**The role of the FAFICS vice-presidents (VPs), the dissemination of information and the FAFICS we all want** (1)

At the request of the coordination and secretariat of the Video Conference Meeting of Latin American Associations (March 15,2018), AFICS Argentina prepared this document, focused on the role of FAFICS vice-presidents (VPs) and thinking in the FAFICS that we all want. With an effective functioning, based on democracy and on the defense of the interests of its members, FAFICS should follow-up the committed actions, and disseminate updated information to all the Associations.

The FAFICS Rules of Procedure say in article 5.4, that the VPs will assist the president in his or her functions; in article 5.5, that the Bureau may attribute to each of the VPs a special responsibility for a substantive area of the Federation's work, and in article 5.7 that the Council shall determine the VP number, taking into account for it, the global nature of the Federation.

This is all that has been regulated on the functions of the current 7 VPs positions.

At the Bureau meeting in Vienna, October 2017, a review of the VPs functions was made and, with a very positive self-criticism, several points were defined to improve them (Item 3: functions of the VPs) (2).

To this end, the Bureau relied on a document prepared by Jerry Barton, one of the VPs. In this document, six substantive roles were identified:

(i) Increasing FAFICS membership

(ii) Maintaining relations with member associations

(iii) Carrying out public relations activities

(iv) Contributing to the Editorial Committee

(v) Liaison with the UNJSPF on improved access to information

(vi) Following up on work assigned in compliance with the work plans of FAFICS and collecting ideas for long-term work programmes

In the discussion, roles (ii) and (vi) were seen to be more the tasks of the Secretariat, and role (iii) called for expertise and experience beyond the scope of a Vice-President, while role (v) was very much within the responsibilities of the President.

In addition, it was recalled that the Bureau had identified two other important roles at its meeting in 2013: (i) enhancing the operations of the Emergency Fund and other solidarity funds; and (ii) acting as counterpart liaison.

The Vienna Bureau meeting finally agreed to have four portfolios which could be assigned to VP: Membership, Newsletter, Emergency/Solidarity Funds, and Liaison.

We interpret that the *Liaison function* means that the VPs must exercise an active interrelation with the Standing Committees on Pensions and on ASHI (After Service Health Insurance) and, through the FAFICS representatives, with the Pension Board, and the Working Group on ASHI. The VPs can also control and collaborate to optimize the use of solidarity and emergency funds and exercise an active interrelation with other associations or organizations, as regards the interests of retirees and pensioners.

In point 6 of the Proceedings, the Bureau, based on a document prepared by Georges Kutukdjian, considered the situation of the "FAFICS Matters" Newsletter which has not been published since 2014. Apparently, it would start to be published on the FAFICS website, first only in English, and later the VPs, Ari Toubo Ibrahim and Adriana F. Gomez, would be asked to translate it into French and Spanish. No deadlines or dates were given.

The dissemination of information is not limited to the Newsletter. Up-to-date information should be disseminated in more than one language, about the FAFICS activities, in the follow-up of the commitments approved by the Council meetings, including matters on Health Insurance. The basic support is a website with good design, sections and links.

In this regard, we consider that FAFICS should be in a position to have the necessary resources to translate, at least into French and Spanish, its Newsletter and its most important documents.

**We believe that in the future, the VPs should play an active role, with specific responsibilities and accountability for their management**. It should be borne in mind that a large part of the limited resources of FAFICS are used to travel expenses of their officials, including VPs, to meetings about which little information is disseminated to the member associations.

There should be a fluid and timely relationship between the VPs and the Country Associations, especially with those of the same language and/or Region, with information capture and feedback from the bottom up and with proposals based on knowledge of the conditions in the countries and regions, to ensure a true representativeness.

For the strengthening of FAFICS, in the interest of its constituent Associations, a democratic evolution in the decision-making process is also necessary, with Council decisions adopted by consensus and/or by a majority of the present or represented associations. A revision of the current double majority system has already been proposed, and this is an issue that remains pending.

***Election, number and terms of mandate of the FAFICS Vice Presidents***

The Bureau considered (item 8.30) that after 10 years of application of the Rules of Procedure, the number of VPs necessary for the effective functioning of Bureau and the Council could be revised, as well as the way in which the VPs are elected, the terms of their mandates, and the frequency of elections. Jerry Barton and Gerhard Schramek volunteered to present a set of proposals on the above matters, to be considered by the Bureau at its next meeting, April 2018.

**Any modification proposed to these items should be aimed at improving the efficiency and monitoring of compliance with the responsibilities assigned to the VPs. A better management will not be achieved only by changing the number of VPs or lengthening their terms of office.**

**Particularly in this occasion, we AFICS Argentina affirm that an extension in terms of mandate of the FAFICS, officers, President and VPs, from 4 to 6 years, will not benefit *per se* the democratic functioning and, on the contrary, it could mean a negative precedent for that democracy.**

We must also remember here the long and precious practice followed in FAFICS of seeking and obtaining consensus for the nominations, which would be very negative to weaken.

We hope and wish that the new elected officials will honor the commitments and decisions made in the Bureau and the Council meetings, and that we all could have access to a complete and timely information.

**AFICS Argentina**

(1) Information prepared by AFICS Argentina, as agreed in the Latin American AFICS Virtual Meeting (Associations of Former UN Officials, in Latin America and the Caribbean), March 15, 2018, with the coordination of Juan Antonio Casas, AFICS Panama, the secretariat in charge of Adriana Gómez (AFICS Chile), and the participation of representatives of the Associations of the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay (with adhesion of Nicaragua and Costa Rica)

(2) We rely on the report, sent by e-mail to the Associations (in English), by the FAFICS secretariat. We were unable to have access to that text on the FAFICS website.

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**Annex**

*On the functioning of FAFICS and the Vice Presidents*

According to point 9 of the next FAFICS Council meeting agenda, July 2018, there must be elections and designation of FAFICS authorities (FAFICS Officers). Among them, the president and vice-presidents. Both the current president and some of the vice presidents have served four years in office and, therefore, according to point 5.2 of the Rules of Procedures, they will cease to hold office, and therefore others must be elected instead to sustain and reaffirm the democratic values and continuity of FAFICS.

The authorities of FAFICS, which includes the VPs, will be elected in the course of the Council session (art 6.1). To this end, the FAFICS secretariat must invite member Associations, at least 6 weeks before the Council meeting, to nominate candidates (Article 6.2). These nominations must be sent by the Associations to the FAFICS secretariat at least one month before the Council meeting (implying that each candidate has the support of his or her association, Article 6.4). The FAFICS secretariat should disseminate to all the associations the names of these candidates, as well as a brief CV, at least 3 weeks before the meeting of the Council (art 6.3). In addition, Article 6.5 of the Regulation says that the FAFICS Bureau can propose candidates. The candidates who receive the most votes from the associations present or represented in the Council will be elected.

The representatives of FAFICS on the Pension Board are also elected. Point 2 of the "attachment" to the Regulation says that the FAFICS President will consult with all the associations well in advance of the Council meeting, if they wish to propose a representative to be included in the FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board. The list of proposed persons must be circulated in the Council on the first day of the sessions

The Rules of Procedure can be amended or suspended by decision of **the Council.** This decision must have a double majority of votes, which is the majority of the Associations present or represented in the Council, and the majority of the total membership of these associations (art. 10.1).