

FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS D'ÉTUDES CLASSIQUES  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE SOCIETIES OF CLASSICAL STUDIES

Le Secrétaire général : Prof. Paul SCHUBERT, 7 rue des Beaux-Arts, CH-2000 NEUCHÂTEL  
tél. (prof.) (41) 22 379 70 35 tél. (privé) (41) 32 725 16 80  
fax (41) 22 379 79 32 e-mail : paul.schubert@unige.ch www.fiecnet.org

---

**Meeting at the Fondation Hardt (Geneva / Vandœuvres), March 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup>, 2012**

Attended by : Dame Averil Cameron (President), FrancoMontanari (Treasurer) and Paul Schubert (Secretary General)

The general aim of this meeting was to discuss some improvements in the way FIEC is working, in order to make the Federation more efficient and allow it to better serve its purpose. This process of review is highly necessary, purely as good practice ; in this particular case, it was initiated by some very helpful comments sent to us by Kurt Raaflaub (former President of the American Philological Association).

We needed to pave the way for a discussion to be held with the whole FIEC Board on the occasion of the FIEC General Assembly in Bari (Sept.7<sup>th</sup>, 2012).

We agreed on some basic points :

- Finances will be a key issue in the future of FIEC.
- The purpose of FIEC is – and remains – to create a link between societies of classical studies throughout the world.
- Views may be mixed about our five-yearly congresses, and it may be useful to review the format ; but they serve a useful purpose since there is no other similar gathering potentially of all classicists worldwide.
- In present and future conditions, FIEC probably needs to be more responsive to its member associations and to the subject than it has been in the past, and we need to consider how to achieve this.

We suggest a double approach, which would rest on an increase of funding : first, developing our presence on the web, since this seems to be the most efficient way of reaching our societies and the public ; second, increasing the number of members of the FIEC Board, with the intent to assign a specific task to each member.

*Increase of funding*

No development of FIEC activities can be considered without additional funding. Presently we receive only limited fees from our affiliated societies, and all the work done on behalf of FIEC by its officers is performed on a voluntary basis.

*Developing our presence on the web*

We should re-design the website with the help of a professional designer, not only to make it look more attractive, but above all in order to develop some new functions. There should be much more information on the website, which should be fed in by someone who would

collect the information on a regular basis. The website should also allow people to communicate with FIEC in an interactive way (providing information, making suggestions, etc.). It should offer a permanent platform for the organization of congresses, where people could upload abstracts. This might raise the general perception of FIEC congresses.

The website should be a tool for better governance, with increased transparency on the way FIEC works. It should help us in the process of fund raising, in the promotion of Classics, and in the fostering of contacts on a truly international basis (i.e. including countries outside of Europe / North America / Australia). We could also better manage the allocation of the small travel grants which we started giving out for the 2009 Congress in Berlin.

Our present means are very modest. Societies affiliated to FIEC pay a yearly fee of € 110.- ; some societies cannot afford even such a small amount, others pay a little more ; but on the whole, we receive ca. € 7'000.- / 8'000.- every year. Subsidies from CIPSH have dried out. All the work done for FIEC by its officers is done on a strictly voluntary basis. Each one of us has only limited time to devote to FIEC.

How do we pay for the development ?

- The initial development of a new website could be paid for by cutting the three symbolic subsidies which we pay to scientific projects (*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, *Année Philologique*) on a yearly basis of € 1'000.- each.
- For the upkeep of the website, one member of the Board will have to supervise the flow of information.
- As for the technical part of the process, i.e. uploading information on the website, this should be done by a graduate student, who would have to be paid for his/her work. For this we need additional funding. We should first consider raising the yearly fee paid by societies affiliated to FIEC .
- We should also issue regular appeals not only to societies, but to individuals who would be willing to support FIEC. We should therefore consider setting up a system of individual (and not only institutional) membership, with a modest fee (€ 25.- ?) [N.B. : this will imply a change in the FIEC constitution]. This could be done either through direct contact or through our affiliated societies. Individuals, however, will accept to support us only if they feel that FIEC is doing something in return for their contribution ; it is thus important that we function better as a medium for information on classical studies (announcing events, job openings, information on efforts to promote Classics in different parts of the world etc.).

### *Increasing the number of the members of the FIEC Board*

The current FIEC constitution states that there are seven members of the FIEC Board :

- A President
- Two Vice-Presidents
- A Treasurer
- A Secretary General
- Two ordinary members

A proposal will be made in Bari to increase this number to ten by adding three ordinary members. In the future, all members of the Board should be assigned a specific task, such as (for instance) : uploading material onto the website; fund raising ; promoting classical

studies ; promoting international contact ; managing the allocation of FIEC travel grants ; staying in touch with our societies etc.

The next election will take place in Bordeaux (2014). We must make a proposal for each seat, but should also make sure that alternative proposals can be made by societies affiliated to FIEC. In every case, candidates should present a statement on their willingness to help within the FIEC Board, each candidate with a specific task.

### *Organization of congresses*

FIEC itself does not contribute directly to the cost of the congresses, and they are a considerable financial burden to the hosts. As a matter of principle, congresses need to break even, e.g. by reducing the present large number of invited speakers whose expenses are paid in full, and/or by reducing the amount covered for speakers.

In other words, inviting fifty guest speakers – as has been the case in recent congresses – seems no longer feasible. We should probably bring it down. The international organizing committee should also be pruned down (one representative from the FIEC Board + a few other members), and included within the national organizing committee. International members would attend only one or two decisive sessions of the organizing committee. The actual format of the congresses also needs to be reviewed, and the relation between FIEC itself and the local organizers clarified.

FIEC congresses are sometimes criticized for accepting most papers, with a disregard for quality. We could therefore try a system consisting of different levels, e.g. :

- Invited speakers : in plenary sessions.
- Speakers selected on the basis of a careful vetting process.
- Shorter papers where the selection process would be less rigorous.
- We could also consider having panels on a specific topic, with speakers from several countries. Some societies might wish to set up a panel at their own expense.

Those are only suggestions ; whereas the general frame needs a thorough revision, details will have to be reviewed on the basis of feedback. We therefore need to find ways of getting a better feedback at the end of congresses.

### *Conclusion*

All those proposals should be first submitted by e-mail to all current members of the FIEC Board, asking for their opinion (and input). When we meet in Bari, there should be a preliminary discussion by the Board, before the General Assembly. Finally, this will be also discussed on the occasion of the General Assembly.