

**Activity Report 2020-21**  
**ILO Former Officials Section**  
**Executive Secretary: François Kientzler**

**presented at the ILO Staff Union General Meeting, 21 October 2021**

**Officers of the Former Officials Section:** Cherry Thompson-Senior, Carmen Sottas, Abdoulaye Diallo, Guy Bezou, François Kientzler, John Myers, Jean-François Santarelli, Pierre Sayour and Ivan Elsmark (Honorary Executive Secretary).

During the long months of the pandemic, the Bureau of the Section was functioning in slow motion but still managed to fulfil its responsibilities towards retired colleagues, keeping them informed through its website in particular. The demand for information and communication remained high during the pandemic and we responded to all personal requests.

**Meetings of the Bureau of the ILO Former Officials Section**

On Wednesday 4 November 2020, the Bureau met via videoconference, with SHIF Executive Secretary Florian Léger in attendance. A second Bureau meeting was held in person on Tuesday 1 June 2021, away from the ILO, on the premises of a housing association in the Pays de Gex. Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Chair of the Staff Union Committee, was invited. The following points in particular were discussed at these two meetings.

**ILO staff:** Catherine Comte-Tiberghien shared information on the situation of ILO staff as well as on the continuation of activities despite the current restrictions on access to the ILO.

**SHIF:** Florian Léger emphasized the specific situation of SHIF staff obliged at the end of 2020 to work from home for a second time. Some claims are being processed remotely but others require handling by post or are deposited in the box on level P2. In the spring of 2020 the possibility was extended to retired staff of submitting their claims via SHIF Online, on a computer or mobile phone. Some 600 retired staff members (out of 2500) are utilising this option. In theory, processing times are shorter.

Pierre Sayour, member of the Bureau of the Former Officials Section and Chair of the SHIF Management Committee, referred to the existence of two working groups – Governance and Benefits – that the Management Committee had set up. In view of the inflation in healthcare costs in many countries, the ceilings on certain flat-rate benefits would need to be raised, according to members of the Bureau.

**Relations with the ILO Staff Union and HRD**

As mentioned above, we kept in contact with Staff Union representatives, the Chair and the secretariat all through the long months of lockdown. Access to the ILO building was granted to the Section's Executive Secretary in September 2020, but in November the door was slammed shut again and remains so. In June 2021 we wrote to André Bogui, Director of HRD, to raise the issue of our return to the ILO. Our letter with his reply can be found on our website. We have stepped in to forward SHIF claims on behalf of retirees who are sometimes at a loss about how to deal with the complexities. Thanks to information available on the ILO's intranet, we have been able to follow the arrangements concerning staff and access to the building, the progress of activities, meetings of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference, as well as the situation of the staff, most of them working from home.

## **Section's website (<http://www.anciens-bit-ilo.org>)**

During these long months of restrictions, the members of the Bureau were able to keep in touch with members by email and post as well as, above all, through the Section's website, which is hosted outside the ILO. Here thanks go to Azeddine Sefrioui, our webmaster, for his work, his availability and his responsiveness. The site is regularly updated with information distributed directly by the Section, such as articles paying tribute to deceased colleagues; other information is collected from the ILO's intranet site and from the Staff Union. Our site receives hundreds of visitors a month and during the winter months they even exceeded several thousand, according to data provided by our hosting service. We welcome this and will continue to give priority to this means of communication, while not forgetting those who do not have access to the internet.

## **Messages to retired staff**

In 2020 a Christmas letter from the Bureau of the Section, with a message from Director General Guy Ryder, went out to all ILO retired staff (see our website). In July 2021, the Bureau published the list of Section members and sent them each a hard copy. We are grateful for the support of REPRO staff that made this possible. The publication included a message from François Kientzler, Executive Secretary of the Section, and listed the names of retired colleagues who passed away in 2020 and 2021. This information has been updated and made available on the Section's website under *Message No. 68*.

## **Updating of files**

Another ongoing activity has consisted in regularly updating our files. This has been possible thanks to access to both our email and the files we were able to copy during our brief spell inside the ILO at the end of 2020. Information is sent to us by the HRD secretariat and also directly by Section members. We were able to contact everyone entering retirement and send them information material about our activities, with a view to encouraging them to join the Section. We have responded, either by email or by post, to individual enquiries concerning notably SHIF and taxation matters. Retirees have thanked us for our continued commitment towards them.

## **Management of accounts**

The Bureau has updated access to its bank accounts as a result of Bert Essenberg moving away and Guy Bezou being appointed Treasurer. Steps were successfully taken with our three banks to activate online access to the accounts. After some expense in terms of both time and effort, this was achieved. Financial savings in management of the accounts have been one result.

## **Relations with AAFI-AFICS and FAFICS**

Over the past months representatives of the Bureau participated via videoconference in meetings of the AAFI-AFICS Committee. This has enabled us to keep in touch with partner retiree associations such as those of the WHO, ITU and UN. In July 2021 we participated in the General Meeting of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) which was held by videoconference. Various presentations allowed us to be

informed about pension fund developments (see our website) and fruitful discussions were held on After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI).

### **Virtual exhibition 2021 by the ILO Art and Decoration Circle**

The ILO Art and Decoration Circle has had the backing of the ILO Former Officials Section for many years. Artistic activity creates objects of value and fosters personal development. The Circle has normally held its annual exhibition in the ILO Colonnades with the support of various ILO departments. In view of the pandemic, some members of the Circle expressed their wish to be able to present their work in virtual form. An exhibition involving 15 artists was set up on the Section's website in the spring of 2021 and can still be visited to view the artists' work. The Circle hopes to return to exhibiting in the Colonnades as soon as possible.

29 August 2021