

DRAFT MINUTES of the **February Federal Committee meeting**

21 October 2023, Brussels

Start of the meeting: Saturday 21 October, 9:45.

End of the meeting: Saturday 21 October, 18:00.

Opening of the Federal Committee meeting

Chairman Philipp Aghatonos opened the Federal Committee meeting at 9:45.

Formalities

Election of the Tellers

Ilaria Caria, Davide Negri, Elias Barth and Alexandre Météreau are appointed Tellers, on a suggestion by Luisa Trumellini, VP and coordinator of the UEF Secretariat.

Election of a Credentials Committee

Luisa Trumellini, Ilaria Cari and Roland Hühn are appointed members of the Credentials Committee, on a suggestion by Luisa Trumellini.

Election of the Resolution Committee

Daphne Gogou, François Mennerat, Hervé Moritz, Eszter Nagy, Alejandro Peinado, Giulia Rossililo, Henrik Soderman, Luisa Trummellini, are appointed members of the Resolution Committee.

Approval of the Agenda

The agenda is approved by acclamation as amended.

Approval of the Minutes of the Federal Committee Meeting on 11-12 February 2022

The minutes of the Federal Committee meeting of 11 and 12 February 2022 are approved by acclamation.

Confirmation by the FC of the new positions appointed by the Executive Bureau

Chairman Philipp Aghatonos informed the FC that:

- Sandro Gozi has stepped down as UEF President due to multiple political commitments that have arisen;
- Anna Echterhoff would no longer be Secretary General of the UEF as this role linked to the President;
- that Rafael Bez and Daniel Gerer -who had taken over the Treasurer's duties- resigned their positions.

In place of these three roles, he presented the new positions appointed by the EB:

- New President: Domènec Ruiz Devesa
- Treasurer: Roland Hühn
- Acting Coordinator of the Secretariat: Luisa Trumellini, Vice-President

The Federal Committee has the three new positions approved by acclamation.

Welcome speech and political introduction by Domènec Ruiz Devesa, President of UEF

President Devesa, after expressing his gratitude for the work of the outgoing President and Secretary General, thanked the Federal Committee for its trust and the new team, which was committed to getting UEF back on track at this difficult time. The balance of the first two months of work is positive overall. They have been very intensive weeks of work, but the results are beginning to be seen. On the political level, Mr Devesa recalled the UEF's commitment to the process opened with the Conference on the Future of Europe, the great work of the European Parliament that had just materialised with the positive vote in AFCO on the Report containing the European Parliament's proposals for the reform of the Treaties, and recalled the challenges that now lay ahead: the plenary vote in the EP and then the not easy passage of the EP's request to the European Council through the Council.

UEF finances & activity report

Report on the financial situation by Roland Hühn, Treasurer of the Union of European Federalists

In his report on the budget the treasurer highlights that he wants to explain the structure of the UEF budget and how the structure is linked to the deficits in the budget 2022. He explains that there are two sections in the budget, one for costs which are eligible for the grant and one for expenditures which are non-eligible.

In 2022 there were many non-eligible expenses and less own revenues caused by a huge workload due to audits of the secretariat and legal and accounting expenses which are not eligible and which caused the deficit.

In 2023 the non-eligible amount will be less and the own revenues more due to big efforts to raise money but there will still be a deficit. The work that was done with respect to the budget approved in February, for which the FC is now being asked to vote again, was to decrease some expenses, replacing some very costly activities with similar ones at practically no cost, and to abandon the regranting scheme, which requires very complex management and should have been prepared at the beginning of 2023; since nothing was done, it was simply impossible to implement it.

He concludes after detailing these messages by stressing the necessity for a good grant management to avoid non-eligible expenses and secure in a continuous process of grant supervision the eligibility of expenses during the year.

Report by the Auditors

Matteo Roncarà made an oral report (on line) on behalf of both auditors. Their general assessment is that the supporting reasons brought by the Treasurer seem solid to them.

Referring to the 2023 budget, a lot of work has been done. They consider positively that the activities and related costs have been reduced, as well as the expected co-financing, while at the same time increasing the resources to cover staff costs. There remains the almost 57,000 euros of co-financing that must be found to make the accounts balance.

With respect to the documents received for the 2022 budget, the auditors have appreciated the effort and success in finding a new auditor and getting the job done on time and in a very professional way..

There the forecast is for a loss of 97,000 euros, which requires the Commission to liquidate the remainder of the 2022 grant.

Thus generally speaking, the central point for UEF is to structure a meaningful self-financing system, making it stable and efficient. Without it, the UEF is destined not to survive with this operating model.

In connection with Budget 2023 Abdul Aydemir then raised some questions on the issue of the EKI's request for payments. Luisa Trumellini explained more in detail the question to the FC and reported the decisions taken on it by the EB in their last meeting. The dossier is available for request.

After some Q&A, the Federal Committee approved the 2022 Balance sheet and the revised Budget 2023

Report on state of preparation of the XXVIII European Congress

Ilaria Caria, UEF Secretariat coordinator,, took the floor and explained the status of the preparation of the Congress (venues and draft program) and the status of memberships and number of delegates.

The active sections are UEF Belgium, UEF Bulgaria, UEF Finland, UEF France, UEF Germany, UEF Greece, Groupe Europe, UEF Hungary, UEF Italy, JEF Europe, UEF Kosovo, UEF Lithuania, UEF Luxembourg, UEF Spain, UEF Switzerland, UEF United Kingdom.

For the UEF sections of Austria, Cyprus and Luxembourg, the number of delegates has been announced to be confirmed in consultation with the EB following the outstanding payment of the contribution.

The UEF sections of Czechia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia are inactive and they didn't receive any delegates.

Reports on UEF activities 2022-2023

Luisa Trumellini, Acting Coordinator of the Secretariat and UEF VP, took the floor and presented the organization of the office and then invite Davide Negri and Alexandre Metereau to present respectively:

- the new political actions to mobilize the UEF sections in view of the vote of the EP on the Report to reform the Treaties;
- the new website of the UEF, as new instrument of the UEF and of the UEF sections.
- the activity report of UEF activities 2023 and the CERV Grant status.

Political Debate in cooperation with PC 1

The political debate organized by the UEF's Political Commission on Institutional Affairs (PCI) and by the Spinelli Group focused on the draft report on the amendment of the treaty, and on the role of the European Parliament both in promoting a deep reform of the functioning of the European Union and in the future architecture of the Union described in the report itself. Four members of the Spinelli Group, Domènec Ruiz Devesa (President of the UEF and MEP S&D), Alin Mituta, Markus Ferber (Vice-President of the UEF, online) and Daniel Freund (online), took part in the debate moderated by Giulia Rossolillo, rapporteur of PCI.

After a short presentation of the subject matter of the discussion by Giulia Rossolillo, Domènec Ruiz Devesa introduced Alin Mituta (Renew Europe), co-rapporteur of the report on Parliamentarism, European Citizenship and Democracy. Alin Mituta focused on the main points of this Report and its relationship with the report on the amendment of the treaty, underlining the pivotal role of the participation of citizens in the building of a stronger and more democratic European Union and on the need to accompany the strengthening of representative democracy in the EU with forms of participatory democracy. In particular, after the successful experience of citizens' participation during the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE), the creation of a stable form of citizens' participation in the form of a European Agora in the framework of which the citizens should be able to discuss on the main EU's priorities for the year ahead would be needed. Moreover, the introduction of an EU-wide referendum on fundamental matters would allow the citizens to express themselves on the major challenges the European Union is facing and will face. These reforms would also allow fighting euro-scepticism and making citizens feel like protagonists of the development of the European integration process. The need to strengthen European participatory democracy was underlined also by Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D), whose speech focused mainly on the changes of the Treaties proposed by the European Parliament's committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) and on the need to strengthen the European Union and to transform it in a real democratic power before enlarging it. Domènec Ruiz Devesa stressed the pivotal role played by the European Parliament in pushing for a Treaty reform and the role that the Spanish Presidency of the Council could play in triggering the procedure of article 48 of the Treaty of European Union through the fixing of an Agenda for convening a Convention after the European Parliament's elections. As far as the enlargement is concerned, Domènec Ruiz Devesa stressed the need to give candidate countries like Ukraine a real perspective of accession to the EU but underlined the impossibility of going in this direction without a strengthening of the European Union through a deep reform of its decision-making mechanism and the building of the foundations of a federal Union. Enlargement without strengthening European democracy and without encompassing the actual intergovernmental decision-making mechanisms would indeed make the functioning of the European Union impossible and entail the risk of a European Union's collapse.

The debate following Alin Mituta's and Domènec Ruiz Devesa's speeches focused on the importance of a treaty reform and on the need to develop federal ideas in Eastern European countries linking enlargement and deepening positively, without giving the impression of a will to exclude candidate countries from the European integration process.

After the debate, Markus Ferber (EPP) and Daniel Freund (Greens/EFA) took the floor online. Markus Ferber started from the weak role of the European Parliament in the field of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), underlining the contradiction of having a directly elected Parliament without a voice in many pivotal decisions like on EU's own resources or in the foreign policy and defence field. The AFCO Report on Treaty reform, he stressed, represents a huge step in this direction, as it would make the European Parliament very similar to a national Parliament and transform the European Union into a democratic and federal body. He then highlighted the need to strengthen the EU's role in the international arena, making a comparison between the capacity of the US in terms of competitiveness and political role and the lack of a single European voice at the international level leading to the

incapacity of the EU to defend the interests of its citizens and to play a positive role in terms of strengthening international democracy.

Daniel Freund focused instead on the provisions of the AFCO Report of the reforms of the Treaties concerning the environment, underlying the fact that climate change and environment protection are the main challenges of our time. The debate that ensued from these interventions added some reflections on the situation of Eastern European countries concerning EU values and the importance of EU action in the field of environmental protection.

Report from the PC-meetings

The following Political Commissions presented a report of the debates that took place the days before in online format

- Giulia Rossolillo presented the discussions held at the PC1 meeting on the AFCO Report and the process for Treaty reform on 12 October
- Ester Nagy presented the discussions held during the PC2 meeting debate on the Slovak elections on 18 October
- Carlo Maria Palermo presented the joint debate held at the PC3&PC5 debate on AI, Cybersecurity, and Democracy on 6 October
- Luca Lionello presented the discussion held at the PC4 meeting on Policy Solutions for Restoring Growth and Competitiveness in Europe on 17 October

Reports on UEF sections and JEF Europe activities

The following people presented a report of their section's activities:

- Daphne Gogou, on behalf of the UEF Greece
- Eszter Nagy, on behalf of the UEF Hungary
- Henrik Söderman, on behalf of the UEF Finland
- Luc Landrot, on behalf of the UEF France
- Alejandro Peinado Garcia, on behalf of the UEF Spain
- Paolo Milanesi, on behalf of the Movimento Federalista Europeo
- Philipp Agathonos, on behalf of the UEF Austria
- Daphne Gogou, on behalf of the UEF Greece
- Raphaël Bez on behalf of the European Movement Switzerland
- Jean Marsia on behalf of the UEF Belgium
- Juuso Järviemi presented the activities of the Young European Federalists (JEF).

Presentation and vote on the resolutions

Resolution: ***For a more democratic Europe*** now proposed on 28 September 2023 by EUD Kreis Heilbronn, MFE Sezione di Sondrio, UEF Belgium, UEF Groupe Europe, UEF Luxembourg.

Chairman Philipp Aghatonos invited Luisa Trumellini to present the Resolution For a more democratic Europe with amendments.

Luisa Trumellini informed that the amendment was reformulated by the Resolution Committee and that it was accepted by the proposals.

A vote was cast on the entirety of the resolution.

The resolution was unanimously adopted with 1 abstention
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Closing remarks by Domenec Ruiz Devesa President of the UEF

Domenec Ruiz Devesa thanked the Presidium and the Secretariat of the UEF for organizing the event. He thanked the participants for coming to the FC meeting. To come together is always an important moment, and this occasion was fruitful from political and organisational points of view.

For federalists, this is a moment of responsibility, a moment to support our partners. European federalists fight within the European Parliament, within the organised civil society. The Federal Committee ends with the promise of engaging in many months of political campaigning: delegates discussed the initiatives to take in the next months, such as a demonstration in Strasbourg.

Domenec Ruiz Devesa reminded that now is the moment to fight and achieve the results European federalists are calling for.

Chairman Philipp Aghatonos pronounced the end of the meeting at 18:00.