

**Report by the Chair of TREF, Sarah Verth,
to the Finance Committee on 25 March 2026**

Since my report to the Finance Committee last December, TREF has met once, on 18 March, by videoconference. We were pleased to welcome new TREF members Sabrina van Santen of Germany and Veronica Buccheri and Mauro Morandin of Italy, as well as Xavier Reymond, who replaced Mélissa Lucarelli as the representative of Switzerland for that meeting; Cristina Biino, who was attending her first meeting as Chair of the Finance Committee following several years as the representative of Italy at TREF; Jan-Paul Brouwer, the new Director for Finance and Human Resources; Malika Meddahi, the new Head of the Beams Department; Lisette van den Boogaard, the new Head of the Human Resources Department; Vincent Brillault and Christophe Delamare, the new President and Vice-President of the Staff Association, respectively; and Bertrand Salami, TREF's new Technical Secretary. In her absence, we thanked Sarah Kudling, the former representative of Germany, for her valuable contributions to TREF's activities.

As you are aware, the 2027 five-yearly review of financial and social conditions begins this year. TREF's role as a forum for tripartite discussions between the Member States, the Management and the Staff Association makes it a key player in the five-yearly review and we will therefore be closely involved throughout the process, hence this additional meeting in March. The first item on our agenda was a set of presentations on that subject by Lisette van den Boogaard. She presented the timeline, followed by an introductory document providing information on the legal framework for the review, 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 and, finally, the Management's proposal for the financial and social conditions to be reviewed. These comprise mandatory components, namely the basic salaries of staff members, graduate stipends and subsistence allowances for associated members of the personnel, other social and financial conditions, namely expatriation benefits and family benefits, and several additional components, such as well-being and working arrangements, family leave policies, the contract policy and career structure, benchmark jobs and performance management. The reports and proposal were presented to TREF on this occasion for information and to give the members the opportunity to request factual clarifications. TREF looks forward to discussing them in more detail at its May meeting.

We then heard a presentation on the proposed revision of CERN's maternity and co-parent leave provisions, also from Lisette van den Boogaard. As you will hear under Item 9 of today's agenda, the proposal would extend the duration of maternity and co-parent leave; 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 international organisations and to simplify the associated administrative procedures. This presentation was for information only. The proposed modification to the Staff Rules and Regulations will be presented to TREF in May and, subsequently, to the Finance Committee for recommendation and to the Council for approval in June. TREF voiced strong support for the proposal and commended the Management on its decision to address maternity and co-parent leave and the associated contract extensions outside the context of the five-yearly review and thus avoid a two-year delay in implementing change. However, we also noted that the proposed new provisions, while an excellent step in the right direction, seem relatively conservative compared to the leave provisions

offered by certain Member States and some other international organisations, and therefore welcomed the assurances that benchmarking in this area will also be carried out in the five-yearly review and that the Management has not ruled out further changes in the future.

Finally, as you know, TREF decided in May last year to establish its first ever working group, the Working Group on National Personnel Returns, which I had the pleasure of chairing. Its aims were to propose a definition of “balanced personnel returns”, to examine the personnel statistics, in particular those pertaining to national return, and, having sought input from relevant stakeholders at CERN and in the Member States, to produce recommendations for TREF on how best to move forward. I am pleased to inform you that, following four highly productive meetings, the Working Group has now concluded its work and has produced a report, which was approved by TREF at its meeting last week. The vast majority of CERN’s Member States were represented on the Working Group and it was extremely interesting to hear their different perspectives on personnel return and to work together towards a common understanding of the challenges, which differ from Member State to Member State, and the possible solutions. I encourage you all to take a look at the report, which contains fifteen recommendations designed to encourage further reflection on certain key topics relating to personnel return and will be available on the Indico page of today’s meeting.

I was pleased to see eighteen Member States represented at TREF’s meeting last week and hope that this high level of attendance will continue. At our next meeting, we will hold in-depth discussions on the various reports relating to the five-yearly review, as well as on the Management’s proposal for the financial and social conditions to be reviewed, and will also hear presentations on a number of other key topics. I would like to encourage all delegations to send a representative to take part in this meeting, which will take place on 13 May, in person at CERN.