

# DRAFT MINUTES of the UEF XXVIII Congress

**Towards the European elections. For a federal Europe.**

25-26 November 2023, Brussels

Venue: House of the European History and Institut Européen de la Culture  
Arabe, Brussels

Start of the meeting: Saturday 20 January, 9:30.

End of the meeting: Saturday 20 January, 13:00.

## **Saturday 25 November**

10.30: Opening of the Congress

## Election of the Presidium

Candidates for the Congress Presidium are Philipp Agathonos, Raphael Bez and Dafne Gogou.

The Congress elects by consensus Philipp Agathonos, Raphael Bez and Dafne Gogou at the Congress Presidium.

## Formalities

### **Election of the Tellers**

Philipp Agathonos suggests electing as tellers Elias Barth, Alexandre Météreau and Olalla Pastor Del Valle. The Congress by unanimity.

### **Election of a Credentials Committee**

Philipp Agathonos suggests electing as members of the Credential Committee the Treasurer Rolad Hühn, the acting Secretary General Luisa Trumellini and Ilaria Caria. The Congress approves by unanimity.

### **Election of a Resolution Committee**

Philipp Agathonos suggests electing as members of the Resolution Committee Daphne Gogou, Luca Lionello, Hervé Moritz, Carlo Maria Palermo, Alejandro Peinado, Giulia Rossolillo and Florian Ziegenbalg. The Congress approves by unanimity.

## Approval of the Agenda

Philipp Agathonos explains that there is a change in the Agenda due to the fact that since Mr. Sandro Gozi is not present at the Congress it is not possible to award him the Honorary Presidency. The agenda is approved with this change without discussion.

## Approval of the Minutes of the of the last Congress in Valencia (3-4- July 2021)

The minutes of the Federal Committee meeting of 21 October 2023 are approved by acclamation with this add by Raffaele de Luca at the point of the votation on the Resolution "*Luisa Trumellini informed that the amendment was reformulated by the Resolution Committee.*".

## 11:00: Welcome addresses

Welcome addresses are given by Hans-Gert Pöttering, Christelle Savall, Fernando Iglesias and Petros Fassoulas.

Philipp Agathonos welcomes the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign affairs and Security Policy, former President of the European Parliament, Josep Borrel, who is present at the Congress.

## 11:30: Opening speech and Political report by Domènec Ruiz Devesa, UEF President:

Philip Agathonos gives the floor to Domènec Ruiz Devesa, who thanks all the participants to the Congress, more than 100 delegates coming from all corners of Europe, and underlines the importance of this moment, in which the European Parliament has approved the first proposal to reform the Treaties after the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon. He first of all greetings and thanks the House of European History that hosts the Congress, and in particular Hans-Gert Pöttering, also former President of the European Parliament, and the Director of the House, and acknowledge the presence of Miguel Angel Martinez Martinez, former Vice-President of the European Parliament and also member of the Board of Trustees of the House of the European History.

Before entering into the political part of the report, he wants also to thank who has been leading the organization up until few months before the Congress: Sandro Gozi, former UEF President, and Anna Echterhoff, former Secretary General.

The first point he highlights is that the proposal for a Treaty reform by the European Parliament, which will make the European Union more democratic and more efficient in its decision-making, was the result of the effort of five co-rapporteurs, all federalists and members of the Spinelli Group, coming from five different political groups from the left to the center right. We federalist should be proud of this.

The second point concerns the fact that things have changed a lot since the Lisbon treaty: we live in a world now that is totally different, because of the financial and the euro crisis, the Arabic springs, the conflict between Russia and Georgia, the first aggression of by Russia to Ukraine 2014, Brexit 2016, the election of Trump as U.S. President 2016, the pandemic 2020, the second war of aggression into Ukraine 2022.

This is the first thing that we have to bear in mind and by the way, it is also interesting to see at some other structural developments that have happened since then that have accelerated. Climate change is very obvious, digitalization, both issues that are not even mentioned in the Lisbon Treaty. And then we have had the relaunching of enlargement, which is also very important and was not in the agenda for a long time. So now we're going to a union of 36 member states.

What we are saying from our federalist perspective is if the world changed, then Europe must change. Remember, for instance, the Maastricht Treaty. It was the response to that great geopolitical challenge that was happening in Europe at the moment.

We also need to tackle the institutional dimension of the European Union. This is something that for a long time no one wanted to talk about in Brussels.

I remember at the beginning of the conference on the future of Europe in which we were actively engaged and in particular one Prime Minister that took the floor in the conference and said don't talk about institutions because people are not interested in institutions, but in jobs, social welfare, climate.

Of course, I'm not going to deny that to discuss or talk about institutions it's in principle maybe not the most appealing matter for the common citizen, but when we talk about democracy and citizenship, and we make these concrete, I think people are also interested, as we saw in the working group of democracy in the conference on the future of Europe.

Institutional reform and in particular reform of the treaties is also in a way like going to the dentist: you cannot postpone it forever. Now the the big question that we are going to face, and this is also the big danger as federalist organization that we're facing now is that particularly in some think tanks, some experts are saying that we need to reform the Union, but we must do it without changing the treaties, because it would be too long, too difficult: we can use the passerelle clauses.

We are not against the passerelles, but there are many things that need to be changed an we cannot do it through the passerelles. And, by the way, it is not by it's not by coincidence that since entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, not just not even one of these passerelle clauses has been activated. The problem is that there are no counter benefits for those that are afraid of losing the veto in the Council that consider themselves losers. In the context of a general reform of the Treaty, instead, we can compensate those that feel they are giving up almost an existential question for them, which is the right to veto decision on foreign policy or taxation or social policy in the Council.

But then we have other topics in the treaty that we cannot solve with the past adults, like the question of surveillance of rule of law in Article 7 TEU.

Then there is another very important reason, which is the powers of the European Parliament.

Is it really possible to leave the European Parliament without the power to initiate legislation, without the power to co-decide on taxes and without the power to co-decide on own resources, meaning the revenue side of the budget, especially in view of the next enlargement?

If we think of the recent Recovery Plan, it's only the Council who decides on issuing this European debt, and it's only the Council deciding which European taxes will be put in place to pay back this debt that has to be paid back.

And now, just to conclude a few things on our strategy, As has been said by the Ambassador, now the Spanish Presidency, which I think is very important, has committed to put the proposal by the Parliament into the agenda of the next Council of General Affairs, which is of the 12th of December.

This is very important because it's the Council according to the Treaty, Article 48, the one that regulates the reform, that has to transmit the proposal by Parliament to the European Council.

This is why we have an important role to play as federalists, because we need now, particularly the national sections, to liaise with the national governments, to get to guard, to gather support for this in the European Council. Before the end of the Belgian Presidency, meaning before the European elections, we need to have a decision by the European Council.

Of course, the Convention cannot happen now, before the European elections. January of 2025 is probably a good moment because he's after the European elections and after the election of the new Commission, the new President of the European Council.

We need to support this process of reform that was launched by the European Parliament.

We need also to do our campaign for the European elections, meaning we have to stimulate the participation in the European election, and we need to also promote making the election more European, to really foster up on European debate. So we need to be active in these three dimensions, support the process to activate the reform of the treaty, to stimulate the participation in European elections and to make the European elections more European.

And for that we need also to improve the capacities of our organization.

Our organization works in three particular fields, grassroots participation at the grassroots, mobilization, advocacy in the European institutions and also policy development. And to do this even more effectively, we need of course to increase our membership. We need to be more, we have to be more present across the European Union and even beyond, also in Ukraine.

I will see, I will say we need to develop also to stimulate that the European movement and the federalist organizations are also active in the in the candidate member States, because we have to also make them understand the importance of deepening alongside enlargement.

We also need a more effective Bureau, with a division of tasks. We need people in the Bureau that work on policy development, that work on campaigns, and then work on fundraising at the minimum and also relations with other organizations, especially the European Movement, the world federalist movement and the Spinelli Group.

We need to be more accountable as Bureau to the Federal committee and the Congress. Every time that we approve a political resolution, we have to come back to the next meeting of the federal committee or Congress and explain exactly what we have done.

This is important. The resolutions that we approve have to be really implemented and I would like to be very strict on that.

Now on Monday we will send our political resolution and a letter to Charles Michel asking him to put the item of treaty change in the agenda, as he said of the 15th of December.

As you know, Altiero Spinelli, our founder, one of our founders, when he finished the the manifesto of Ventotene, said that the road to travel is not secure, nor easy, but it must be traveled and and so will be.

So what we have to say now is that he opened the road for us and we are already traveling the road and we are every day a bit closer to achieve the goal of a more peaceful, democratic, fair, sustainable federal Europe.

## 12:00: Special address by the Representative of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU Raúl Santiago Fuentes

In my capacity as representative of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU, I must say that I am very happy to accompany you in this event for three reasons.

First, for the role played in the history of European construction by the Union of European Federalists. The Union of European Federalists has shown its commitment for more than 75 years by having played a fundamental role in the organization of the Hey Congress in 1948, playing a decisive role in the campaign for direct suffrage to the European Parliament and more recently in the mobilization in favour of a constitutional treaty for Europe.

My second reason is because this Congress will elect as President for the first time as Spanish Domènec Ruiz Devesa, to whom I would like to wish good luck and success in this new responsibility.

And thirdly, here I will go into more detail because your Congress is being held only three days after the adoption by the European Parliament of the report of amendments in view of the revision of the Treaties as adopted on 22nd November.

This triggers for the first time since 2007, the Treaty Reform Procedure and was supported by 5 political groups, the People's Party, Social Democrats, Liberals, Greens and the Left.

The Union political deepening cannot be ignored. With a Union potentially of 36, we cannot ignore matters such as the veto, the number of Commissioners and the composition and powers of the Parliament. Therefore, we can say that enlargement, the new Member States and deepening of the

political Union must go hand in hand in line with the Granada Declaration adopted by the European Council on 6th October 2023.

Having said that, the need to introduce institutional reforms in view of the relaunch of enlargement is not incompatible with continuing to exploit the full potential of the Lisbon Treaty.

The Spanish Presidency has committed to transmit the Parliament's report to the European Council at the meeting of General Affairs Council on 12 December, in compliance with Article 48 of the Treaty and with view to its potential inclusion on the agenda of the European Council on 15th December 2023. The Spanish Presidency has to promote its work in favour of the maxim expressed in the Treaties to make possible and ever closer union between the peoples of Europe and its citizens.

What better place than the Congress of the Union of European Federalists to recall this noble aspiration? Thank you very much and good luck.

After the special address, Philipp Agathonos gives the floor for their interventions to Brando Benifei, Cyrus Engerer, Mercedes Bresso, Reiner Wieland and Thijs Reuten.

**Brando Benifei:** What I want to underline is that we get here through a process where a civil society and obviously the UEF has been crucial because I have been the chair of this Spinelli Group during the conference on the future of Europe. And bringing participants from all the components of that conference to converge towards a federalist reform approach for the conclusions of the conference was a very important momentum that we built all together.

And if it will be impossible to proceed with the unanimity to reform the Treaties, member states that want to do more should not be impeded by doing it.

I want to remind you what happened with the next generation EU: when it was clear that there were some governments that didn't want to proceed with that decision, some Member States said clearly that they wanted to proceed without them. This was a moment when there was a clear message.

I hope some national leaders will take the courage needed to say that we cannot sustain an enlargement that is needed. It's fundamental, but it cannot be sustained without the deepening.

And this means also that we are ready to find solutions that will not prevent those that want to build the federal union from doing so, because some member states do not want that.

But first of all, we need the convention to be called and I think that this needs to be our focus also by working to send a clear message to our citizens.

Without the Federal Union now we will not be able to stay as Europe in the global stage. So I think it's extremely important and now we give a clear message, we give a clear message to our citizens, to our national elites that if there is no more time to lose. UEF will be crucial in these.

I'm the rapporteur of the Artificial Intelligence Act. How can we compete with our model, a human centric, human rights based model with US, with China if you're not a federal union?

Let's continue our fight together and and keep on working together.

**Cyrus Engerer:** I remember when I joined the young European Federalists in Malta.

There were some people who used to tell me this was quite some time ago now, but there were some people who used to tell me of course, you are joining the Young Federalists: you're young, you're an idealist, but by time reality will catch up with you and you'll realise that while it was good to be active in JEF at a young age, now reality has kicked in and you know that we should be much more intergovernmental, much more nationalistic and fight for our national priorities at a European level.

After that I went to the College of Europe and over there we had no JEF.

But it was the year when the European Constitution which was being rejected and we're moving towards the Treaty of Lisbon and the flag of the European Union was no longer in the treaties or being discussed for the treaties.

And we decided that the College of Europe to start JEF at the College of Europe.

And once again, there were those people who were telling me, of course, now you've grown up a bit further, you're a bit older, but you're surrounded with idealists at the College of Europe who will have one goal.

And now I'm a member of the European Parliament and obviously after working in different institutions, I also work at my country.

And now in the European Parliament, I once again found myself working and fighting to have a much stronger Union, a much more integrated Union and continued way towards a more federal European Union.

And once again, people in my country once again ask how can you believe that coming from the smallest Member State, you know, fighting to have a more unified European Union?

But my reply is that the EU has been beneficial for our country, that if the EU ceases to exist, we would lose a lot of these benefits that we get from being Member States of the European Union and that we need to reform the EU to make it more effective.

And it is For these reasons that last week, when we were in the European Parliament discussing triggering Article 48 and discussing whether we should have a discussion on the changes of the Treaties, I was the only Maltese voting in favour of that resolution in in our European Parliament.

I know and I believe that all of us here, when we speak of a more united and more federal Europe, we are Speaking of a Union that will leave no one behind, not even the smallest Member State.

And we need to really make sure that this message comes across because a federal union does not mean discarding, discarding the smallest amongst us.

A federal union means giving power to each and every one of us across our European Union so that together we can actually work on the policies of the future that give strength to all of us, even the smallest of us to move us forward together and a union that would leave no one behind.

We're seeing the rise of populist people who many a times bank on the weaknesses of the European Union, who want the European Union to be weak.

Because by having a weak European Union, they can succeed, succeed in scaremongering even further because they say, you know, the European Union is not effective.

The European Union is so slow in deciding we should take back our powers into our nation states to decide ourselves.

We need to be much more well organised and we need to take over the presence on social media, which unfortunately currently is that vacuum has been filled in, filled up by the populists who have an easy job at taking over the social media.

But we need to do the same and I know that we can do it better because ultimately if we hear the stories of people, and I always believe that in politics we should have politics that tells people stories.

If we go across all our Member States, from the biggest to the smallest, and hear the stories of different citizens and how the European Union was so beneficial for them, if we tell those stories, we can also win over more hearts and minds to have more united project of ours.

And hopefully one day people stop telling me back home that I'm still too young and too idealistic.

We have lived and worked it all together and I know and I'm convinced that this is the way forward for a European Union that functions and that brings more benefits to all citizens of the Union.

**Mercedes Bresso** underlines that she is very happy of the approval of the proposal of treaty reform by the plenary of the European Parliament, but we must reflect on the reasons why it was approved with a very small majority, especially in the EPP. On the other side from the SND and from the Renewal Group we had the very large majority in favor of the changing of the treaty and of the proposal of the convention. Now we need to work in this few weeks very strongly to oblige the European Council to give an answer, a positive answer on the convening of a Convention.

So we should work mainly with the society to help our politician to find the courage of going ahead for the strengthening of the European Union to make it able to decide on important issues and to protect its citizens.

**Reiner Wieland:** Some of some of the previous speakers have addressed the problem of the extreme parties in Europe, which is a problem in Europe. But an even bigger problem is populism growing more and more.

So we have to explain to the citizens why Europe, but without big promises and more attention at delivering.



All our polls prove that more people than five years ago, more people than 10 years ago believe that we need more Europe.

It's good that we have a no veto campaign, but we should reflect also on the possibility of having a super-qualified majority, a bridge between unanimity and qualified majority. Let's construct that and then discuss which issues we put into that cup. If we do the other way around, we collect too many opponents and we will never get it.

For a long time, for a very long time, I didn't hear the President talking about the situation of our organization. EUD is not satisfied with the situation of UEF and some members of EUD would like to leave UEF. I still believe that we need a strong roof organization and I'm ready to support the roof organization. But we have to deliver. So we are ready to support in political in in, in political context addressing the European elections and beyond, in terms of politics, also in terms of union of European federalists, but we have certain expectations.

**Thijs Reuten:** Federalism is a complicated word to use in the Netherlands. And that is the pity.

That is a shame. And it's not productive for our European future because the Netherlands is one of the founding States, is the 5th economy of the European Union is 6th country in population, and we cannot afford, we can simply not afford whichever government is in power in The Hague to be outside. Many Dutch politicians do not want to talk about treaty change because they are afraid to take responsibility and do not want to organise a public debate.

So I think that there's enough enough work ahead of us. We have to spread our ideas, even with a different narrative in the different member states, but we have also to turn our ideas into action.

I hope to see many of you in the coming year, in 2024, to just before or just after European elections go ahead with creating also a Dutch, recreating also a Dutch branch of the federalist movement.

## 12:45: Special address by Enrique Barón Crespo

I want to greet the Congress as President of the Spanish Federalists, you know that we, we are growing, we are growing, building our country and making it a decisive partner in Europe.

The proposals of the federalist, and not only that proposals that we are going to approve in this Congress, but the resolutions of the European Parliament, are a good road map in order to make progress.

I was elected president in a very decisive moment for Europe and at that time there was already a debate between federalists and nationalist.

When I had to make the proposals on behalf of the Parliament, I had two important texts. One was the Spinelli proposal of 1984 and the other was "The Federalist", the debate on the creation of the United States.

We have to make decisive steps forward, and this is the main debate that we are facing in the next European elections.

And I do think that the role of the European federalist is not only to preach the gospel, is to be active and decisive in all our countries in order to make a step forward and make possible that we build finally a active and protagonist European Union.

## 13:15: Activity Report

Luisa Trumellini and Ilaria Caria presents the situation and work of the Secretariat

Davide Negri takes the floor to illustrate UEF activity of the last two years through a power point presentation.

## 15:00: Financial Report by Roland Hühn, Treasurer of UEF

The Treasurer illustrates the budget of 2022 and the revised budget 2023.

Philip Agathonos explains that, due to the fact that year 2023 is not yet finished and UEF has to wait for the approval by the Commission, the Congress is not able to discharge the Executive Bureau and the discharge will be done by the first Federal Committee of 2024.

Thorsten Frank asks if he can have information about the costs of a new audit and the new members of the Secretariat, Florian Ziegelbag underlines that he would have liked to have some information about the budget some days before, that for the political discharge of the EB we have to take into account what the external auditors will say and he asks how is the communication flow between UEF and the European Commission and what are the plans for the restructuring of the Secretariat, Velko Ivanov underlines that in the future the regranting scheme could be useful and asks if the Treasurer and the Secretariat will apply for it in the future.

Roland Hühn clarifies that UEF will probably apply for a regranting scheme in 2025, that information about the costs of new staff in the office have been asked to Partena and that the communication with the European Commission is good and takes place on a regular base.

Philip Agathonos recommends for the future to illustrate budget's details in the Federal Committee and not in the Congress.

## 16:30: Presentation of the study "Mapping the cost of non-Europe (2022-2032)" by Meena Fernandes, Political analyst in the European Parliamentary Research Service

## Workshop to present UEF position in view of the European Elections 2024 and discuss strategy and campaign.

Due to the agenda constraints, Alexandre Météreau explains that the workshop won't take place and will be opened outside the congress in the next weeks. He briefly illustrates the main objectives for the upcoming European elections: encourage voters to support a stronger Europe, encourage candidates to commit to the federalist ideas, challenge political parties to expose their views on the future of Europe. He asks for contributions by everyone on objective settings, target audience and mobilization through a forum online.

Raphael Bez opens the debate and gives the floor to Chloé Fabre: we saw a lot of interesting videos but, once we have the occasion to meet all together, it would be important to leave more room for the debate.

### Political debate:

Before opening the political debate, Philip Agathonos announces to the Congress that number of candidates equals the number of positions and suggests to proceed, after the debate and after each candidate has introduced himself, through acclamation. He also suggests that if some candidate wants to take the floor during the political debate to specify that he is a candidate.

Then, he opens the debate and gives the floor to:

**Hervé Moritz:** I want to make some considerations about the campaign. During the last FC we agreed about two strategies. First we support the opening of a convention until the next European elections, but if the convention is not opened we must maybe push for another strategy and encourage the next European Parliament to work on the proper initiative.

**Eszter Nagy:** I am a candidate for the EB. I wanted to react to the words of the Commission's representative. I was very happy to hear that the European Commission wants to create a European public sphere, because in Hungary we experience a national public sphere. The representative of the European institutions in Hungary is very much linked to the government, and this has negative consequences because he does not represent the EU neutrally. Moreover, 90% of the Hungarian media is controlled by the government, so that it will be very difficult to have a European debate in occasion of the European election. For these reasons, I would like to know more about the activity of the Commission to create a European public sphere.

**Pierangelo Cangialosi:** I have a suggestion for the European elections campaign: we can use the social media of the anti-federalist candidates to spread our message. More seriously, my concern is about the proposal for treaty reform. When in 1984 the Spinelli project was approved, Spinelli referred to the Hemingway novel "The old man and the sea" to underline the difficulties of avoiding that a federal project is plucked piece by piece by its opponents. This is what is happening with the European Parliament Report on Treaty reform, because the plenary did not approve the proposal to give fiscal capacity to the European Union. So, we have to defend what we have now and to ask for a convention.

**Alejandro Peinado:** It is very important that we push the national political parties to do a European campaign and to follow the programs that the European political parties are adopting. Domènec Ruiz Devesa is working with Sven Simon at a Report on European elections 2024 and we can also follow some of the recommendations contained in this report in order to consolidate a set of proposals to send to the national political parties. We must also take advantage of the fact that today we have here Alessandro Giordano from the European Commission, that described a bit the pilot project "Building Europe with local councilors". Our sections have indeed the possibility to promote the implementation of this project and

in a previous Federal Committee we adopted a resolution on it. My second point is that we must push the national political parties and the groups in the European Parliament to adopt resolutions to push the European Council to convene a convention. If we don't succeed in December, we must keep pushing in order to have the majority in the European Council as soon as possible. I also want to add that I am a candidate for the Executive Bureau.

**Velko Ivanov:** My point is that we should try to make the major European political parties to confirm that this time they will resist the pressure of national government and will follow the system of Spitzenkandidaten. We should also underline that the communication between European institutions must improve and the different institutions do not have to send different messages. If we want that the other take us serious, we have to behave serious. This would be a major signal that Europe is strong only when it is united.

**Wolfgang Wettach:** We have three audiences that we need to address in the next European elections: the older population, the population that starts at the 50 plus age bracket, and the young population, possibly voting in its first European election. We need to give them a reason to vote, because we can be tempted to defend what the European Union has done for us until now, but in the feeling of many people the European Union has not delivered enough. This includes the European pillar of social rights, and of course also the point of Spitzenkandidaten. If we give people the impression that they get to vote on the next Commission's President, we need to deliver. For the parliamentarians, we have to ask them to sign our manifesto, and once they have signed it, we should ask them also to become members of the national UEF section. This would give us much more visibility, because official candidates of the major political parties cannot be completely ignored by the media. For the older people, we should ask what would they want to change and tell them that Europe can deliver on those changes and that the cost of non-Europe has been too high in the past. As concerns young people, we should use social media like Tik-Tok with the help of JEFers.

**Philip Agathonos:** I will concentrate on the issues of foreign policy and defense. In 2009 we made substantial mistake. The first one is the permanent chair of the European Council. We created a position that strengthened the European Council and gave it a power that it was not supposed to have. This mistake created also a competition with the President of the Commission. The second big mistake was to give a third hat to the High Representative. There is nothing wrong in being high representative and vice-president of the Commission, but the High Representative is also the chair of the Council on Foreign Affairs. So, you have in the foreign, security and defense policy a comitology procedure. There is no presidency, which means that nobody has the right of initiative. The right of initiative is de facto in an authority that has no means to implement anything because it does not have a budget, except for paying the salaries. So, they can do nothing without the Commission doing and agreeing also on the financing. And the member States provide the capabilities. I do not think that we have to go back to the rotating presidency, but we need elected presidents: we need a president who has the power to broker a deal between the member States and the authority proposing deals, the external action service. The problem is who decides the decisive issues in defense, who will send the letter if a soldier is killed in mission. Only when you decide this, that's where the authority lies. You can of course have the co-decision of the Parliament, but you cannot send a soldier as long as the letter comes from a Member State. Only when the authority is transferred to Brussels there is no more veto power of the member States. If you want to be active, you need to have standby capacity, you need to be able to deploy people in the military, in the police, in the justice, in the civil administration. Finally, what I want to say to conclude is that we need much more investment in technology, innovation: we need to empower our companies, our own innovation in Europe, our data spaces, cyber, digitalization. We need to use the security and defense development to boost our companies, our own capabilities.

**Thorsten Frank:** I have three points. The first one is how can we get more members. In Germany we are a big section, but we are losing members and I think there are possibilities to get more grass-rooted action.

One example is the European Value Path, which is a mobile store art exhibition, that can be transported every four weeks from one little city or region to another, so that you can see, easily walking through a park, some European values. The second point concerns the fact that we followed also another approach, which is called the European Local Council Program, aimed at informing local councilors on what is going on in Europe and at encouraging them to make more education towards European issues. The third point concerns young people and how can we reach them. Perhaps we should use social media like Tik-Tok, but we can take care of our own organization, and we have JEF, that has a campaign called EurHope, that could be a good approach to young people.

**François Leray:** I am the former president of UEF France and I am a candidate for the EB. France is a small section, but we did many things. We created for example a scientific committee, composed by 20 members quite known in their field of expertise, that can talk about federalism. They go on television, radio, write on newspapers and they say that for people is better to be federalist than not federalist. We have also organized a few events, like the one in Strasbourg, and we are very proud of it. As concerns communication, I am the vice president of the French National Communication Association. We all talk about social media, but we shouldn't forget that in Europe there are many old people, and social media like Tik-Tok are useful for young people. So, we must use traditional medias and also Tik-Tok. My last point is that we should talk to common people, that have everyday problems like the cost of food. They cannot understand our institutional message, and we have to find the right message to let them understand that federal Europe could be useful also to give answers to problems like the cost of food and energy.

## 17.00: Presentation of the candidates to the different positions and elections

In his report the Treasurer started saying the positive conclusion of t

Philipp Agathonos, UEF XXVIII Congress Co-chair and member of the Presidium, reads the names of the new members of the Arbitration Board: Ugo Ferruta, Daniel Frey, Marianne Hühn, Andreu Iranzo Navarro, Peter Austin, Stefano Spoltore and Daniela White.

The Congress approves by consensus.

Mr. Agathonos reads the names of the candidates to the Executive Bureau: Antonio Argenziano, Raphael Bez, François Leray, Daphne Gogou, François Mennerat, Eszter Nagy, Alejandro Peinado Garcia, Wolfgang Wettach and suggests to fix the number of the EB members at eight. The Congress approves by consensus.

He then reads the names of the candidates as Vice-Presidents and proposes to fix the number of them at three. The names are: Markus Ferber, Alin Mituta and Giulia Rossolillo.

After the interventions of three delegates the Congress votes on the vice-Presidents.

Markus Ferber, Alin Mituta and Giulia Rossolillo are elected by large majority with 1 vote against and 5 abstentions.

For the position of President there is only one candidate: Domènec Ruiz Devesa.

The Congress elects him by unanimity.

Mr Agathonos explains that the other two individual positions, the one of Secretary General and the one of Treasurer will be *ad interim* positions, as the two candidates, Luisa Trumellini as Secretary General and Roland Hühn as Treasurer, will only remain in office until the next extraordinary Congress in spring.

The two candidates are elected by the Congress by unanimity.

The President of the Young European Federalists, Christelle Savall, is member *ex officio* of the Executive Bureau.

### EXECUTIVE BUREAU:

1	<b>PRESIDENT</b>	Domènec	<b>Ruiz Devesa</b>
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2	<b>VICE PRESIDENTS</b>	Markus	<b>Ferber</b>
3		Alin	<b>Mituța</b>
4		Giulia	<b>Rossolillo</b>
5	<b>SECRETARY-GENERAL</b> <i>ad interim</i>	Luisa	<b>Trumellini</b>
6	<b>TREASURER</b> <i>ad interim</i>	Roland	<b>Hühn</b>
7	<b>EB Members</b>	Antonio	<b>Argenziano</b>
8		Raphaël	<b>Bez</b>
9		François	<b>Leray</b>
10		Daphne	<b>Gogou</b>
11		François	<b>Mennerat</b>
12		Eszter	<b>Nagy</b>
13		Alejandro	<b>Peinado Garcia</b>
14		Wolfgang	<b>Wettach</b>
15	<b>EB Member as JEF President</b>	Christelle	<b>Savall</b>

As far as the Federal Committee is concerned, Philipp Agathonos explains that there are less candidates than positions and that the Congress is allowed to elect 11 people. He reads the names of the candidates (Jean Marsia, Olalla Pastor del Valle, Nikos Yannis, Francisco Aldecoa, Angel Landabaso, Flavia Gabriela Sandu, Hervé Moritz and Luis Miguel Pariza) and proposes to postpone the deadline for candidacy to the next day at 9, appealing especially to women for gender balance reasons. The name of Kati Systä is added to the list of candidates.

The session ends at 18.00.

## Sunday 26 November

9:30: Opening of the third session of the Congress

The election of the Federal Committee takes place. The following people are elected:

Francisco Aldecoa, Matilde Ceron, Nikos Giannis, Angel Landabaso, Eva Lichtenberger, Jean Marsia, Hervé Moritz, Olalla Pastor del Valle, Luis Miguel Pariza, Kati Systä, Flavia Gabriela Sandu

Substitutes directly elected FC members: Julia Preiss, Malte Steuber, Angela Schweizer, Rainer Wieland, Thorsten Frank.

## Political debate

Philip Agathonos opens the debate and gives the floor to:

**Florian Ziegelbach:** We must try to reach people who are not interested in and agree with our arguments. This is the commitment for the coming years. Communication to get our message across to people.

**Reiner Wieland:** Who is our worst enemy? Results are always seen as normal, due (e.g. roaming). It takes wars to show that things are not as they should be.

Spitzenkandidaten: the system last time didn't work because of the parliament, because it didn't oppose it. Many heads of state did not want Spitzenkandidaten.

We have to deal with the problem of nationalism. We have to distinguish nationalism and patriotism.

**Chloé Fabre:** I am the second woman to speak. We need to be more inclusive, both in terms of gender and age. I encourage all women to speak. For the next congress I would like the nominations to be published in advance so that we can discuss with them. I hope the new board members will do a lot.

European elections: in France we have already started action with the JEF and the European Movement. Next week we have a big conference organised with the UEF, UEF Milan and UEF Frankfurt on the future of Europe. Our task as UEF is to prepare the next European Parliament so that there are federalists in all important committees.

**Luca Lionello:** priorities of UEF. Improving communication but we have to ask why many people go towards extremism. This is the priority. To solve this problem it is not enough to explain the successes of the European integration process. People are afraid. The answer is to have a functioning EU which deliver. This is why we need a reformed EU capable of delivering, having a power, the resources, give answers to the problems. The second point is that if the convention is indeed called one problem will be that not every member state supports the treaty change. And here come the idea of multi speed integration, and we have to think how this will be structured.

**Carlo Maria Palermo:** enormous work we did bringing our ideas into the Conference in the Future of Europe and pushing for a treaty reform. Very important to remember what is the background of the Conference. People know which are the problems of the EU and that we need European solutions. Our role is to make these ideas vocal in the debate. Essential to challenge the political class. Two problems are pivotal: the one of the resources and the one of security and defence. The federalist are the people that bring these ideas to the debate.

**Christelle Savall:** Explaining the EurHope campaign, we asked to the young people what do they want from Europe. Young people are not homogeneous. Some people want more Europe, but they do not know that a treaty change is necessary, and we must explain them that it is. Another controversial issue is if do we want federalism or a Europe of nations. It is also very important to go to the countries where there are not a lot of federalists, because it is very different to be a federalist in France or in Poland. We will make campaign for the European elections and we will try to explain to the citizens why Europe is necessary and what Europe could do if it were stronger. Very happy to cooperate with UEF.

**Roberto Castaldi:** Institutions and policies go hand by hand and we need to be aware of that. As concerns the Spitzenkandidaten mechanism, I think that the responsibility of its failure is not only of the European Parliament, but also of the European parties, that should try to choose candidates that are acceptable for all the pro-European parties. As concerns the request of a Convention, it could be in the agenda in March, because there is no more time for December. The issue is to have a majority in the European Council. Finally, one of the elements lacking in the European Parliament proposal was differentiated integration. We need to start thinking how to avoid to end up with a referendum in France. A solution could be a European referendum with a double majority and the possibility of a second referendum. A double round like in French national elections.

**Theodoros Tsikas:** I am the vice-President of UEF Greece. It is important to focus on the way we express our views on the relationship between reform and enlargement. If we say that the Treaty reform is necessary to proceed with enlargement, it is correct. If, instead, we formulate this idea in a negative way, saying that there is no enlargement without reform, this risks to be an advantage for those that do not want a reform or enlargement.

**Sofia Viviani:** I want to focus on two points. The first one is that enlargement is a big asset but at the same time we have to be careful not to say that we want federalism just for enlargement. The second is that we have to be careful because the Council tries to use art. 49 TEU to reform the treaties. This would be a disaster and we must focus our narrative on Art. 48 TEU.

**Miguel Angel Martinez:** As Guy Verhofstadt is going to become president of European Movement International, I believe it is important we work closer together with them on federalists proposals.

## 10:30: Vote on the political documents

The following documents have been adopted:

- Manifesto For a Federal Europe: the Urgency of Overcoming the Current Treaties
- Resolution for Restoring Growth and Competitiveness in Europe
- Statement The Atrocities of the Wars in Ukraine and Palestine Remind Us of the Urgency of Having a Federal European Government to be Able to Act on the International Stage
- Political Declaration Reinforcing UEF-WFM Cooperation

## 11:30: Decisions related to the transfer of UEF headquarters from Netherlands to Belgium

Philipp Agathonos reads the points of the Agenda on which a decision should be taken by the Congress:

- a) Proposal for a decision to transfer the Association's headquarters from the Netherlands to Belgium, Région de Bruxelles capitale, Square de Meeûs, 25;
- b) Proposal to draw up Statutes in accordance with Belgian law, respecting the operating procedures of the existing Statutes and to adopt the form of an "Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif (AISBL)" to be called "UEF"



c) Proposal to accept the draft Statutes;  
d) Proposal that the Congress appoints Mrs Giulia ROSSOLILLO as sole representative to express before the Notary Bernard DEWITTE the will of the Congress to take the formal decision to change the headquarters, to adopt the new Statutes and to appoint the new administrators (EB members);  
e) Proposal that the Congress appoints Mrs Giulia ROSSOLILLO as sole representative to sign the deed in accordance with the foregoing resolutions, to request the aforementioned Notary DEWITTE to seek the approval of the Belgian Ministry of Justice for the AISBL's Statutes and to proceed with the publication of these Statutes in the Moniteur Belge.  
He then gives the floor to Giulia Rossolillo to illustrate the changes in the statutes necessary to adapt them to Belgian law, the steps that have been followed to come to the change of headquarters and cross border conversion of UEF and the reasons why she should be appointed as sole representative to take the formal decision at issue and to sign the notarial deed before the Notary Bernard Dewitte.  
All the decisions are approved by the Congress by unanimity with two abstentions.

## Closing remarks by the UEF President

Thank you for electing me President, this is a big responsibility to carry on the work and the political decisions taken during this congress. This for me is a big honor, the greatest honor a federalist can have is to be President of UEF. I follow in the steps of fantastic previous presidents. I was an active member a few years before being elected MEP. I see myself as a grassroots member of the movement, as an activist. I am glad I can bring the federalist message in the European Parliament. I would like to continue being an activist with you. If I continue in the institutions it would be great, but I will be active nonetheless. Thank all of you for your contributions and participations. I would like to thank Rainer Wieland in particular, that as Vice-President of the European Parliament, he joined us yesterday and today. Thank to all of those participating in the last EB and thank you for stayed committed and running again to the ones who run again. Thank you for Luisa Trumellini for acting as Secretary General, you continue in this challenging role and we know it is a hard job, we appreciate your availability for doing it. Thank you to Roland for continuing as treasurer, as you know that's the least popular position in an NGO. It is a lot of work and it is not easy work. Thank you to the team in the Secretariat that continued to work in difficult circumstances. Thank you to Giulia Rossolillo for taking up the responsibility of the legal representation of the grant vis-à-vis of the Commission. Practical matters are also important together with the political ones. Thank you Miguel Angel Martinez, former Vice President of the European Parliament and Member of the Board of trustees of the House of European History, he has attended our whole Congress.

I think in the end the Congress went well. We had a very compressed agenda to show the organization all the allies we have in the EP, all the MEPs who wish to join us, to help build the organization further. We also wanted to allow the delegates to interact and have a dialogue. The inputs are valuable.

Regarding the Secretariat, what we discussed in the FC is that we would like to change the statutes to make the Secretary General position full time, as the voluntary basis is not working. We will put this proposal forward in the following weeks.

We will approve an important report on AFCO in December on Spitzenkandidat. Regarding the report the Parliament adopted this week, I wish everyone voted for it. It is true that the report, in order to have the support of the five political group, they had specific things to put in the report. Some topics were controversial. Given this, the report was too long and Rainer Wieland was correct in criticizing it in this regard.

We are a united organization. What we have to do is to be able to develop a proper synthesis of the various feelings and opinions across our member organizations. We must also be able to build on our members' strengths and share the knowledge across the network.

We will focus on political activities around the European elections, such as campaigning for parties to have our ideas in their manifestos.

Thank you to all the venues hosting us and for everyone working hard over the weekend.

**End of the Congress**