

COFACE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

13-14th March 2019
Dublin, Ireland

Participants :

Jean-Bernard AUDUREAU, ASGECO (ES)
Norma BERNAD, UNAF (ES)
Eric DE WASCH, Treasurer, Gezinsbond (BE)
Annemie DRIESKENS, President, Gezinsbond (BE)
Virginie DURIN, Familles de France (FR)
Peter GRABNER, Family Initiative (SI)
Sven IVERSEN, AGF (DE)
Eija KOIVURANTA, Vaestoliitto (FI)
Renata OUREDNIKOVA, Women For Women (CZ)
Elisabeth POTZINGER, KFÖ (AT)
Mériadec RIVIÈRE, UNAF (FR)
Gaetano SANTONOCITO, AIAS (IT)
Silvija STANIC, Step By Step (HR)
Antonia TORRENS, Vice-President, KMOP (EL)

Secretariat:

Liz GOSME, Director
Irene BERTANA, Policy and Advocacy Officer
Florian CHARRON, Senior Project and Finance manager
Arianna GIORGI, Trainee
Pascual MARTINEZ, Policy and Advocacy Officer
Martin SCHMALZRIED, Policy and Advocacy Manager
Isabell WUTZ, Communication Officer

Excused:

Chantal BRUNO, APF (FR)
Sylvie HIRTZ, APEMH (LU)
Kinga JOO, NOE (HU)
Mariela NANKOVA, WMAV (BG)
Marie NYSENS, Ligue des Familles (BE)
Gonçalo SOLLA, Fundação LIGA (PT)
Stanislas TRNOVEC, Club of Large Families (SK)

Irish delegation (on the 13th only):

Daphne AHRENDT, Eurofound / Rachel CASSEN, LEAP / Carmel DAWSON, ICA / Zoe HUGHES, Care Alliance Ireland / Liz KERRINS, Children's Rights Alliance / Karen KIERNAN, One Family / Anne PAYNE, ICA / Sarah SHERIDAN, Focus Ireland / Wayne STANLEY, Focus Ireland / Bernice TURNER, Eurofound / Sam DUNNE, Treoir

13th March 2019

AC meeting part 1

1. Welcome by Annemie Drieskens, President

Annemie Drieskens welcomes the participants and opens the session at 14.45. She mentions the difficult political situation in which civil society is evolving: the Brexit, the shrinking civic space, the yellow jackets movement, the climate change issue, etc.

Inequalities are growing again, families are left behind, the social crisis is still hitting the communities, there is a rise of discrimination against families on the move and migrants, etc. The values that we promote at COFACE are clearly under threat.

She reminds that the end of the year 2018 was a very busy period with the work-life-balance directive. She congratulates the members and the team for the goal achieved, as the WLB directive has been adopted. The entire network can consider this as a very important milestone. She adds that COFACE has already launched the second step of the puzzle of the Worklife balance puzzle: the call for a New EU deal for childcare. She emphasizes that parents need good services, and to ensure this, COFACE needs to mobilize and realise.

2. Draft agenda & Draft minutes

The draft agenda is approved without modification.

Florian Charron mentions that there was no comment received about the minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes are then approved.

3. Statutory business

-Membership update.

Annemie Drieskens announces that Hervé Hoffmann left Pro-xy and as a consequence unfortunately he will not be present anymore to the COFACE meetings. The Secretariat will try to reconnect with the new Director after Dublin.

She also adds that the Belgian organisation AP3 just left COFACE.

Liz Gosme counterbalances those news by saying that there is a lot of interest in joining COFACE from different family organisations across Europe, and that new applications may come at the time of the General Assembly in May 2019.

-Annual report 2018.

Liz Gosme presents the annual report 2018.

Remarks:

Elisabeth Potzinger mentions that it would be helpful to have a shorter version, like an A4 paper, to ensure the dissemination.

Sven Iversen adds that some paragraphs seem to be doubled, even sometimes by using the same wording.

Liz Gosme will ensure a double check about the text, mentioning that the framework in which COFACE has to evolve for the final reporting may lead to this kind of repetition.

The annual report is then adopted.

-Annual financial report 2018.

Eric De Wasch presents the financial report. He reminds the AC about the co-financing system (80%-20%) and the different audits that COFACE needs to go through. He especially mentions the difference between the initial planned budget and the final underspend in the 2018 budget due to the 3 COFACE changes of staff in 2018.

There is no remark, and **the financial report is adopted by the AC members.**

Annemie Drieskens thanks Eric De Wasch for his involvement within COFACE those last years as Treasurer.

- Assessment of the EU work-life balance directive

Annemie Drieskens presents the assessment of the EU work-life balance directive.

In this document, COFACE highlights the advancement of rights for working parents and working carers. This Directive has to be considered as a milestone, an important step in the right direction and she is convinced that it will benefit the well-being of all family members. She invites the members to monitor the national transposition processes closely and to insist on upward national reforms to meet the needs of families.

Liz Gosme mentions the background and details more the assessment. It highlights how the directive paves the way for a strengthening European values of gender equality, social inclusion, diversity and non-discrimination; examines the new minimum standards on paid family leaves (paternity, parental, carers); considers the employment rights and right to request flexible arrangements which hold potential to change workplace culture; and finally underlines some derogation clauses which require further assessment. The document ends with guidelines for

CONFIDENTIAL

transposition to consolidate national policies and legislation. As soon as both co-legislators have approved the Directive (in the next month), COFACE will expect national governments to consolidate these social rights, involving relevant civil society organisations representing families of all types without discrimination, and move towards swift transposition.

She reminds that most COFACE member organisations were involved in this process, and it is greatly thanks to them that an agreement was found on the directive.

Pascual Martinez declares that with this assessment COFACE shows its leadership on the topic of worklife balance at EU level. He explains that the “EU bubble” is waiting for this assessment, and thinks it is a good starting point for further action during the transposition process into national law.

Annemie Drieskens encourages members to follow the transposition of the WLB directive and to use the assessment prepared by the COFACE secretariat.

Remarks:

Elisabeth Potzinger says that the WLB directive is very useful for encouragements. She mentions the fact that the Conservative party endorsed it and even promoted it directly through the paternity leave of one of the Ministers in charge.

Annemie Drieskens is really glad to say that COFACE is now well recognized and respected at EU level regarding this dossier. She would like the member organisations to give their feedbacks about how it is implemented at national level, and stay in close contact with the COFACE secretariat about this.

4. Debrief from seminar “Economics at service of society”

-Exchange of views about the seminar and results on Economics policy brief

Martin Schmalzried presents the Economics policy brief. He reminds the AC that on the 22nd and 23rd of November 2018 COFACE-Families Europe held a seminar entitled “Economics at the service of society”. He details the content of the policy brief which is structured along the lines of the seminar rationale providing the context (GDP indicator, failures of the banking system, inequalities rising, deregulation of the financial industry, etc.), highlighting the interventions of speakers in Plan A and Plan B.

Remarks:

There is a discussion between Eric De Wasch and Martin Schmalzried regarding universal and minimum income. Martin reminds that unemployment benefits is insurance-based while universal basic income is intended as a universal grant, which is a different approach.

Antonia Torrens reminds that even if the crisis really hit Greece very hard, as the family unit is very strong the support was ensured through family intergenerational solidarity.

Annemie Drieskens mentions that the donut economy is a bit equal to what COFACE is promoting – a mix of social and environmental sustainability, namely striving for Economics at the service of

society AND the planet. The two boundaries of limits of the economy, like the donut, are the environment and society. The donut model ticks so many boxes, so Annemie suggests that COFACE explore it further. She would also like to explore the time banks system, maybe in Barcelona when visiting ASF.

Eric De Wasch also mentions the “climate bank” that is discussed during start of the EU election campaign.

Liz Gosme reminds that what Martin Schmalzried is doing is much respected at EU level in many EU advisory groups. Through the Economics seminar, COFACE wanted to bring his knowledge and contacts into a COFACE event. Maybe we may have next year an internal meeting about economics as well in order to identify all the economics policy experts in the COFACE network.

Annemie Drieskens adds that, much like the green economy, COFACE refers to the reconciliation economy through the WLB package. We need to build on how to reconcile families and economics.

Martin Schmalzried wants to make sure that the position of COFACE is acknowledged in economic and financial circles, ensuring that families have access to basic bank services and access to credit through a very functional financial system which promotes the general interest. Otherwise, if the system fails, families will be automatically hit.

Sven Iversen mentions the fact that on page 4 it is written “recommendations”. Martin Schmalzried proposes that it may be better to call this document a “seminar report” rather than a COFACE policy brief. The AC agrees to this and the seminar report will be published in the March newsletter.

14th March 2019

AC meeting part 2

- Feedback about the session with the Irish delegation

There is interest from some Irish organisations to join the network. It was nice as well to reconnect with ICA. Liz mentions that LEAP wants to become member but with One Family they have some issues regarding the membership fee. Maybe that will be the good opportunity to test the phasing test. We could reproduce the same kind of event in another country, like Sweden as an example.

The members are really happy to have the opportunity to meet the Irish organisations. They appreciated the format of the session and the venue (Europe House) as well.

5. Building inclusive societies. COFACE position paper.

Liz Gosme explains the process, the stocktaking exercise by Caitlin Ackerman (COFACE intern from October-December 2018). As a result of this exercise, two documents were produced: a policy brief and a position paper.

Presentation of policy brief on COFACE actions in support of migrant families and children. This policy brief was published in December 2018 following the work of Caitlin Ackerman in consultation with the members. Additional actions can be included in this policy brief if members would like to show their work in support of migrant families. Annemie Drieskens invites the members to advise the Secretariat if there is something going on in their country.

Irene Bertana presents the policy position on building inclusive societies. See presentation on the AC meeting webpage.

Remarks on the position paper:

Elisabeth Potzinger thinks we need three-generation support. We should make up our mind if we want to talk about informal or family care. She would like to receive the presentation of Irene Bertana.

Sven Iversen says that we should define at the beginning the definition of children with a migrant background, and we have to be careful about words like inclusion, integration, where does integration stop and inclusion start?

Annemie Drieskens likes the position paper, and has some comments as Gezinsbond. About school professionals, we should add teachers-to-be (in training); maybe mention that there is a need for an inclusive labour market; important to say that there is an inclusive mindset needed. Schools should hire more teachers with migrant background; if we speak about inclusive culture, we should also mention inclusive services; if there a coordination between the Commission DGs on this topic?

Antonia Torrens adds that we need lots of effort and training for families and schools in general, finding new channels to create synergies in the best interest of the children.

Liz Gosme reminds that COFACE works with especially one DG, DG EMPL, which tends to approach the issue of migration from a labour market perspective. DG JUST is tackling the issue from a child rights perspective, DG EAC from the school perspective, and DG HOME leads on migration and asylum policy.

Irene Bertana asks the members to send her some materials they may have regarding the topic.

Liz Gosme says that the document can be translated if there is interest, and that COFACE can share those costs with the interested members. We need to support migrant communities as well as host communities as well (preventing cuts in family-related budgets).

She mentions that in Denmark they are reforming ECEC, making it almost compulsory from the earliest age as a way to ensure inclusion. Annemie Drieskens adds that in Belgium they recently have a debate to make ECEC compulsory. Parents with no job and low incomes, should not be blamed when they choose NOT to introduce their children into childcare facilities. Gezinsbond are considering now that those parents without work should be supported, not only making ECEC compulsory for all of them. Elisabeth Potzinger thinks we need special training and we cannot forget the ECEC and the financing of the kinder garden. It is more than learning language, it is also inclusion.

The position paper is adopted, taking into account the different suggestions and amendments of AC members. It will be published in May before the European elections.

6. EU update

-Digitalization + GDPR implementation

Martin Schmalzried reminds the AC that the GDPR was implemented since last year. Many people talked about GDPR and COFACE is working on a video series “GDPR- Know your rights” on how much control of your data do you have, how it is working, what are your rights. We have started with a first video on data portability. The idea is to make sure that the stakeholders get involved in the process and better understand how the GDPR affects families. The COFACE members had a look at it and appreciated it.

He talks about bullying, online environment, the negative experiences that children have, we are also involved in a project called “Digital Citizenship Education” with the Council of Europe, and advising various EU expert groups on media literacy, fake news issues and safer internet and more.

Remarks:

Annemie Drieskens mentions that Gezinsbond won an award for its safer internet programme, and she would like to thank COFACE members for the support, the programme is called “Safer online”. It might be translated in Bulgarian and Greek through an Erasmus+ project.

Following questions on Youtube kids, Martin Schmalzried explained that for a few years now he has drawn attention to the flaws of this video sharing platform, the strengths but also the weaknesses which is the subtle advertising (eg unboxing videos), the lack of control over the suggested videos that children might end up watching.

Liz Gosme talks about the COFACE expert meeting in Athens on digitalization to come in November 2019 and the need to mobilise the COFACE network to attend this. It will take place on 20-21 November 2019.

Sven Iversen informs the members that AGF just finished a paper on digitalization and care. They have a commission for the elderly and AGF gave an input about that to the Government. This will be part of a larger paper that will be finished this year.

- European Pillar of social rights (7 principles)

Liz Gosme says that the main news about the EPSR is the WLB directive being adopted, and further actions are being taken to implement actions in the fields of childcare, long-term care, access to financial services and more.

Irene Bertana mentions as well a European report on energy poverty. COFACE is co-signing a manifesto and there will be a convergence of national activists from the 12th of June 2019.

Pascual Martinez says that there will be a country assessment done by DG EMPL and DG JUST, to examine how well these countries implement the EU worklife balance directive. He is also working with the EIGE (gender equality institute) on developing a worklife balance index (linked to the EU gender equality index), and in general keeping up links with EU agencies like EIGE and Eurofound which publish useful reports on topics matching the needs of COFACE. The voice of civil society organisations is generally appreciated by these agencies.

-European Accessibility Act

On the disability front, Irene Bertana announces that the transposition of the European Accessibility Act will start this year, and we will follow this closely with the European Disability Forum. She also mentions the review of the 10-year European Disability Strategy, and the work of the EEG on Deinstitutionalisation. She invites AC members to send their experts to the COFACE Disability meeting on 13-14th June in Luxembourg.

-European Budget + EU funds (ESIF briefing)

Update on the negotiation of next European budget by Irene Bertana: we are following the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Common Provision Regulations (CPR), the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III).

She described the work in different coalitions, in particular with:

- the European [Expert Group](#) on the Transition from Universal to Community-Based Care on ESF+, ERDF and CPR (our key demands [here](#))
- the [Alliance](#) on Investing in Children on ESF+ and CPR (our joint statement [here](#))
- the European Platform on Asylum and Migration on AMF (joint statement [here](#))
- child/disability rights organisations on IPA III

We drafted reactions to the Commission proposals and we worked with the Parliament that had to write reports on each draft regulation. The results of the lobbying strategies were broadly positive, our key points included references to human rights treaties on child and disability rights, stronger partnership with civil society, strong funding to social inclusion and were included in the

Parliament reports. After the elections and the establishment of the new European Parliament we will continue our advocacy work on the trilogues involving Commission, Parliament and Council.

Remarks:

Jean-Bernard Audureau comments on energy poverty and namely the relation between poverty and lack of energy efficiency. ASGECO is trying to raise awareness to consume less energy – but low-income families are under much pressure so it can be difficult to reach out to them.

Irene Bertana also refers to the idea of a European Child guarantee (which would potentially be a portion of the EU budget earmarked for investment in children specifically), she reminds the AC that the idea of some political groups was to do the same as for the youth guarantee.

Liz Gosme reminds the members that the 2021-2027 budget is being defined this year, and there for NOW is the time for COFACE members to act and get involved in national consultations/negotiations on the use of EU funds. For instance there will be a national consultation on the use of the ESF in France in Autumn 2019. She tells the members that now is the time to knock at the door of the funding authorities, giving them evidence of the needs of families and highlighting potential good practices for funding in order to unblock funding today and in the future

To support members, Irene Bertana presented an ESF+ briefing to the members and this will be available on the AC meeting webpage.

Liz Gosme reminds that COFACE has published a call for a new EU deal for the childcare (in December 2018).

Elisabeth Potzinger tells the importance of the intergenerational dimension of the care.

7. Campaigns/communications update

-Results of communications seminar (22nd February)

Annemie Drieskens thanks the team for organizing this COMMS seminar. She is launching a call to enlarge the COMMS group. Liz Gosme thanks as well the members to have sent someone to this meeting. Isabell Wutz communications officer brought in an external expert into this seminar, to support and facilitate the work/discussions. She thinks it would be useful to have annual meetings of communications officers of the COFACE network.

-European Parliament elections: update on actions at EU and national level

Annemie Drieskens reminds that we need a strong EP for the future, and she mentioned the launch of the COFACE call to action in February 2019 based on the principles approved by the AC in Graz. The launch took place during a high-level event at the EESC on the topic of democracy and elections. She called on members to translate and use this call to action, and build momentum on social media and in the press. It would be useful to send the COFACE secretariat two things:

- 1/ What is your ambition with this? Do you have plans to use this call to action in your countries?
- 2/ How could we build a strategy around the ten principles?

CONFIDENTIAL

She reminds the AC that at the COMMS seminar on the 22nd of February, there were group discussions focusing on country specific approaches which yielded many ideas on how to communicate Europe to local citizens, taking a societal issue like worklife balance and translating into actions of daily life.

Isabell Wutz informs that some members already sent translations in Czech, Dutch, and Spanish is in preparation, as well as Hungarian. The next step in the campaign will be to storify Europe, to make the voters realize why it is important to vote and to vote for our COFACE values. It needs to speak to the audience we reach. She is happy to receive anything and then discuss about what we can do. She also mentions all the information that members can find on the website already in the section called “European elections”.

Liz Gosme mentions the call to action and the infographics, namely that Arianna and Isabell are currently working with different members on translations and other language versions. The next phase will be to create one or two videos that will be ready in April, to communicate how the EU can impact positively the citizens. She reminds of the fact that the members need to tag us on social media to know what they are doing, and that the plan is to prepare a collective social media wave around the 15th of May, and that this the elections will be further discussed in Barcelona during the General Assembly.

Elisabeth Potzinger reminds that this year we will also celebrate the 25th anniversary of the International day of Families (Silver Jubilee).

Annemie Driescens thinks we should relaunch our values on this occasion. We could highlight what COFACE is expecting from the MEPs.

8. 2019 key COFACE actions

Annemie Driescens mentions the different activities coming up in 2019:

- Barcelona, 6-8th May: Administrative Council/General Assembly/Worklife balance expert meeting, with Asociacion Salud y Familia (internal)
- Luxembourg, 13-14th June: COFACE Disability platform meeting, with APEMH (internal)
- Helsinki, 3-4th October: Administrative Council (internal) & Conference on child health and well-being, under the Finnish presidency of the EU, with Vaestoliitto (public)
- Athens, 19-20th November: Expert meeting on digital parenting, with KMOP (Universal Children’s Day).

Liz Gosme asks the members to send their policy experts on WLB for the Barcelona meeting, during which we will be talking about childcare, the transposition of the WLB directive, including the disability organisations, the one parent families’ organisations, etc.

Annemie Driescens thinks it would be good to create a kind of worklife balance network with companies, to be discussed at the meeting in Barcelona. She also mentions that in Belgium there is a campaign managed by the Ministry of Labour to encourage fathers to take their paternity and parental leaves.

Liz Gosme presents the proposal for the Helsinki conference. She suggests having Open Spaces instead of workshops for the conference, so that the conference can be a space for transnational exchanges but also for in-depth learning of practices with one speaker per Open Space. As an example, Martin Schmalzried will be presenting Nutrimedias about food advertising.

Remarks:

Virginie Durin likes the format but maybe we need to think more about the name. “Open space” is not clear enough (at least for the French).

Elisabeth Potzinger would like to talk about child friendly cities in the programme. In Graz they have an audit launched and by September it will be finished.

Liz Gosme also mentions UNAPEI for inclusive childcare.

Liz Gosme thinks it would be useful to try again the lunch networking hotspots (as was done for Families on the Move).

Eija Koivuranta mentions the Ministries of Education and Family Affairs. The COFACE conference will be included in the official calendar of the Finnish Presidency.

Antonia Torrens: there is an initiative from some member organisations of COFACE like Gezinsbond, Vaestoliitto and KMOP to create a Digital Family Lab where all MOs could find very useful materials for very various topics: health education, sexual education, bullying. She made an open call to everyone who is interested in participating. There would be some short videos, short on-line courses and create a COFACE Family Lab, which will be useful for everyone. This would be further discussed at the General Assembly and consolidated at the Athens meeting on 20-21 November.

The AC finished with a short discussion about 2020 with different suggestions emerging:

- Internal expert meeting on Economics
- It would be good to host COFACE meetings under the Croatian and German Presidencies of the EU
- Elisabeth Potzinger prefers that the meetings be organised from Monday to Wednesday.

9.AOB

Annemie Drieskens says that IPPF asked us to mobilize against the World Family Congress meeting 2019. In 2017, the congress was held in Budapest. It is very conservative and discriminatory against the diversity of families. IPPF is managing a petition against it and to counter-attack the WFC.

Elisabeth Potzinger does not think it is necessary to take position against this event. Gaetano is supporting her, saying that it may damage what COFACE is doing. It is better for him to not react at all. He mentions that last week the government did not give the official support from the Italian



Draft agenda

CONFIDENTIAL

government for this event. If we want to have a meeting on disability in Italy, this can be organized. We could have like a big conference with families with disabilities, like a sports' event, potentially partnering with Special Olympics. The impact of their previous event was fantastic, there was a national event managed in Toscana, which gathered 5000 people, in Siena.

Annemie Drieskens thanks the AC members for their input, and will consider this issue more closely in the coming weeks ahead of the meeting which will take place end of March.

The meeting ends at 13.50.