



Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS) – Cyprus

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MINUTES OF THE FOUNDING MEETING OF AN ASSOCIATION OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS IN CYPRUS (AFICS-CYPRUS)

HELD AT UNFICYP HQ, NICOSIA ON 20 NOVEMBER 2012

Agenda Item 2 - Adoption of the provisional agenda

1. Mr. Anders Tholle (Focal Point and member of the Organizing Committee) opened the meeting at 10:15 hours and asked those present whether there were any proposals for any additional items to be included in the agenda. After some deliberation the agenda was adopted 'as is'. The agenda is attached hereto for ease of reference.

Agenda Item 1 - Welcome address by SRSG/CM UNFICYP

2. On the arrival of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Chief of Mission, UNFICYP, Ms. Lisa Bутtenheim, she welcomed those present and congratulated the Organizing Committee for their efforts in establishing an Association of Former International Civil Servants in Cyprus (AFICS-Cyprus) which she felt was overdue. She was pleased to see both local and international former staff members at the meeting and hoped that it would be the first of many meetings of the AFICS in Cyprus.

3. On the departure of the Ms. Bутtenheim from the meeting, Mr. Tholle introduced himself and elaborated on his 35 year career with the UN. He stated that Mr. Gert Schmidt was the mainstay of the Organizing Committee which was composed of seven experienced former UN staff members. Thereafter, the remaining members of the Organizing Committee introduced themselves, namely, Mr. Gert Schmidt, Mr. Michael McNally, Ms. Aida Bichara-McNally, Ms. Micheline Sevan, Ms. Cecilia Sidera and Mr. Giannfranco Longo also attended the meeting.

Agenda Item 3 - Decision to establish an Association of Former International Civil Servants

4. Mr. Tholle stated that the decision to establish an AFICS in Cyprus was a historic moment in time and requested those present to indicate their agreement to the creation of an AFICS in Cyprus. All retirees/beneficiaries present were in favor of the establishment of AFICS-Cyprus.

Agenda Item 4 - Review and approval of draft Statutes of the Association



5. Mr. Tholle expressed his gratitude to Mr. Ioannis Antoniadis for his significant and professional input to the proposed statutes which had initially been circulated by mail to all those who had expressed interest in joining the Association. Based on additional feedback a few additional minor changes had been made to the statutes. He requested Mr. Schmidt to present them on the screen provided and make any further amendments as necessary.

6. Mr. Schmidt stated that 186 former staff members had been contacted by UNJSPF, on behalf of the Organizing Committee, out of which 74 responded and expressed an interest in the establishment of an AFICS-Cyprus, some of whom were unable to attend the meeting.

7. He further pointed out that it was necessary for the Association to be legally recognized and therefore to approach the Cyprus Government for non-governmental organization status which would entitle it to certain rights and privileges, for example, reduced postage. He added that all retirees/beneficiaries interested in the establishment of the Association had been sent documents through the local post office. Additionally, the Association would be unable to open a bank account if it was not recognized by the Cyprus Government.

8. Mr. Schmidt also mentioned that retirees/beneficiaries living in the north were unable to attend the meeting due to transport issues and age. He added that the Association was for all former staff members throughout the island. Mr. Schmidt then introduced the statutes and went through these, Article by Article, pinpointing any further changes that had been made to them.

9. Article 1 of the Statutes (Name and Working Language). No comments were made on this article.

10. Article 2 (Seat and Representation). During the review of the statutes it was noted that there was no mention in the statutes that AFICS-Cyprus was a non-profit organization and it was proposed that it be included therein. It was agreed that the wording “The Association is established in Nicosia, Cyprus as a non-profit organization.” be included under this heading.

11. Dr. Michael Voniatis mentioned that in order for an NGO to be registered there would need to be last least 20 members and the statutes would have to be deposited with the Ministry of Interior, a procedure which should not take long.

12. Article 3 (Aims and Purposes). No comments were made concerning this article.



13. Article 4 (Membership). A change had been made to paragraph 2 of Article 4 which now read that there would only be two types of membership (instead of four), namely ordinary and honorary. This change was accepted.

14. With respect to paragraph 6 of Article 4, Mr. Schmidt stated that all information concerning individuals was dealt with confidentially. Mr. Tholle stated that the Associations in New York and Geneva had lists of members which contained information such as addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses which were given to them by the members at their own discretion. He added that the Associations did required lists of members but that members should be given the option to provide what information they so wished. A lively debate ensued and it was agreed that the membership list would not be ‘published’ but rather ‘distributed’ to members during the first quarter of a calendar year. Paragraph 6 of Article 4 was amended and accepted accordingly.

15. Article 5. (End of Membership). It was agreed that the first condition “death” should be omitted as it was considered redundant.

16. Article 6 (Organs). No comments were made concerning this article.

17. Article 7 (Assembly). With reference to paragraph 10 thereof, a query was raised whether members could vote via correspondence. Mr. Schmidt stated that it was feasible that the signatures of members could be accepted if they were unable to attend the meetings. It was therefore proposed that the word ‘present’ be removed from paragraph 10 of article 7 to read “.... decisions of the Assembly shall be taken by a majority of members voting”. The proposal was accepted and the amendment made.

18. Article 8. (The Executive Committee). Mr. Schmidt stated that AFICS-Cyprus, at this juncture, is a rather small association and he suggested to limit membership of the Executive Committee from seven to between five to seven members. Para 1 of Article 8, was changed to read “The Executive Committee shall consist of at least five but not more than seven members to be elected...”.

19. With reference to paragraph 1 b) of Article 8 regarding election of the Executive Committee members, after some deliberation, and to ensure experience and continuity, it was agreed that, exceptionally, three members of the first Executive Committee drawn by ballot shall serve a period of four years. The paragraph was amended accordingly.

20. Article 9 (Committees). No comments were made.



21. Article 10. (Dues). Mr. Schmidt indicated that the member contribution would be discussed under Agenda Item no. 7. No changes were made to this article.

22. Article 11 (Expenditure and Accountability). For security reasons Mr. Schmidt expressed concern that the amount of Euros 2,500 indicated in paragraph 2 of the article could be too high especially in view of the fact that a bank account could not be opened until the Association was legally recognized by the Cyprus Government. He queried whether the amount should be reduced. It was subsequently decided that the amount of Euros 2,500 should remain and that efforts be made for a bank account to be opened as soon as possible.

23. Article 12 (Amendment of the statutes). No comments were made.

24. Article 13 (Dissolution of the Association). No comments were made.

25. Mr. Tholle congratulated Mr. Schmidt on the work done with regard to the statutes and asked those present whether they agreed to the statutes as presented and amended at the meeting. The statutes were accepted and adopted.

26. Mr. Schmidt then went through a list of the names of those who had indicated that they were going to attend the meeting and asked those present whether they had in fact been included. All had been included.

Agenda Item 5 - Election of volunteer Executive Committee members

27. Prior to the meeting, three of the members of the Organizing Committee had expressed willingness to be members of the provisional Executive Committee, namely Mr. Longo, Ms. Sidera and Mr. Schmidt. At the meeting, Mr. Ioannis Antoniadis, Ms. Suchada Patchantavivat, Dr. Michael Voniatis and Mr. Anders Tholle also volunteered to become members of the Executive Committee. The Constituent Assembly then appointed the seven volunteers to serve on the provisional Executive Committee until the election of a new Executive Committee by the first ordinary session of the Assembly.

Agenda Item 6 (Decision to apply for membership of FAFICS)

28. Mr. Tholle stated that there was a slight actuary (funding) deficit in the Pension Fund and as a consequence the Pension Board had recommended that the retirement age be raised from 62 to 65. The recommendation had been passed by the Advisory Board and it was anticipated that the General Assembly and the Fifth Committee would adopt it. This would only be applicable to new pensioners and should gradually improve the actuary imbalance.



Another area where the FAFICS would make presentations is with regard to the After-service Health Insurance (ASHI). He added that there would be a “contribution” of \$1.35 per Association member to FAFICS per year, which was expected to be increased to \$2 in July 2013.

29. Mr. Tholle indicated that he was delighted that the AFICS-Cyprus had been established and recommended that former staff members become members.

Agenda Item 7 (Decision on member contributions to the Association)

30. Mr. Tholle advised that the Organizing Committee had met and discussed the issue and had suggested that former staff members who received a reasonable pension should pay Euros 30 for annual membership of AFICS-Cyprus and that those receiving small pensions of Euros 500 or less would pay Euros 10.

31. After deliberations, it was decided that the annual membership contribution be increased to Euros 50 as it was felt that the amount of Euros 30 was too little to cover costs. Messrs. Tholle and Schmidt both pointed out that the revised amount of Euros 50 may still be insufficient to cover the Association costs, especially as once AFICS-Cyprus had become a member of FAFICS in July 2013, it would be eligible to send a representative to the FAFICS meetings which would involve travel costs and expenses to and from Cyprus and New York, Geneva, Paris or wherever FACICS would meet, apart from the other local costs of the Association.

32. It was agreed that the proposal of Euros 50 for annual membership fee for members receiving a pension of over Euros 500 per month and Euros 10 for those receiving a pension of less than Euros 500 per month be accepted.

Agenda Item 8 (Decision on schedule for annual Assembly meetings)

33. Mr. Schmidt advised that the Article 7 of the Statutes made it contingent to hold an annual ordinary assembly meeting each year prior to 1 May, however, extraordinary meetings could be called at any time. He queried whether there were any proposals for a meeting schedule. Mr. Tholle suggested that an Executive Committee meeting be held within the next few days after which a date for the annual meeting could be set.

Agenda Item 9 (Pension developments and information)



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34. Mr. Tholle referred to his previous comment (paragraph 27) with regard to the actuary deficit of the Pension Fund which he said was not extremely serious but serious enough for a decision to be made that new pensioners retire at 65. He added that the Fifth Committee would ultimately have to decide on this issue.

Agenda Item 10. (Any other business)

35. A gentleman at the meeting queried whether there was any information regarding the Cost of Living Allowance for Cyprus. Mr. Tholle advised that this information had not yet been made available.

36. Mr. Francis Clancy asked whether any of those present were aware of anything in writing specifying that retired staff members were exempt from paying income tax to the Cyprus Government with respect to their pensions. A lively debate ensued but nothing concrete was presented.

37. The Resolution for the establishment of AFICS-Cyprus which contained Annex I (Statutes of AFICS-Cyprus) and Annex II (names of members of the provisional Executive Committee) was signed by the 43 retirees/beneficiaries present.

The meeting ended at 12.30 hours



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ORGANIZING COMMITTEE FOR A FUTURE AFICS-CYPRUS

AGENDA FOR THE FOUNDING MEETING OF AN AFICS-CYPRUS

Operations Conference Room
UNFICYP Headquarters, Blue Beret Camp (BBC)
UNPA, Nicosia
20 November 2012
10:00 hrs to 12:30 hrs
followed by light lunch

1. Welcome address by SRSG/CM UNFICYP (10:15 hrs)
2. Adoption of the provisional agenda
3. Decision to establish an Association of Former International Civil Servants
4. Review and approval of draft Statutes for the Association
5. Election of volunteer Executive Committee members
6. Decision to apply for membership of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS)
7. Decision on member contributions to the Association
8. Decision on schedule for annual Assembly meetings
9. Pension developments and information
10. Any other business