

**FERPA declaration adopted at the Mid-Term General Meeting in
Rome on 10, 11 and 12 October 2017**

*The retired and elderly people who are members of FERPA, together
with ETUC, call for:*

A social Europe, a better Europe for all

1) The 60th anniversary of the European Union: defending shared values together

On 25 March 2017, the leaders of 27 Member States meeting in Rome signed the “Charter”, ensuring the continuation of the Treaties of Rome signed 60 years ago.

The “Charter”, in its entirety, commits the signatory countries to joining together to combat terrorism and ensure the continuation of 60 years of peace, with greater solidarity and cooperation between the Member States. It opposes those who want to return to a divided Europe.

In the opinion of FERPA, being united means embarking on a new phase in order to build a social Europe committed to meeting the needs of male and female citizens of all ages.

Europe must stand for democracy and freedom, the free movement of citizens and respect for human rights.

Europe cannot become a series of fortresses that are closed off and under siege as that would be a tragedy for our view of a social Europe for the working world.

Therefore, all parties must play their role and take on their responsibilities.

It is not about pledging political allegiance, but instead a duty of civic spirit and solidarity.

We must relaunch a social Europe to achieve the strategic objectives of ETUC and FERPA.

It is in this context that FERPA is holding its Mid-Term General Meeting in Rome.

2) A priority: social Europe

FERPA endorses the “Rome Declaration” adopted at ETUC’s Mid-Term Conference in Rome on 29, 30 and 31 May 2017.

And, as underlined by ETUC, “the trade union movement played a crucial role in pushing the European institutions to change their approach; however, this does not mean that austerity is dead”.

FERPA welcomes the proposed European Pillar of Social Rights. This means that the social dimension is finally - although much later than it would have liked - on the European agenda. The proposals are heading in the right direction and now it is about effectively implementing them as well as the options outlined, because there is little in the way of specific actions in the actual pillar.

FERPA, together with ETUC, is calling for the social partners to take part in implementing this Pillar. And, as far as it is concerned, FERPA will play an active role in the development of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

A number of significant challenges therefore remain, first and foremost combating poverty, which is one of FERPA’s key priorities. As acknowledged by the European Council on 16 June 2016: “The economic and financial crisis has led to a cumulative **increase** in the number of people at risk of poverty of more than 4 million”. Yet this goes against the objective that the European Union set itself in its “Europe 2020 Strategy”, which consists, on the contrary, of **reducing** this figure by 20 million by 2020.

Today, the rights of elderly people are being reformed and systematically rolled back in Europe. In this connection, FERPA is calling for a long-term vision while also ensuring that acquired rights are retained. This requires sustainable financing, adequate Social Security coverage and fairer taxation. Europe must play a more active role in drawing up an international convention on the rights of elderly people. Moreover, trade union organisations representing the elderly must be involved in this process.

Combating poverty is not just a matter of morality, equity or social justice; it is also a matter of democracy, as demonstrated by FERPA in its Charter for the Rights of Retired and Elderly People and during the Executive Committee’s discussions on 2 March 2017. Poverty is a form of inequality so serious that it makes any satisfactory response to the minimum requirements of people of all ages difficult, if not impossible.

There are other challenges that we need to confront in these historic times. FERPA fights against all forms of exclusion, discrimination, sexism, racism and xenophobia. FERPA opposes nationalism, populism of all kinds and dangerous divisions, in order to make Europe stronger, more social, and not just focused on banking and finance. In the opinion of FERPA, retired people are full citizens and

they contribute to social cohesion and to “living well together”. FERPA wants a Europe of rights, social justice, equality, freedom and democracy.

3) Strategic Resolution from FERPA’s Congress in Budapest more relevant than ever

To achieve its objectives, FERPA is reaffirming its strategic resolution adopted at the Congress in Budapest on 11 September 2015. It undertakes to support the Charter for the Rights of Retired and Elderly People adopted by its Executive Committee on 24 and 25 October 2016, notably:

- **The right to dignity and the fight against age discrimination**
- **The right to well-being**
- **The right to security**

In its capacity as the representative of its member trade unions, FERPA, in addition to defending retired and elderly people, asserts its commitment to intergenerational solidarity:

- with young people through the memorandum signed by FERPA and the ETUC Youth Committee;
- through its unfailing support for workers’ trade unions which fight for employment, workers’ rights and against any form of exploitation.

FERPA is mindful that its actions must first and foremost meet the expectations of retired and elderly people, in accordance with the orientations set out by its Congress in Budapest:

1. Obtain the right for elderly people to receive a secure, adequate and decent pension income, since relegation to social assistance can only destroy civic solidarity. This implies a revaluation system for pensions indexed on salaries. FERPA demands a minimum pension in each country that is of a sufficient level to allow people to live in dignity.
2. Enable access to high-quality long-term public healthcare, which FERPA intends to continue to promote through social dialogue alongside ETUC, in order to safeguard the conditions for all elderly people to “grow old with dignity” and so that this is no longer seen as a luxury but as a fair and basic necessity.
3. Acknowledge and promote active ageing in order for retired and elderly people to continue to play a role in society. Old age is a stage of life that must be respected, not endured. FERPA denounces and combats all discrimination that stigmatises elderly people and denies their contribution to society, in

terms of their participation in associations, family or political life. This stigmatisation of such an image of elderly people can be described as ageism.

4. Provide support for loss of independence, which is an important topic on account of longer life expectancy, which is leading to later but greater dependency. We must learn lessons from our past experience in order to implement new approaches and overcome the problems that have arisen with the ECI.

5. Make a commitment to women by fighting against discrimination and violence, and in favour of equal rights, equal pay and equal pensions. Women are at greater risk of poverty than men, which means that equality must become an objective for all trade union organisations. The FERPA Women's Committee will contribute to FERPA's deliberation process on the condition of women in Europe.

6. Develop the housing policy and reduce energy insecurity while complying with environmental policies.

This highlights the pressing need for a social Europe, a Europe of employment, public well-being, rights and social justice, a Europe for all.

4) FERPA ever stronger and more representative

Across Europe, advancing age and longer life expectancy are a reality and an opportunity. Nevertheless, this longevity entails social and economic consequences. It is within this new reality that FERPA intends to play its role as the European trade union federation representing and defending retired and elderly people within ETUC. It claims the right to be recognised as such in order to participate and vote in the bodies of ETUC, as set out at the Congress in Budapest attended by the Secretary General, Luca Visentini. FERPA wants to have its place, its rightful place, within ETUC.

FERPA can bring its experience to ETUC through the involvement of currently retired workers who want to continue their trade union involvement and help shape a model of society founded on equity, solidarity, well-being, equality and justice for all male and female European citizens of all ages.

With its 10 million members, FERPA calls for its full recognition as a European trade union organisation within the European bodies.

5) A programme of action for the next two years

- Mobilise to strengthen FERPA through the accession of new trade union organisations representing pensioners.
- Continue FERPA's commitment to "growing old well in Europe", particularly by launching a "campaign" on poverty (energy poverty, food poverty, pension amounts) and on meeting the cost of long-term care, through the ECI.
- Continue, together with its pensioners' trade union organisations and with ETUC, to raise awareness among employee trade unions about the consequences a career path can have on the pension levels of future pensioners in the context of combating poverty.
- Focus specifically, together with FERPA's Women's Committee, on the situation of women by identifying the specific needs of female pensioners in order to conduct European campaigns against inequalities and improve the overall situation.
- In the context of intergenerational solidarity, help the memorandum of understanding with the Youth Committee to "take root" and continue FERPA's involvement at European level in the activities and bodies of ETUC.
- Continue to improve FERPA's "visibility" in Brussels by meeting with decision-makers at the Commission, the Parliament and the Council.

FERPA will act and cooperate with those who want to build a better, social and fairer Europe to guarantee a confident outlook for all European citizens of all ages.

Very specifically, in order to improve its visibility and effectiveness and on the basis of these objectives, FERPA will organise in each country, **in the spring of 2018, a European day of mobilisation** the details of which have yet to be defined

And, in the context of the European elections scheduled for 2019, FERPA will mobilise to be able to count on a European Parliament that has as its priorities equality, solidarity and social justice."

FERPA will oppose anti-democratic political forces that want to challenge its objectives.