



ferpa

FÉDÉRATION EUROPÉENNE
DES RETRAITÉS ET DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES

**CONSTITUTION
of
FERPA**

**European Federation of
Retired and Elderly Persons**

Adopted by the 8th Congress



ferpa

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DES RETRAITÉS ET DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES

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Article I Name and identity

I.1

FERPA¹ is the European Federation of Retired and Elderly Persons recognized as such by the European Trade Union Confederation in its Constitution (article 26). As a federation of independent and democratic trade unions of and for retired and elderly persons FERPA campaigns on their behalf for a free, democratic and peaceful society based on interpersonal and intergenerational solidarity.

I.2

FERPA has grown from the structure of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). Previously the position of retired and older persons was discussed within the ETUC framework in a Coordinating Committee of Retired Workers (CCTR²). In December 1991 the name and structure of this committee was changed into European Federation of Retired and Elderly Persons FERPA, ratified by the ETUC Executive in June 1992. At its first congress in April 1993 FERPA was formally founded and established.

Article II Values and aims

II.1

FERPA is committed to respect the basic principles of Human Rights, equal opportunities and equal representation of men and women, the eradication of all forms of discrimination and the promotion of solidarity amongst its members. These principles shall also be reflected in the internal organization and structures of FERPA.

II.2

FERPA defends the interests of all retired and elderly persons on behalf of the trade union organizations belonging to the ETUC framework. FERPA itself is part of the ETUC structure.

II.3

FERPA advocates for the interests of retired and elderly persons towards international institutions, and more specifically towards European institutions such as the European Commission, the European Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Council and other European institutions that may be established, as well as to broader European organizations as the Council of Europe, the European Free Trade Association and comparable institutions.

¹ The acronym is derived from the French name: Fédération Européenne des Retraités et des Personnes Agées.

² From the French: Comité de Coordination des Travailleurs Retirés.

II.4

FERPA campaigns to give retired and elderly persons a voice and an active role to play in the policy shaping processes at European level. FERPA also supports activities of its member organizations voicing their opinion and their demands at national and international level about issues of major importance.

II.5

FERPA demands more specifically:

- safe and sustainable public pension systems anchored in solidarity between generations, guaranteeing a decent standard of living for the present and future pensioners;
- public health care systems enabling all inhabitants to receive adequate, respectful and affordable treatment;
- full social participation of elderly persons at all levels of society;
- full participation of elderly persons in life-long learning initiatives;
- guaranteed dignified care for dependent elderly persons in long term care;
- full access to social services and services of general interest for elderly persons;
- adequate housing facilities for elderly persons and their entourage, where necessary adapted to the special needs of the elderly.

II.6

FERPA works together with organizations which are sharing its aims and values, with a view to develop and initiate common actions and activities in the interests of retired and elderly persons in Europe.

Article III Membership

III.1.

Organizations assembling retired and elderly persons and which are associated with member organizations of the ETUC and thus sharing the aims and values of the ETUC can be eligible to be a member organization of FERPA.

III.2

To be allowed to affiliate member organizations shall be independent and democratic, share the values and aims of FERPA and shall pay their contributions on times set.

III.3

All FERPA members are entitled to fully participate in the discussions in the FERPA bodies, but only those members that are up-to-date with payment of their contributions can take part in the decision making processes within FERPA.

III.4

Organizations of retired and elderly persons not yet member of FERPA can apply for observer status and participate in FERPA deliberations without voting rights.

III.5

Applications for membership and observer status shall be submitted to the FERPA General Secretary and dealt with by the FERPA Executive Committee.

III.6

Member organizations or organizations with observer status acting in contradiction with the values and aims of FERPA and thus contrary to the interests of retired and elderly persons in Europe can be suspended or expelled from the FERPA organization.

III.7

Further details about application of membership and observer status and of suspension, expulsion and readmission of membership and observer status are laid down in the Rules of Procedure of FERPA.

Article IV FERPA bodies

IV.1

The governing bodies of FERPA are the Congress and the Executive Committee.

IV.2

Further permanent bodies within FERPA are the Steering Committee, the Women's Committee and the Finance Committee.

IV.3

Congress is the supreme authority of FERPA. It shall assemble every four years. An extraordinary congress may be convened by the Executive Committee on its own initiative or on the request of one third of the member organizations.

IV.4

The Executive Committee is the decision making body between congresses. It shall at least meet twice a year. Other meetings of the Executive Committee can be organized on the initiative of the Steering Committee.

IV.5

The Steering Committee shall give follow up on decisions made by the Congress and the Executive Committee and examine issues of relevance, steps to be taken and decide on interim and urgent actions. The Steering Committee shall meet at least four times a year.

IV.6

The President of FERPA and the General Secretary of FERPA are ex-officio members of the FERPA Congress, the FERPA Executive Committee and the FERPA Steering Committee, with full voting rights.

IV.7 The Treasurer of FERPA shall compose and present the yearly budget of FERPA and the accounts to the Executive Committee.

IV.8

The Women's Committee shall advocate especially for the rights and opportunities of retired and elder women in Europe. It submits proposals to the other FERPA bodies with the right to speak and vote in these bodies. The Women's Committee shall meet at least two times a year.

IV.9

The Finance Committee shall examine and audit the income and expenditure of FERPA and the compliance of these transactions with the decisions taken by the Congress and the Executive Committee. The Finance Committee shall meet every six months and submit a written report to the Executive Committee.

IV.10

All meetings of FERPA institutions shall be convened by written invitations originating from the FERPA General Secretary as a rule sent by electronic mail.

IV.11

Further regulations about membership rights, voting procedures, time schedules for meeting invitations, meeting procedures and the order of the deliberations not covered in this Constitution are laid down in the Rules of Procedure of FERPA.

Article V *Gender representation*

V.1

Delegations of members to the governing bodies of FERPA shall be composed of a balanced representation of men and women. In case of a multiple delegation either sex shall at least have a 40% share of the total number of delegates.

V.2

In case of a singular delegation to the Congress the nominating member organization might nominate a deputy member of the other sex. In case of a singular delegation to the Executive Committee the nominating member organization might either include a deputy from the other sex in the delegation or send alternately yearly a male and female delegate to the meetings during the session period.

Article VI **Voting procedures**

VI.1

Discussions in the bodies and institutions of FERPA shall be conducted with the aim to reach consensus.

In case of persistent differences of opinion on policy issues and issues of a non-personal kind a voting procedure by showing of hands will be executed.

On the request of one-third of the delegates present a block vote shall be held.

In cases of a personal kind a secret ballot will be arranged.

VI.2

On issues of general policy and normal business a simple majority of votes i.e. 50% + 1 of the delegates present will be decisive.

On specific issues, mentioned in the relevant articles in this Constitution and in the Rules of Procedure a qualified majority might be necessary.

VI.3

Only member organizations that have paid their full membership fees in the previous years are entitled to vote.

VII Congress

VII.1

An Ordinary Congress shall take place every four years at a time and place to be decided by the Executive Committee and shall be convened at least four months in advance.

An Extraordinary Congress shall be convened on the initiative of the Executive Committee or on the written request of at least one thirds of the member organizations. An Extraordinary Congress must take place no later than four months after the receipt of the submission of a request.

VII. 2

Congress shall elect its President at the opening of the meeting.

VII.3

The agenda for each Ordinary Congress will be prepared by the Executive Committee and shall include at least the following items:

- a) to determine the strategy and general policy of FERPA;
- b) to adopt resolutions and other policy proposals submitted to the Congress;
- c) to decide on the Activity Reports and Financial Reports;
- d) to decide on any motions proposed to the Congress;
- e) to decide on any proposed amendments to change the Constitution;
- f) to ratify the appointment of the members of the Executive Committee;
- g) to elect the General Secretary of FERPA;
- h) to elect the members of the Finance Committee;
- i) to grand discharge for the mandates that are fulfilled.

VII.4

The agenda of an extraordinary Congress shall be determined by the proposals presented by the initiators of the Extraordinary Congress and the response of the Executive Committee on these proposals.

VII.5

The number of Congress delegates to which member organizations are entitled shall be as follows:

Paid-up membership	Delegates
Up to 10,000	1
Up to 50,000	2
Up to 100,000	3
Up to 200,000	4
Up to 350,000	5
Up to 500,000	6
Up to 700,000	7
Up to 1,000,000	8
Up to 1,350,000	9
Up to 1,750,000	10
Up to 2,400,000	11
Up to 3,100,000	12

Plus 1 additional delegate for every extra 1,000,000 paid-up membership.

VII.6

Each organization may designate extra deputy delegates, without the right to vote, whose number shall not exceed one third of that of their full delegates.

VII.7

Each delegate has one vote.

A member organization may nominate the delegation of another member organization to act on its behalf at Congress, provided written notification of its action is given to the General Secretary, if possible at least four weeks before the beginning of Congress. But no delegation may represent more than *two* member organizations in addition to its own.

VII.8

Except for items under VII.3 e), proposed amendments to change the Constitution, all decisions will be taken by a simple majority of votes. Items under VII.3 e) shall be decided upon with a two-thirds majority vote.

VII.9

The General Secretary shall be elected by each Ordinary Congress for a period of four years. The General Secretary shall be eligible for re-election once only

To avoid discontinuity if the General Secretary is not able to accomplish the activities of the function, temporarily or permanently, and to enhance FERPA's representation as a whole, the Executive Committee shall appoint a Deputy General Secretary out of the members of the Steering Committee of a different gender than the general Secretary who only shall serve during absence of the General Secretary and until a new General Secretary is elected at the next following Executive Committee. When starting taking up responsibilities the Deputy General Secretary shall have the authority, responsibilities and duties of the General Secretary as prescribed by the Constitution.

VII.10

The Finance Committee shall be elected by each ordinary Congress. It shall be composed of three members from different member countries, who's president shall be invited to attend Executive Committee meetings. Each member shall have an alternate from the same organization. The full and alternate members of this Committee shall not be members of any other institution of FERPA. The alternate member shall sit only when the full member is unable to take part in the Committee's work, of which replacement the General Secretary must have been informed.

If the replacement of a member of the Finance Committee is required between two Congresses, the Executive Committee shall exercise the power of Congress to elect a new member who must belong to an organization from the same country as the country of the member to be replaced.

Article VIII Executive Committee

VIII.1

The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year and additionally when requested by the Steering Committee. It shall be convened by the General Secretary and chaired by the President.

At the start of each meeting, the President shall ascertain that the quorum of at least half of the delegates of the member organizations or their alternates is present, to be able to conduct its business.

VIII.2

As the decision-making body between Congresses the Executive Committee shall:

- a) implement policies decided on by the Congress;
- b) decide on actions and measures to be taken in support of demands that have been agreed on;
- c) elect the president of FERPA
- d) elect the Steering Committee and its nine members;
- e) elect the Deputy General Secretary out of the members of the Steering Committee;

- f) elect the Treasurer out of the members of the Steering Committee;
- g) assess the activities of the Steering Committee;
- h) approve the draft budget and annual balance sheet, and fix the level of contributions;
- i) take decisions on applications for affiliation, suspension, expulsion and readmission of member organizations and the granting of observer status or suspension of it;
- j) decide on any proposed amendments to change the Rules of Procedure;
- k) if necessary take measures to act on vacancies in the positions of the Finance Committee and the President as indicated in VII.10 and VIII.4.

VIII.3

The number of delegates to the Executive Committee to which member organizations are entitled shall be as follows:

Paid-up membership	Delegates
Up to 100,000	1
Up to 300.000	2
Up to 1,000,000	3
More than 1,000,000	4

A substitute member shall be appointed for each full member.

Additional members with full voting rights are:

The Chair of the Women's Committee

The President and

The General Secretary.

VIII.4

The President of FERPA shall chair the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Steering Committee. If the President is absent or for any reason ceases to hold office, the Executive Committee shall appoint an Acting President or a successor.

VIII.5

Organizations with observer status shall be entitled to appoint an observer with the right to speak.

VIII.6

The Executive Committee shall take decisions by simple majority.

Article IX Steering Committee

IX.1

The Steering Committee shall meet at least four times a year, be chaired by the President and convened by the General Secretary.

IX.2

The Steering Committee shall prepare and debate policy issues relevant for FERPA and in particular:

- a) act on the policy guidelines and decisions of the Executive Committee;
- b) examine issues of current relevance
- c) steps to be taken and decide on interim and urgent actions;
- d) draw up the budget and keep it under review.
- e) prepare the agenda of and recommendations to be submitted to the Executive Committee.

IX.3

The Steering Committee will be composed of the nine members elected by the Executive Committee and of the President, the General Secretary and the Chair of the FERPA Women's Committee. In its composition the Steering Committee should reflect balance in gender and region while aiming at continuity.

IX.4

The Steering Committee shall take decisions by simple majority.

Article X Women's Committee

X.1

The Women's Committee shall meet at least twice a year and be convened and chaired by the Chair of the Women's Committee.

X.2

The Women's Committee shall exchange experiences and knowledge on activities to be carried out in favour of elderly women at national and international level and

- a) monitor the implementation of FERPA's gender policy;
- b) draw up proposals for FERPA on policies for equality of opportunity and the improvement of the status of older women in Europe;
- c) propose topics for discussion by the Steering Committee and the Executive Committee.

- d) elect the Chair of the Women's Committee;
- e) decide on the composition of the Coordinating Committee of the Women's Committee
- f) work as a trade union network, and establish specific working groups.

X.3

The Women's Committee shall be composed of the women members of the Executive Committee. Each member organization must nominate at least one full representative and one alternate to the Women's Committee.

X.4

The Chair of the Women's Committee shall hold office for the period between two ordinary Congresses. The Chair shall be a full member of the FERPA Steering Committee and the FERPA Executive Committee.

X.5

The Chair of the Women's Committee will set up a Coordinating Committee, which shall be composed of herself and five other members of the Women's Committee. Every member organization can propose candidates for this Coordination Committee out of there Women's Committee members.

X.6

The Women's Committee shall take decisions by simple majority.

Article XI Finance Committee

XI.1

The Finance Committee shall meet every six months and will be convened by the General Secretary. It shall meet in sufficient time to be able to submit a properly-prepared written report to the Executive Committee.

XI.2

The Finance Committee shall examine and audit FERPA's income and expenditure and its compliance with the decisions taken by the Executive Committee. It shall examine FERPA's budget forecasts and balance sheet. It shall give its written observations on these items, which shall be submitted to the Executive Committee to accompany the presentation of the budget and balance sheet. It shall organise its auditing, forecasting and proposal-making work with the aim of transparency and improved efficiency.

XI.3

As a general financial policy the activities of the FERPA shall be financed from the membership contributions paid by the affiliated organizations in accordance with the amounts set by the Executive Committee. This shall not prevent specific activities from being financed out of extra-budgetary resources.

XI.4

The Finance Committee shall take decisions by consensus.

Article XII General Secretary

XII.1

The General Secretary is responsible for the organizational activities of FERPA. The General Secretary shall be a permanent official. She/he shall be the spokesperson of FERPA and promote and co-ordinate its activities in liaison with the Steering Committee.

Article XIII Rules of Procedure of FERPA

XIII.1

To further detail and precise the rulings and regulations of the FERPA constitution and its bodies Rules of Procedure are formulated and laid down in a separate document that forms part of the set of regulations and procedures of FERPA.

XIV. Amendments to the Constitution

XIV.1

Amendments to and changes of the constitution can only be approved by Congress with a two thirds majority vote.