently appeared have not yet healed the deep social wounds caused by:

- years of depletion of jobs and the impoverishment of those who depend on them;
- youth unemployment with insecure, low-quality jobs;
- the reduced purchasing power of wages and pensions; -
- greater inequality.

The loss and reduction in social and health services and the privatisation of public structures and services have contributed to the impoverishment of entire population groups, particularly the weakest, such as retired and elderly persons.

Even though *the population of retired persons* is not uniform, meaning that expectations and needs are many and varied, they live in a changing world, in societies that are rapidly evolving like means of communication.

Faced with these changes, FERPA has an obligation to respond and continue making itself ever more appealing while playing an active role.

However, at the same time, it is not because they have left the world of work that retired persons are no longer “active” in society, whether within families, associations or involvement in politics, for example. They also contribute to economic life, provided that the amount and quality *of the purchasing power* of their pensions permit them to do so.

They are therefore not a “burden” but an “opportunity” and an “investment” for society.

An ageing European population poses a number of challenges, to which the trade union movement has to respond, including three in particular:

- The first is enabling the population to continue living and ageing in dignity by putting in place appropriate structures and resources *by the Member States*.
- The second is enabling elderly people to continue to be active and play their *proper* role in society. It is therefore necessary to combat any form of age-related discrimination and any attempts to undermine solidarity between the generations by, for example, pitting young against old or vice versa.
- The third relates to growing poverty, particularly among retired elderly women. When they retire, they suffer, in a more accentuated manner, the consequences, particularly in terms of wages, of the greater discrimination to which they were subject during their working lives. They also have to deal with the economic consequences of the breaks they experienced in their career due to *the absence of a* work-life balance.

FERPA has fought and will continue to fight to overcome these challenges by making its voice heard in all relevant forums of discussion and decision-making at European level and within ETUC. It will do this by asserting its role and function as a trade union as well as enlisting its member organisations in implementing:

- The European Charter for the Rights of Retired and Elderly People,
- The Protocol that was signed with the Youth Committee of ETUC
- The *autonomous* agreement, the negotiations in which it participated within ETUC as part of the European Social Dialogue, on “active ageing and an inter-generational approach”.

The 8th Congress of FERPA plans on continuing its commitments by confirming and updating the Resolution adopted at its Mid-Term General Meeting in Rome on 10, 11 and 12 October 2017.

Priorities of the 8th Congress of FERPA and action programme: for a more social, united Europe that is more mindful of its retired and elderly persons.

FERPA firstly recalls its three fundamental requirements, which are

- The right to dignity
- The right to social support
- The right to security.

FERPA intends to provide, as the representative of retired and elderly persons, through its involvement and alliance with young people and active workers, *its support in the struggles* for full employment and employment rights

14. FERPA also reiterates the priority objectives that it has set for itself:

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- a) Obtain the right for elderly people to receive a secure, adequate and decent pension, *which is regularly reviewed*, guaranteed by public pension systems founded on intergenerational solidarity, since relegating them to the status of welfare recipient can only destroy solidarity.
- b) *FERPA, together with ETUC within the framework of social dialogue, intends to continue to promote access to high-quality and long-term public healthcare, in order to ensure that all elderly people have the conditions to “grow old with dignity”. This is a fair and basic necessity.*
- c) Acknowledge and *support active ageing* in order for retired and elderly people to truly continue to play a role in society. Old age is a stage of life that must be respected, not just tolerated.
- d) *Providing* support for loss of independence *is an* important condition given longer life expectancy, which is leading to later but greater dependency and what are often very high costs in terms of long-term care. We must learn lessons from our past experience in order to adopt new approaches and overcome the problems that have arisen with the ECI.
- e) Highlight the position of *retired* women, in cooperation with the FERPA *Women’s Committee*, by:
 - identifying their specific needs as retired persons and conducting European campaigns to combat inequality
 - improving the overall gender situation and participating in the International Days on 8 March and 25 November organised around these themes and that of the violence of which they are victims;
 - holding a meeting every two years *to have an overview and to* examine the situation of *retired* women.
- f) Expand housing policy and adapt homes and cities to cater for elderly people, reduce energy insecurity in accordance with environmental policies, by launching a “campaign” on poverty
- g) Mobilise to strengthen FERPA through the membership of new trade union organisations representing retired persons.
- h) Raise awareness among employees trade unions on the potential effects of careers on the pensions of future retirees within the context of combating poverty
- i) Continue FERPA’s involvement at European level in ETUC activities and bodies.
- j) Continue to improve the “visibility” of FERPA with European institutions by meeting with decision-makers from the Commission, Parliament and the Council

Furthermore, after the Solemn Proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, in Gothenburg, FERPA has committed to playing an active role in its implementation and to making concrete proposals, by joining forces with ETUC initiatives, particularly relating to chapter III, which is entitled: “Social protection and inclusion”, concerning paragraphs:

- Old age income and pensions;
- Health care;
- Long-term care;
- Housing assistance to the homeless;
- Access to essential services.

In the next four years, FERPA

- Will develop a timetable for minimum pensions *to be achieved in each of the countries that are members of the EU;*

- Will conclude an assessment of the gender pension gap and make concrete proposals to be presented to the EU and the countries of the EU on how to close this gap.

In spring 2019, it **will organise** a European day of action on the most urgent issues facing retirees and elderly persons.

It will also **make its voice heard**, along with ETUC during the elections, for a European Parliament that prioritises equality, solidarity and social justice.

In this context, FERPA, in its capacity as the trade union for retired and elderly persons, **requests** that the next Congress of ETUC also **recognise** its role and function within its decision-making bodies. Failing to acknowledge that FERPA, *rightly, represents and speaks on behalf of retired and elderly persons, whose numbers make up a quarter of European society*, is a problem and it *is a social limit for ETUC* itself.

FERPA **will continue** its action by involving its structures in Europe and in the different countries, while cooperating with those who want to build a better, social and fairer Europe to ensure a peaceful future for all European citizens, regardless of their age. For this purpose, hold meetings in the different member countries of FERPA to inform our members on FERPA's work and on what it is and what it does, including via campaigns using pamphlets explaining FERPA's work and identity.

All of this highlights the pressing need for:

- a social Europe based on solidarity;
- a Europe of employment, social protection, social rights and justice;
- a Europe for all

Building on its past achievements, FERPA is a trade union organisation of retired persons with its sights firmly set on the future.