

**Report by the Chair of TREF, Sarah Verth,  
to the Finance Committee on 24 June 2026**

Since my report to the Finance Committee in March, TREF has met once, on 13 May. We were pleased to welcome Karin Voodla, who replaced Kairi Otto as the representative of Estonia for that meeting. This was a fully in-person meeting and it was a pleasure to see many members of TREF at CERN and to have the chance to catch up and to enjoy interesting discussions over dinner and during the breaks.

The first item on our agenda was a series of presentations by Lisette van den Boogaard on the 2027 five-yearly review of financial and social conditions. As you will remember, at our March meeting, Ms van den Boogaard presented the timeline for the review, followed by an introductory document providing information on the legal framework and four key reports covering the main recruitment markets for staff members, the recruitment and retention of staff members, the data collection process for salary comparison and the related mandates and the comparator research institutes for graduates. She also presented the Management's proposal for the financial and social conditions to be reviewed. In May, Ms van den Boogaard presented the latest versions of these documents, the majority of which will also be presented to you today. TREF was fully satisfied with Ms van den Boogaard's explanations and supported the Management's proposal, which is tabled for recommendation by the Finance Committee today and for approval by the Council tomorrow.

We then heard another presentation from Ms van den Boogaard, this time on a proposed revision of the Staff Rules and Regulations with respect to maternity and remunerated parental leave. TREF, like the Finance Committee, had already heard an initial presentation on this subject, for information, in March, and we were pleased to now have the opportunity to review the proposal itself. As you know, the Management proposes to extend the duration of maternity and paternity/co-parent leave, which would be renamed "remunerated parental leave" as it would apply to all parents, including birth mothers; offer greater flexibility in how such leave is taken; and extend by six months the contracts of doctoral students and staff members on limited-duration contracts taking maternity leave. The aim is to bring CERN's provisions more into line with those of other intergovernmental organisations and to simplify the associated administrative procedures. TREF expressed its strong support for the proposal, the associated provisions of which are tabled for recommendation by the Finance Committee today and for approval by the Council tomorrow. However, we would also like to reiterate that, while the proposed new provisions represent an excellent step in the right direction, they seem to remain relatively conservative compared to the leave provisions offered by certain Member States and some other intergovernmental organisations, so we also welcome the Management's assurances that benchmarking on maternity and remunerated parental leave will be carried out as part of the five-yearly review and that the Management has not ruled out further changes in the future.

The next item on our agenda was a presentation on the CERN personnel statistics for 2025 by Maria Fiascaris, the Reporting and Analytics Coordinator in the HR Department. We noted that the total number of members of the personnel has increased by 2.1% with respect to 2024. The proportion of female employed members of the personnel at the end of 2025 was unchanged with respect to the end of 2024, at 24.6%, just shy of the aspirational target of 25% set for the 25 by '25

initiative. The main driver of change over the course of the initiative was the graduate and fellow population, where the proportion of women increased from 25.4% in 2021 to 30% in 2025. Change in the staff contingent is naturally slower, due to the lower turnover. TREF also noted with satisfaction that the level of applications for staff positions remains high, that the graduate and student programmes are attracting record numbers of applicants from the younger generations and that the implementation of the conscious hiring measures across the Organization, together with the HR Department's direct sourcing efforts, are showing signs of a positive impact on recruitment from the underrepresented Member States. As well as the personnel statistics, Ms Fiascaris presented the results achieved with respect to the HR Department's key performance indicators (KPIs) for 2021–2025, noting that all targets had been either reached or exceeded and that new HR KPIs for the mandate of the current Management would be presented to TREF in due course.

We then heard a presentation from Louise Carvalho, the leader of the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Programme, on recent D&I highlights. She began with an update on the proportion of women among the employed members of the personnel (MPEs) following the end of the 25 by '25 initiative, the results of which she had presented to us in November. TREF was gratified to hear that, as of April this year, women comprised 25.4% of the MPE population and that, among new arrivals, that figure stood at a record 33.6% overall and 30.2% in STEM roles. We were also interested to hear about the new D&I Strategic Oversight Board, which has been set up by the Management to provide strategic oversight and direction for CERN's D&I Programme. Finally, Ms Carvalho told us about the new Inclusion Matters initiative, which was launched in April and invites members of the personnel to submit proposals for actions designed to improve inclusion at CERN. The goal is to implement 50 such actions by December 2030. This bottom-up approach is already bearing fruit, with some 21 proposals received by the time of our meeting, and we look forward to hearing updates on the initiative in due course.

Next, we heard the annual presentation from the CERN Ombud, Marie-Luce Falipou, covering statistics on visitors to the Ombud's office in 2025. She reported that the number of visitors had been slightly higher than in previous years, at 137, and that the year had seen an 8% increase in the number of both men and Users consulting the Ombud. While personnel of all demographics used the Ombud's services to some degree, the rate was higher for women, staff members, particularly those holding indefinite contracts, and administrative professionals than for other groups. Relationships between supervisors and supervisees remained the most frequently raised category of issue, followed by peer and colleague relationships. Finally, Ms Falipou outlined a set of collaborative actions that she intended to contribute in 2026, designed to foster well-being, engagement and inclusion and to position the Ombud as the first port of call for members of the personnel wishing to discuss a relevant issue or concern.

Ms van den Boogaard then presented the Management's response to the report of the TREF Working Group on National Personnel Returns. As you will remember, I summarised the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations in my report to the Finance Committee in March, and I hope that many of you have since had the opportunity to read the report in full. The Working Group made a total of 15 recommendations, 12 of which were addressed to the Management and three to TREF. We were pleased to hear that the HR Department remains fully committed to

continuing its efforts to improve personnel return to the underrepresented Member States, in particular by continuing to ensure the attractiveness of CERN's job offers and the effective promotion of opportunities within the Member States concerned. Ms van den Boogaard gave us a breakdown of the ongoing and planned activities designed to address the Working Group's recommendations and undertook to present key statistics relating to several of them to TREF at its next meeting in October. TREF expressed its gratitude to the Management for its commitment to following up the Working Group's recommendations and looks forward to hearing future updates on the subject.

Finally, we heard two presentations from Kandy Mitchell, the Chief Operating Officer of the Pension Fund, on behalf of Doug Heron, the Chief Executive Officer and Secretary of the Pension Fund's Working Group on Factors and Parameters. The first was an update on the activities of that Working Group, which was established by the Director-General at the request of the Council in 2021 to review certain factors and parameters used by the Fund in the light of the updated best-estimate factors produced for the 2019 periodic actuarial review. In that context, TREF took note of proposed amendments to the Pension Fund's Rules and Regulations concerning the young spouse reduction factor and expressed its support for the proposal, which is tabled for recommendation by the Finance Committee today and for approval by the Council tomorrow. If approved, the amendments will enter into force on 1 January 2027. We also took note that, following an extensive review of the transfer value factor, the Working Group has concluded that the various proposed changes would not improve the overall suitability of the factor and could even prove detrimental to the Fund's members. The factor will therefore remain unchanged for the time being, pending further reflection. The next phase of the Working Group's activities will be to study the seven parameters identified by the Actuary as being in need of review. TREF looks forward to hearing the Working Group's proposals thereon in due course.

Ms Mitchell's second presentation concerned a set of editorial changes to the English version of the Pension Fund's Rules, consisting of inclusive language and minor linguistic amendments. These were presented to TREF for information, and you will also be invited to take note of them later in your agenda today. The amended Rules will be published on 1 July this year.

Sixteen Member States were represented at this meeting. This represents a slight dip in attendance compared to our recent meetings. While I understand that travelling to CERN for a fully in-person meeting can be more challenging than simply signing in online, I think all those who attended in May would agree that meeting in person from time to time both enhances our discussions and gives us the opportunity to get to know one another better and thus to gain a deeper understanding of each other's perspectives. I would like to take this opportunity to underline that TREF is an immensely valuable forum for tripartite discussions between the Member States, the Management and the Staff Association, and that our role will be more important than ever during this five-yearly review period. If we do not reach our quorum for a given meeting, it cannot take place. I therefore strongly encourage all Member States to take part in our next meeting, which will take place on 13 October, in hybrid mode.