

ASSOCIATION OF FORMER UNESCO STAFF MEMBERS (AFUS)

General assembly

Twenty-ninth Regular Session, June 14, 2021

(in remote mode)

Provisional report

Chairman: Jacques Rao

Vice-Chairman: Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić

Rapporteur: Georges Poussin

Teller: Aimée Ravonison

Teller: Wolfgang Vollmann

Item 1: Opening of the session by the President

As the quorum was not reached at 2.30 p.m., Georges Kutukdjian, President of AFUS, called the meeting to order at 2.40 p.m. He underlined the importance of the agenda which included, in addition to the statutory items, the 30th anniversary of AFUS which corresponds to the 75th of UNESCO and the adoption of amendments to the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of AFUS.

Item 2: Election of the Bureau of the General Assembly

The President of AFUS presents the candidates: Jacques Rao as Chair of the Session, Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić as Vice-Chair and Georges Poussin as Rapporteur. The three candidates are elected unanimously, by acclamation.

Georges Kutukdjian hands over the presidency of the Session to Jacques Rao. He sends his thanks and adds that this year is also the 50th anniversary of La Francophonie. He expresses a very special thought to the colleagues who have passed away since the last meeting and addresses, on behalf of all the participants, his sympathy to the families of the deceased.

Item 3: Statement by the Director-General or her Representative

The Director-General, Ms. Audrey Azoulay, is represented by the Deputy Director-General, Mr. Xing Qu.

Mr Xing Qu says that he is particularly happy to be present at this meeting and to be able to address it on behalf of the Director-General and on his own behalf. He highlights that for thirty years the AFUS has continued to defend the moral and material interests of its members vis-à-vis all bodies as well as the MBF. It maintains the bonds of friendship and solidarity of former staff members both among themselves and with active staff members. Every day, through its work and its determination, AFUS continues to bring UNESCO's mandate to life in all its diversity and strives to achieve its objectives and pursue its ideals. In these times of pandemic, the presence of AFUS alongside colleagues and former colleagues has been more essential than ever. AFUS has been very active in helping and directing its members to the relevant services during this difficult period and has also been able to adapt quickly to new technologies by strengthening communication with its members. He would therefore like to thank AFUS for its contribution in this regard. He says he was very honoured to be in the presence of so many men

and women who had devoted a large part of their lives to UNESCO. Their retirement is for many of them an imaginary line as they continue to give their time and efforts to the Organization. There is no boundary between yesterday and today in their relationship to the world, their engagement, their desire to be committed to the Organization. The links that are created with UNESCO never end. Together and individually, former staff members have an experience, a history and a memory that are irreplaceable. Through unbreakable ties, they continue to be passionate about the progress of the Organization. The DDG says that he admires greatly this commitment and dedication and that he knows how much AFUS contributes to the influence of "our beautiful house", to its ideals and values that must be constantly reiterated. He is also delighted that the Secretariat is associated with AFUS on the occasion of the 100th birthday of the former Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, in October, in recognition of the precious legacy he left at the end of his mandate: daring to continue to act collectively in order to respond together to global challenges. Mr. Wing Qu wishes to salute the high intellectual level of these events and their importance in helping to spread our ideas more widely known today and their results. He concludes by saying that he has already seen the positive influence of AFUS on the destiny of the Organization and that he wishes it remains so for a long time.

The Chair of the session thanks the Deputy Director-General for his very warm words of support and friendship and asks him to convey to the Director-General the thanks of AFUS. The President of AFUS adds his thanks for the loyalty shown by Mr. Xing Qu and he assures him of the collaboration that AFUS is ready to provide to the Secretariat for the celebration of the 75th anniversary of UNESCO at the next General Conference.

Item 4: Election of Tellers

The Chair of the session presents the candidates for the positions of Tellers: Aimée Ravonison and Wolfgang Vollmann. These are elected unanimously, by acclamation.

Item 5: Adoption of the agenda (doc.29A/1)

No request for addition to the agenda being presented, it is adopted as is unanimously by acclamation.

Item 6: Approval of the Minutes of the twenty-eighth regular session (doc.29A/2)

This report was adopted unanimously, by acclamation. AFUS is particularly thankful the Rapporteur, Elizabeth Khawajkie, who greatly facilitated the work by preparing the Minutes in both languages.

Item 7: Presentation of candidates to the Executive Committee (doc.29A/3) and Item 13: Result of the election of four members to the Executive Committee

The Chair of the session presents the candidates to the Executive Committee: Jens Boël, Neda Ferrier, Patrick Gallaud and Véréne Séret-Mukamusoni, then briefly gives the floor to each of them. As they are all incumbent, they reiterate their attachment to the ideals of UNESCO, to the action of AFUS, and report on the projects they have been able to carry out and wish to pursue.

The number of candidates corresponding to the number of posts to be filled, the four candidates were immediately re-elected unanimously by acclamation. Their mandate will begin on July 1 in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

Item 8: Annual report of the Executive Committee

a) Presentation of the Annual Report (doc.29A/4)

The President of AFUS first clarifies that, although the 2020 Assembly was convened on November 23 of the year, the work mentioned stopped in March, which is why the Report presented today covers the period from April 2020 to March 2021. He specifies that this period was difficult, as communication between the members of the Executive Committee could only take place remotely. However, the participation was intense, eighteen meetings having been held, instead of nine in the regular years, in order to solve all the problems and take the necessary decisions, in particular to deal with relations with the Medical Benefit Fund (MBF) and proceed with the choice of a service provider (MSH) as well as settle tax issues. The telephone hotlines were very well handled. It was also necessary to ensure a presence with FAFICS. A lot of work was needed in this context because the Joint Pensions Committee, at the request of the United Nations General Assembly, must take decisions in July 2021 concerning the governance of this Joint Committee, a crucial point for retirees from UNESCO, the question of AFUA's presence in said governance being at stake. He concluded by emphasizing the exceptional quality of the Executive Committee and its members. He also thanks all the retirees who have helped.

The Chair then asks the other members of the Executive Committee to take the floor to discuss a few salient points of the written Report, which is very comprehensive.

Pensions and Taxation

Josiane Taillefer, Vice-President of AFUS, underlines that the key issues of taxation and pensions were very time-consuming. We had to be quickly connected and set up hotlines. The changes in the dollar rate have created many questions among some retirees, the situation of surviving beneficiaries as well. The question of the CSG-CRDS and that of the governance of the Pension Fund - already mentioned by the President of AFUS - were major concerns. The digitization of the certificate of entitlement has raised doubts about its usefulness. It was necessary to respond to other more usual requests such as the search for people not receiving their pension and the follow-up of tax declarations.

Vérène Séret-Mukamusoni indicates that AFUS can congratulate itself on the success of the MBF set up at the end of 2020 to obtain the exemption of the CSG-CRDS absolved "wrongly and with lost funds" - terms used by the Conseil d'Etat - in respect of the property income and the financial assets of former staff members of UNESCO and other international organizations. The solidarity of these organizations has fully worked. Vérène Séret-Mukamusoni invites colleagues who have not yet made their request to contact the tax services to claim the payment of default interest on the tax wrongly paid for 2017, 2018 and 2019. She specifies that a levy of 7.5% on income from property and financial assets is maintained by the French State as a solidarity tax that will have to continue to be paid. However, the CERN colleagues appealed the decision of the Conseil d'Etat on this point. Other issues were also addressed.

Josiane Taillefer and V r ne S ret-Mukamusoni are very grateful to the colleagues who have provided assistance in these areas. Several of them are mentioned as well as the good teamwork.

Social issues

Odile Blondy stresses that the purpose of the telephone hotlines she holds on Monday afternoons is to maintain the social ties of the community of retirees and to facilitate their life in France after the end of their professional life. In particular, it is a matter of informing them and guiding them in their procedures with France, for example when the former staff members decide to assert their rights to French or European pensions within the framework of conventions or to obtain a "*Carte Vitale*", or decide an affiliation to a complementary health insurance, which should be done in opportune time. Many requests were related to dependency, home care, finding places in nursing homes, returning to families. Odile Blondy also encourages colleagues to think about passing on their assets by consulting a Notary and, for those who have no family in France, to appoint a trusted person in the event of hospitalization or to have a mandate drawn up for future protection by the person of their choice, in the event of placement under guardianship. The resumption of information sessions by the UNESCO Notary is envisaged.

Cultural and leisure activities

Josette Erfan, Secretary General of AFUS, in addition to the information contained in the Report, thanks the two tour guides who, impacted by the closure of the museums, have done everything to organize videoconferences, a formula which will continue in the future to allow all those who cannot physically enjoy the cultural life of Paris. The confinement prevented the continuation of Tai Chi courses. These will resume at the start of the school year if the Sports Hall is available again. The biggest disappointment during the pandemic was the impossibility of organizing the end-of-year lunch. Hope exists for 2021.

Club One author, one book, one hour

Patrick Gallaud, Vice-President of AFUS, indicates that during the pandemic, the Club wanted to keep the link between the members by distributing, sending direct to mailboxes and on the website four letters giving ideas for reading. During the second confinement, another format was adopted with the Zoom application. This is the resumption of the system tested in 2019, the meeting with an author around one of his books, for one hour. As indicated in the Report, the first guest was Thomas Gomart, Director of the French Institute for International Relations (IFRI). The next was Francis Rocard, focal point at the National Centre for Space Studies (CNES) for relations with Mars. A final session will take place before the summer. At the start of the school year, these exchanges with the authors and their books should resume face-to-face, but the video report of each of the meetings will normally appear on the website with all the debates. Patrick Gallaud invites all members to share their suggestions regarding the choice of authors and works.

Memory and Future Club

Neda Ferrier, supplementing the information given in the Report, specifies that, throughout the health crisis, the Club has continued its virtual interviews. It was possible to follow the news closely and even gain new audiences. Several talks dealt with the vagaries of multilateralism. The inauguration of a new administration in the United States was also an opportunity to hear

American academics plead for a return of the United States to UNESCO. This is how Professor Aaron Benavot of the University of Albany-SUNY and Judith Eaton, Honorary President of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) answered, from New York and Washington, questions from Alexandra Draxler and Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić. Lakhdar Brahimi, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria and Representative of the UN Secretary General in many countries in conflict, spoke with Georges Kutukdjian. Finally, Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić, Vice-President of the Club was able to question Peter Okebukola, professor at the State University of Lagos in Nigeria, on the expectations of the African continent regarding the World Conference on Higher Education which will be held in October 2021 in Barcelona. On the AFUS website is the latest video, produced by Alexandra Draxler with Manos Antoninis, Director of the Global Education Monitoring Report. In general, we find on the site: an introductory note, a brief biography of the speakers and a link to the video of the interview. In addition, most of the interviews are broadcast on the UNESCO Intranet site and summarized in the review LINK. The Club relies on feedback and contributions from members to continue these exchanges between retired and active staff members.

Relations with the Medical Benefit Fund (MBF)

Christine Bruyère, Treasurer of AFUS, indicates that the President of the association and herself maintain close relations with the MBF Secretariat and MSH International by intervening with them to obtain the resolution of certain cases. Georges Kutukdjian is the AFUS representative on the MBF Management Board, Christine Bruyère is an elected member with Hans d'Orville as alternate, which favours an action from within. We had to be very active to obtain collectively and -too often individually- the vaccine against COVID. Georges Kutukdjian and Christine Bruyère are currently working on the question of obtaining the QR Code to have the health pass allowing travel. A circular has just been distributed indicating the state of the question and helping to understand the steps to be taken.

Promotion and Membership

Christine Bruyère specifies that the membership centre is very well settled and works well. The Promotion Unit, which was more recently created, seeks above all to find a permanent solution to make AFUS known to future UNESCO retirees. The meeting organized on the separation due to retirement of active staff members, in which AFUS used to take part, has long since ceased to exist. In addition to the intervention of the President of AFUS posted on the Intranet, it was possible to obtain from the Administration that AFUS be informed of the names of future retirees, but this decision is too recent to be able to already assess the impact.

The periodical LINK

In addition to the Report, Monique Couratier declares that she is delighted to be able to continue to distribute the periodical in paper form in addition to the digital version which appears some time before the printed version. She asks all those who would no longer wish to receive this traditional version to let them know, but she notes that many are still attached to it, especially those of the oldest who are not equipped with digital tools. In this spirit, it seems particularly important to her to publish, in addition to articles relating to cultural life, summaries of decisions concerning for example pensions or MBF, vaccination, etc. Monique Couratier reported that the next issue is in preparation and will be published during the summer. She warmly thanks the colleagues who participate in the technical production of the review.

Website

Patrick Gallaud specifies that the site has been completely redesigned to, not only be an information tool, but also an instrument of culture based on an outward oriented approach, in particular thanks to two new sections: *UNESCO is 75 years old*, devoted to works consecrated to UNESCO, its great hours, its major programs, its ideas, its architecture, and *AFUS Library* covering all AFUS publications since its creation, with two subsections: *the former Directors-General of UNESCO* collection and the *Cahiers d'Histoire* on the major projects of the Organization. These sections are in English and French. Patrick Gallaud also points out, that at the bottom of the site, are the three latest news from UNESCO. Finally, he indicates that links exist with the UNESCO and FAFICS sites.

b) General discussion

There were no questions.

c) Approval of the Report

The Report was unanimously adopted by acclamation.

Item 9: Report of the Treasurer for 2019 and 2020 (doc.29A/5a)

Christine Bruyère recalls that due to the confinements, the Auditors were unable to meet in 2020, which was only possible for them when the travel limit to ten kilometres from home was ended. The accounts for 2019 and 2020 were therefore examined this year.

The Treasurer first mentions the income and expenditure for 2019. The positive balance of 9000 Euros is mainly due to LINK's expenditure item being less significant, which happens every other year given the dates of publication of issues. On the other hand, at the beginning of 2019, the payroll was outsourced as well as all the related expenses, leaving specialists to manage the URSSAF and other organizations, this being mainly motivated by the start of the withholding tax at source and employee taxes. The cost is very low for complicated tasks that require a particular skill.

Regarding the separate Solidarity account, there were no requests for aid and, consequently, the contributions received were put aside.

Josette Erfan then intervenes for the AFUS Loisirs account, which is also separate. In 2019, debit and credit were balanced. Expenses were covered by benefits from visits and Tai Chi.

For 2020, as Christine Bruyère points out, the accounts still show a positive balance of 8 000 Euros. There were no missions to cover due to the lockdown. However, at the beginning of the year, the FAFICS Bureau took place in Paris and, as it is customary, its members were invited to a restaurant by the President of the host organization, namely AFUS, for a cost of 1000 Euros. Expenses relating to LINK were higher as explained above. On the other hand, subscriptions and voluntary contributions were higher than the previous year by 2000 Euros.

Regarding the Solidarity Account, the situation was similar to 2019.

Josette Erfan indicates that, for the 2020 AFUS Cultural Activities, only a few visits could take place, generating expenses and income. There were certain bank charges for the operation of

the account. The balance at the end of the year is essentially the same as the previous year. It is important to have a working capital to plan future trips.

A participant asks if it is possible to indicate the actual number of AFUS members. The Treasurer answers 1200, while specifying that this number is a little approximate because that of the life members which inevitably fluctuates.

Report of the Auditors for 2019 and 2020 (doc.29A/5b)

The Chair pointed out that the Auditors had validated the accounts for the two years with complimentary comments.

a) Discharge

The Reports are approved unanimously by acclamation and discharge is given to the Treasurer.

b) Estimated budget for 2022 (doc.29A/6)

Christine Bruyère recalls the consistently indicative nature of a Provisional Budget. It considers that the general costs will be of the same order as in previous years and that the number of subscriptions and that of voluntary contributions would be stable. The proposed provisional budget is of 42,800 Euros.

This Provisional Budget is unanimously approved, by acclamation.

Item 10: AFUS' 30th anniversary

Josiane Taillefer presents this point by recalling the background of AFUS, from its creation to today. She considers that AFUS has reached a point of maturity. Without giving an exhaustive history, the Vice-President evokes the main stages and the most striking achievements of "a successful adventure" whose still current goal has been from the outset to develop solidarity between retired staff members and between those and active staff members. In addition, the AFUS since the establishment of the *Miollis Group* increasingly fulfils a role of reflection and transmission of memory, at the service of the Organization and its ideals. It contributes to the tributes paid to former Directors-general. Josiane Taillefer mentions in this regard the one intended for Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow for his hundredth birthday which will take place on October 25th. Finally, the Vice-President evokes the evolution of means with the use of new technologies and the work of the various Commissions and Clubs.

A participant intervenes to suggest that this presentation, very complete and applauded by the audience, be reproduced in LINK. The Chair approves the proposal and indicates that this presentation will also be mentioned in the Report of the General Assembly and that it will appear in full on the website.

The Chair then refers to the tribute to past and present international staff members adopted on December 9, 2020, by the Federation of Associations of Former International Staff members, emphasizing that this text was initiated and designed by AFUS, which proposed it to the FAFICS, then adopted in its final version unanimously and by acclamation. It has been requested that it be read soon before the United Nations General Assembly. Georges Kutukdjian himself read this at the 210th session of the Executive Board. Jacques Rao underlines that the declaration proposes in particular to celebrate on April 11 of each year an International Day of International Civil Servants.

The President of AFUS adds that the first editor was Jacques Rao whom he thanks and congratulates. He explains that the date of April 11 was chosen for the proposed International Day because it corresponds to the date of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice given in 1946 in the Bernadotte case which contains the definition still in force of what an international civil servant is. Very useful definition because very broad. Georges Kutukdjian then reads the text of the tribute.

The Chair proposes that the Assembly expresses its full satisfaction about this text, which is done.

Item 11: Adoption of amendments to the AFUS Statutes and Rules of Procedure (doc.29A/7)

The Chair recalls that the Statutes and the Rules of Procedure in their current version date from 2016. The proposed modifications are displayed in yellow on the screen. For the most part, these are additions, to allow sessions to be held in virtual mode or in hybrid mode. There are also technical changes and language adaptations, typos to be corrected.

The draft revision is presented by the President of AFUS who underlines that the mandate to review these Statutes and Rules of Procedure had been given to the Executive Committee by the previous General Assembly. He confirms the essential reasons indicated by the Chair and insists on the request expressed by colleagues residing outside France that the remote mode or the hybrid mode be favoured as much as possible during the sessions.

Amendments to the Statutes

Article III: Relations with UNESCO

The amendment consists of adding the acronym MBF in brackets and spelling out UNESCO Staff Savings and Loan Service (SEPU).

Article VI: Members and associate members

This is to indicate **in paragraph 6** that All adherents, members or associate members have the same rights and obligations to clarify the situation of associate members and **in paragraph 7** that Any member or associate member of the Association who is not up to date with his contributions cannot exercise his right to vote at the General Assembly and, according to the conditions set by the Rules of Procedure, is deemed to have resigned. Georges Kutukdjian wishes to reassure the members by specifying that this will only be done after numerous reminders.

Article VIII: General Assembly

It will be indicated **in paragraph 2** that the report of the Auditors must also be approved by the General Assembly, **in paragraph 3** that during the votes For the determination of the majority, only the members voting for or against are understood as “present and voting”; members who abstain from voting are considered as non-voting and **in paragraph 5** that The General Assembly normally takes place in face-to-face mode (in person) but can meet in remote mode (online) or in mixed mode (hybrid) if the circumstances require it.

Article IX: Executive Committee

In paragraph 1, two formal clarifications are made: COMEX put in parentheses and the publication of a periodical; **in paragraph 5**, it is specified that the Executive Committee may invite the actual President of the General Assembly, to comply with a practice already followed and which has shown its usefulness. This is a possibility and not an obligation.

Article XI: Correspondents

This new article relates to the possible creation of correspondents to take account of the situation of members residing in certain countries. This is an option and not an obligation. The article reads as follows: The Executive Committee may appoint members of the Association as correspondents in countries or geographical areas to strengthen communication links between members of the Association of the same country or geographical area. The appointment of a correspondent is at the initiative of the Executive Committee or on the proposal of interested members of a country or geographical area.

Because of the addition of this article, the following are renumbered.

Article XIV (ex XIII): Revision of the Statutes

It is again specified that the majority required is that of the members present and voting and it is specified at the end that the Manual referred to is that of UNESCO's Human Resources.

Article XVI (ex XV): Special procedures and consultations

This is a new article which stipulates that When, between sessions of the General Assembly or the Executive Committee, the approval of these organs is required for measures of urgency and exceptional importance, the President may, if he deems it necessary, consult the members by correspondence or by e-mail. To be adopted, the proposed measure must receive a two-thirds majority of voting members. Georges Kutukdjian specifies that these are rare circumstances that do not allow the meeting of the body in question, even remotely.

Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

Preamble

This is to consider the renumbering of the last articles of the Statutes. The article referred to here now bears the number XIII.

Members and Associate Members

Article I: Attestation: the notion of card is replaced by an Attestation which validity depends on the payment of the annual subscription by the member. Georges Kutukdjian specifies that this attestation does not have to be returned annually.

Article II: Surviving spouse: in the first sentence, to remove any ambiguity, it is indicated that the spouse of a deceased member may herself/himself become a member, if necessary, under the same conditions as his spouse by sending in this sense a request to the President. The amendments consider different cases, such as that of a surviving spouse who is herself or himself a retiree from another Organization and a member of the Alumni association of this Organization. She or he could then only become an associate member of AFUS. **In the second sentence**, it is indicated that the provision applies to the spouse of a member or former staff member of UNESCO or of a United Nations Agency.

General Assembly

Article IV: Convocation: in the first paragraph, it is specified that the President of the Association convenes the General Assembly at least two months before the opening of the regular session; **in the third paragraph**, it is repeated what now appears in the Statutes on the normal mode of face-to-face meeting and the possibility of meeting in distance mode or in mixed mode. It is added that in the case of these meetings in remote mode or in mixed mode, these Rules of Procedure will continue to apply in full.

Article V: Agenda: in the first paragraph, sub-paragraph h., it is specified that the Treasurer's report must be certified by the Auditors in accordance with the Statutes. **In the same paragraph**, a paragraph is added stipulating that In the case of a session in remote or mixed mode, the necessary documents will be made available to the members and associate members of the Association within the same deadlines on its website and this digital download will be notified to them by e-mail. **In the second paragraph**, it is specified that the provisional agenda for extraordinary sessions includes all questions proposed by the General Assembly, by the Executive Committee or by at least one hundred members who have requested that the session be convened. **In the third paragraph**, it is indicated that the provisional agenda of the sessions of the General Assembly in remote or mixed mode is established according to the same provisions provided for in the first paragraph. It is added that this agenda should be adopted considering the special conditions justifying the holding of a session in distance or mixed mode, its length, the time available for the session and the efforts to be made to facilitate full participation of members considering the different time zones.

Article VII: Conduct of debates: the revision first concerns the case of remote or mixed meetings. It is thus provided **in the first paragraph** that: In the case of a session in remote or mixed mode, the General Assembly shall ensure, as far as possible, to examine as many points of the agenda as possible without debate and to adopt decisions by consensus. **In the second paragraph**, it is a question of reducing the duration of the suspension of the meeting when the quorum is not reached: The quorum is constituted by the majority of the registered participating members. The General Assembly cannot take any action if the quorum is not reached. However, if, after a five-minute suspension of the meeting, the quorum is not met, the Chairman may ask the members present at the meeting to unanimously decide on the temporary suspension of the application of this paragraph. **The third paragraph** relates to the specific case of remote or mixed meetings: In the case of a remote or mixed mode session, registered members must provide their contact details before the meeting to allow their participation online, after verification of their identity and their authorization to participate in a vote if necessary; the quorum for a session in remote or mixed mode would then be constituted by the majority of the members participating in the meeting.

Article VIII: Voting procedure: the first paragraph repeats the new provisions of the Statutes as to the definition of the majority: Each member has one vote at the General Assembly, which takes its decisions by a majority of the members present (or represented) and voting, except in cases where the provisions of the Rules of Procedure require a two-thirds majority. For the determination of the majority, only members voting for or against are counted as "present and voting"; members who abstain from voting are considered non-voting. **In the sixth paragraph**, it is stipulated that the Assembly votes by a show of hands if it is held in- person, unless it decides otherwise on the proposal of the President or a member of the Association and

subject to Article XI below regarding the election of members of the Executive Committee. Voting takes place electronically if the Assembly is held remotely. In the event of a virtual session, the Assembly may propose to adopt a no-objection procedure for decision-making whereby, if the silence is not broken, the decision is considered adopted. **In the seventh paragraph,** it is indicated that: When a vote by secret ballot is required, the General Assembly may decide on the practical arrangements for holding this ballot during an online session or by correspondence. Finally, **in the eighth paragraph,** the deadline for sending proxies is set at least four weeks in advance.

Article IX: Report of the sessions: it is specified that the report of the sessions of the General Assembly published in the periodical of the Association is synthetic.

Executive Committee

Article X: Candidatures: in the first paragraph, it is provided that the election of the members of the Executive Committee is announced at least six weeks before the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly. **In the second paragraph,** it is stated that applications must reach the Executive Committee at least four weeks before the date of the General Assembly. The accompanying photo must be recent.

Article XI: Elections: in the first paragraph, it is provided that the vote takes place during each regular session of the General Assembly by secret ballot. However, if the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of seats to be filled, the General Assembly may decide to have recourse to an election by acclamation.

Article XII: Bureau: in the fourth paragraph, it is provided that the President may bring together the Bureau members remotely in the event of an emergency or if circumstances so require.

Article XIII: Meetings and working methods: in the second paragraph, it is also provided that the Executive Committee may meet remotely or in mixed mode in the event of an emergency or if circumstances so require.

Subsidiary bodies

Article XV: Composition and functioning: in the second paragraph, it is indicated that each subsidiary body informs the Executive Committee of the state of its work.

Article XVI: Periodical of the Association: the term "periodical" is used in all paragraphs.

Article XVII: Other publications: it is specified that the Executive Committee and the subsidiary bodies may propose publications resulting from their work.

Final provisions

Article XXI: Suspension of the Rules of Procedure: it is stipulated that the General Assembly may suspend the application of any article of these Rules by decision taken by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, provided that the proposal for suspension has been notified 24 hours in advance. This time limit can be waived if no member raises any objection.

Article XXII: Working languages: in the second paragraph, it is indicated that: The debates of the governing and subsidiary bodies may take place in English or in French, at the choice of the speakers.

Annex: Provisions governing the Solidarity Fund

Article IV: Procedure for granting financial aid: in the first paragraph, it is stated that the written request must include all the elements of assessment and supporting documents essential to the case study.

Article V: Responsibilities of the Board and the Executive Committee: In the last sentence, it is stated that: the Executive Committee reports annually to the General Assembly.

At the end of this presentation, the Chair specified that, as should be the case, the Director-General had been consulted and had encountered no difficulty with these amendments.

Discussion and adoption

A speaker said that he regrets that the rule adopted for General Assemblies is the face-to-face mode, the remote and hybrid modes being restricted to exceptional circumstances. He would have liked the hybrid mode, which allows distant members to participate while the closest ones can come on site, to be made permanent.

A speaker stresses the importance of maintaining face-to-face meetings, which allow many retirees to meet.

A third participant supports the hybrid mode formula.

The President of AFUS replies that the Executive Committee would have preferred to retain this one which favours the broadest participation. The experience of this session shows, in this respect, that the introduction of the remote mode effectively allows a few remote members to be virtually present. He assures that the Executive Committee is determined to examine each time the possibility of applying the hybrid mode but that it had not considered it possible to establish it as a rule in the Statutes because of the material difficulties that it can sometimes cause as well as the cost it represents.

A participant asks for details concerning the “membership card”: does it already exist or is it in the pipeline? The President of AFUS replies that it will be put in place when the new Statutes come into force, that is to say on January 1, 2022. The Treasurer adds that new members already receive a written notification certifying their registration. She specifies that it would not be possible to send a membership card to the 1200 members every year. This will only happen when a request is submitted.

The Chair submits all the amendments for the approval of the General Assembly. It specifies that the numbering of the paragraphs may be revised as necessary.

Amendments to the Statutes and Rules of Procedure are adopted unanimously, by acclamation.

Item 12: Election of the Auditors

The Chairman presents the two candidates: Mohammed Bachiri and Rosa Primois. They were re-elected unanimously by acclamation.

Item 13: Miscellaneous matters

No questions are raised.

Item 14: Closure of the session

After the thanks expressed by the President of AFUS and the Chair, the closing of the General Assembly is proclaimed at 5:50 p.m.