**REPORT OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN OF EUROPE**

**QWGA AGM - MARCH 2021**

**UWE Conference and AGM**

The UWE conference 2020 was due to be held in Paris from 18-20 September 2020. The event was also to celebrate the centenary of the French Association, l’Association Française des Femmes Diplômées des Universités, and forty years of the University Women of Europe.

As we are all aware, the global restrictions on meetings and travel including higher than usual costs for those that can and are willing to travel had put our planned AGM in difficulty.

It was to be held in Paris on September 19, 2020, preceded by a beautiful program, including a visit to UNESCO, the discovery of a robot from the Orange Company, a gala dinner on the Seine with singers among other pleasant moments.

The UWE board waited as long as possible before taking the decision to cancel the General Assembly in Paris, looking into what other INGOs were doing.

At board meeting on June 4 2020, the Board took the following decisions unanimously:

1. The AGM physically in Paris is cancelled and all the Centenary commemoration of the French association - AFFDU

2. The AGM is going to be conducted virtually on the 19th September at 10 am, local time in Paris and going to be a short AGM with the statutory work included.

3. Similar to other organisations we propose:

To postpone elections. It is difficult for the NFAs to discuss together and propose a candidate, to confirm by the national boards, eventually the choice is not easy and for the candidate to present themselves. This year will be a WHITE YEAR, a year not accounted for in the mandates.

UWE is governed by the law of the country in which it has its legal seat. It is in the Netherlands, the legal and regulatory provisions of this country allow this concession due to the exceptional circumstances, similar arrangements were deployed in Belgium for the European Women Lobby.

As arranged by the UWE board, myself alongside other CERS and Presidents joined a virtual zoom meeting on Sunday 21st June 2020. Representatives asked numerous questions with many on the concept of a ‘white year’ including its implications. Following reassurance and some clarification, the attendees voted unanimously in favour of a white year and agreed to postpone the elections of the members of the board at the AGM of September, 19, 2020.

**All UWE terms are one year longer now**, so the new schedule for future elections is as follows:

2021 - election of Vice Presidents: possible 2nd term of Aisha Alshawaf, UK and Pina Foti, Italy

2022 - election of the President: possible 2nd term of Anne Negre, France

election of the Secretary General: end of mandate of Roxana Elena Petrescu, Romania

2023 - election of the Treasurer: end of mandate Annelies Pierrot-Bults, Netherlands

**Virtual AGM, 19th September 2020**

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Anne Nègre, UWE President, and Vice-president for Equality at the Conference of INGO’s of the Council of Europe. UWE Vice-president Aisha Alshawaf (BFWG), Treasurer Annelies Pierrot Bults (GWI-NL), and Secretary General Roxana Elena Petrescu (AFU Romania). The Irish Federation of University Women was represented by Leighanne Montgomery, CER, (QWGA). Unlike previous AGMs, it was decided by the Board to limit the presence of the participants to one person/each NFA, the CER or a delegate, in case the CER cannot attend. CERs of many other European federations were present, including Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, UK, Scotland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. As agreed under the Memorandum of Understanding with the Israel Association of University Women was invited to attend the AGM. However, Ora Sharon, CER of the Israel Association of University Women was unable to attend because they were celebrating the Jewish New Year in their country. Ora sent apologies in advance and requested that in the future we will take into account important holidays when we fix the date of our AGM.

*Reports from the UWE Board*

Board members reported on their activities in the year 2019-2020, including actions taken at both the Council of Europe and the European Women’s Lobby.

*President’s Report*

UWE president Anne Nègre gave a comprehensive report, a copy of which is to be made available on the UWE website. She detailed actions taken by the UWE Board, including registration of the UWE office, as voted in Graz as P.O. Box 7922, 1008 AC, Amsterdam , Netherlands. The postal address is at the headquarters of the AFFDU, a French association: 4 rue de Chevreuse 75006 Paris.

Anne gave details of the sensible decision to hold board meetings at a lower cost and more often, board meetings have been held virtually or on the fringe of our events. She gave great thanks to the board, stating UWE is fortunate to have such a dynamic and competent board.

Anne noted that finances are good, but commented on her role as CoE. Once Anne is no longer elected as CoE travel and subsistence expenses as UWE representative at the CoE will be taken care of by UWE again.

The Meet and Greet of 2020 was highlighted in the report, including the IrFUW’s ambition to host the event again in 2021, hoping that the Travel Restrictions will be lifted by then so we‘ll be able to meet UWE Members to Dublin.

The UWE president outlined actions that were undertaken by UWE in the past year. This included the collective complaints. Anne summarized that The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) has adopted 15 decisions on state compliance with the right to equal pay, as well as the right to equal opportunities in the workplace, following complaints which were lodged within the framework of the collective complaints procedure by University Women Europe (UWE) on August 24, 2016. The decisions concern the 15 States which have accepted the complaints procedure (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden), were adopted by the ECSR on 5 and 6 December 2019 and became public on 29th June 2020. UWE President, Dr. Anne Bergheim-Nègre has strongly encouraged us to work to ensure this decision is effective. “It’s up to you to make them effective, to disseminate them as widely as possible in the countries of the European continent. It’s up to you to continue the fight so that this deep injustice of unequal wages between women and men ceases, as well as the absence or the few women on the boards of directors of companies and executive committees. ” – Dr. Anne Bergheim-Nègre, President UWE.

*Treasurer’s Report*

UWE Treasurer, Annelies Pierrot Bults, who is also treasurer of the European Women’s Lobby, presented the UWE accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 and budget for 2021 with a short powerpoint. Annelies said that UWE had no deficit for the year. Annelies also noted that as we needed to be a legal entity for projects the admin fees for the year had increased due to registering as a legal entity. There was however, a small data entry error for admin. This was stated as £50, instead of £50 which will be corrected. Annelies and the committee commented that finances are sound, with a high reserve.

*Russian Federation of University Women*

The Russian Federation of University Women applied to be a full member of UWE, representatives at the AGM were asked to vote in agreement or opposition to this application. The Russian Federation of University Women has been accepted as a full member of UWE.

*Meet and Greet 2020*

The UWE Meet and Greet was due to take place in Dublin from 15th - 17th May 2020 - an event that the sub-committee put great time and effort into arranging. I want to extend my thanks to all involved, the speakers and activities were well throughout and prepared. Unfortunately as we ventured into April 2020, we acknowledged that the Covid-19 restrictions were unlikely to be lifted enough to successfully host the event, many of our European friends would be unable to travel also. After a discussion with the UWE Board and IrFUW Meet & Greet Committee we agreed to place the event on hold indefinitely.

At the UWE AGM in September, we put forward a proposal to remain the host of the UWE Meet & Greet in 2021. Following all our preparations, we feel we are in a strong position to host the social event next year, if Covid-19 restrictions permit. It was agreed at the UWE AGM that we will host the Meet & Greet again, over the 14th -15th May 2021.

Considerations have since been made to the limited detail and understanding of the Covid-19 restrictions in Ireland on travel, social distancing and vaccine roll-out. Following discussions with the IrFUW council and UWE board, we have agreed to cancel the in-person event indefinitely. We are now in discussion with the UWE board in regards to hosting a short, social, online event. More information to follow in the coming weeks.

*UWE Conference and AGM 2021*

It was agreed at the UWE 2020 Virtual AGM that the UWE conference & AGM 2021 will be held in Finland next September. Details will be sent to members as soon as they become available.

**Leighanne Montgomery**

**Coordinator of European Relations**

**March 2021**