



GUIDELINES 2022-2027

Together Stronger!
The guidelines of the Congress
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SCECBU

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The Standing Committee of European Central Bank Unions

Today, the SCECBU is composed of 44-member Trade Unions and National Central Bank Staff Associations. Some of them are affiliated to Federations; others are autonomous Trade Unions (house trade unions).

The SCECBU's main characteristic is that its member representatives are all delegates from staff representative structures within EU National Central Banks.

Soon after setting up the SCECBU, Trade Union Organisations, especially those inside National Central Banks, understood the need to close ranks. They also understood that the social status of the staff, in the long run, could only be efficiently defended by maintaining or developing resources and activities unique to the needs of Central Banks.

That's why the SCECBU keeps on searching for new tasks and activities.

Among the most important issues of concern are those regarding the branch networks' situation. This network, in its entirety, is a necessity for all EU citizens to receive the benefits of the public services which are and must stay an important part of the NCBs.

The Branch network and its staff are the public face of NCBs. Therefore, the maintenance of the branch networks will help to maintain the close affinity of the general public with the EU institutions.

We are aware that the role of a European Trade Union Organisation or Committee is quite different from a "research department" on Central Bank tasks. In fact, its main objective is the success of Trade Unions' actions and, thus, the purpose of its studies and analyses is to reach a very specific goal: the defence of staff's working conditions and rights.

In the 1980s the SCECBU focused its attention on the Committee of the Governors. In order to understand the reason for this one should know that at that time, even though a large number of Central Bank Governors used to meet cordially with the SCECBU's representatives, the Committee of the Governors, as a body, refused any official recognition of the SCECBU.

It was at that time that the SCECBU took its pilgrim's stick, in order to try to convince, with the help of our Central Bank colleagues, the governors of the need to recognise our Committee.

The Maastricht Treaty, the setting up of the ECB and the ESCB and further decisions influencing Central Bank staff brought very important social consequences for National Central Banks. Such consequences are becoming even more evident with thousands of redundancies. Indeed, most National Central Banks have suffered a significant reduction of the workforce, which has had a very negative impact on all their activities. Today, we can say that there has been a loss of tens of thousands of jobs in the EU countries since the formation of the ECB and the ESCB.

Following the ESCB structure, the SCECBU signed in 1999, together with the ECB and two international Trade Union Organisations, an agreement for the setting up of an ESCB Social Dialogue at Frankfurt. This was finally the official recognition of the SCECBU vis-à-vis the ECB as a body at European and ESCB level.

In April 2019 an updated version of the 1999 agreement was signed by the President of the ECB and the SCECBU, UNI and EPSU. This agreement enshrines the rights of the trade unions to deliver an opinion on all aspects that, due to a decision of the decision-making bodies of the ECB, might affect the working conditions of the staff in the ESCB (Agreement on Social Dialogue with regards to the European System of Central Banks – 3rd April 2019).

Social dialogue and staff representation within the European System of Central Banks

At the international level, social dialogue is defined by the ILO as *“including all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy”*¹

Following the creation of the ECB, the ESCB and the introduction of the Euro, several countries have joined the European Monetary Union and new ones seek to go in. In this framework the employer side has already succeeded in creating a certain level of common values and practices and tries to implement them throughout the system. The labour force side is urgently called to find a way to balance the process and to participate in the decisions that will affect the future of the employees. As we are a part of the wider European labour market many of the different systems of social dialogue within the National Central Banks are under pressure; many Central Banks have several problems at the national level and at the same time they have to cope with demands coming from the rapid changes to the economic environment in Europe. This leads to a situation where social dialogue often seems to be the last item on the agenda for the Central Banks’ managers. The only solution for the Trade Unions/ Staff Representations is to fight against this attitude, taking different actions according to local culture and, if necessary, to develop a better coordination at the European level in order to achieve this goal.

It has become clear over the years that some of the Central Banks do nothing to promote a real social structure. In the ESCB Social Dialogue many countries are not present because their Central Banks simply don’t have any form of staff representation; some other countries are not represented because of financial or political reasons; some participants have experienced dismissals from their job because they were very active trade unionists. The combination of these factors could have dangerous impacts on the employment side in all the NCBs.

The SCECBU approved its Guidelines during its last Congress in 2015 in order to enhance the Social Dialogue and to avoid the situation where information to the employees’ representatives is delivered after the decisions have been taken. The 2019 protocol is a first

¹ International Labour Organisation, 'Social dialogue sector'. Available at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/>

step in a positive direction. In addition to, the SCECBU believes that it is necessary to go further in the process, to practice the Social Dialogue at national level and to boost the activities aimed to support the creation of staff representations where no social partners exist.

The national central banks and, especially, the ECB must play an active role as protectors of democratic values of the enlarged Europe. To that end, it's imperative to increase transparency, encourage improvements, enhance strengthening and effectiveness, in order to develop a mutually satisfactory European social relations culture.

The fundamental problem was until recently that the ECB used the “concept of social dialogue” as a substitute to avoid full recognition of the fundamental rights as laid down in the European Social Charter. This charter grants, among a lot of other things, the right to organize the workforce and workers’ right to information, consultation and collective bargaining within the undertaking. Also, we hereby remind that at the moment the ECB does not allow the recognized trade union the power to negotiate the working conditions on behalf of their members.

Keeping that in mind we should not consider, even an active Social Dialogue, as a valuable substitute for fundamental trade union rights for all employees.

Social dialogue can only be a useful means towards full trade union recognition or a practical arrangement for the implementation of a part of the trade union rights (consultation and information).

The demands of the Standing Committee of Central Bank Unions

- All Central Banks in Europe shall allow, protect and provide the necessary means for the employees to establish Staff Representations and to join the ESCB Social Dialogue.
- The European Central Bank itself shall introduce and follow the highest standard in social relationship between employers and employees. The ECB, the NCBs and the Governing Council shall acknowledge, accept and respect their social responsibility vis-à-vis the society and staff as their most valuable asset. This social responsibility must prevail over any profit-orientated decision.
- A set of rules and values at the European level for the improvement of Social Dialogue shall be created, including a consultation process that ensures early intervention in the ESCB’s decision-making process and effective influence in its final decisions; the right of education, information exchange and social protection to secure and develop the European democratic labour market structure and the support to assure the effective functioning of this structure.
- The new protocol signed in 2019 will provide new tools to implement all of these demands, considering that all counterparties will act in good faith.

Development of tasks within National Central Banks

General background

In January 2005 the Governing Council of the ECB introduced the Strategic Intents and Organisational Principles of the Eurosystem (the so called “Mission Statement”). This statement, more than anything else, has had a major impact on Eurosystem Central Banks, on their employees and also on the ESCB as a whole. The tendency has been to homogenize structures and activities of the NCBs of the Euro area and make Euro area NCBs act like a huge single body based on the principle of international division of labour and on the promotion of a European common framework. The other ESCB Central Banks, being the future members of the Eurosystem, are following this trend.

The different European NCB models converge towards the one defined by the Governing Council of the ECB in the Mission Statement. This model indicates that the functions of NCBs must be cost-efficient and only concentrated in Central Banks’ Core Business. Following this idea, NCBs appear to consider employees more as a cost item rather than a resource. The Central Banks are offering less and less public services which are not clearly classified as ESCB tasks and seem to have less and less respect for the traditions and values of their home countries. A growing number of NCBs are ignoring Trade Unions and Staff Representatives. This development alone seems to have caused NCBs to lose respect amongst the public and fosters a strong opinion that NCBs are just sub-servient to the dictates of the ECB. The transformation from an economic authority and provider of services to the public to a body only repeating the ECB’s will has been immense.

In the current development there are disturbing features that are obvious consequences of the chosen policy derived from the Mission Statement. The principle of exploiting synergies and avoiding duplicate work has increasingly led to outsourcing of CB tasks not only to the private sector (as it was for several IT functions and sectors) but also to other NCBs (e.g. TARGET2 and T2S in payment systems’ area, outsourced to the four main Central Bank). National Central Banks also seek possibilities to pool services with some other NCB(s), or to offer alone such a service to other Central Banks, as in the project creating a Eurosystem Procurement Central Office for establishing a framework for joint Eurosystem procurement.

This tendency to specialisation has caused unequal competition between NCBs: the larger ones with more resources win and the smaller ones lose. This could be a benefit for the employees of the big NCBs, but there is certainly a severe risk of job losses for the employees of the smaller NCBs whose employment rights are usually not so strong. Outsourcing in general has brought unpleasant surprises to some NCBs: the costs have been far higher than before and the quality of service has been poor. Several employees have lost their jobs or their professions in all NCBs due to the specialisation.

The recent phenomenon of attempting to increase the apparent effectiveness of decision-making means, in practice, that decisions are taken too quickly without consultation with the Trade Unions or Staff Representatives and no analysis on the effects on working conditions, staff or jobs. Furthermore, making quick decisions often includes accepting risks which, when realized, will be costly for both the NCBs and its employees, not to mention society in general and the credibility of the system. The most serious consequences for the entire Central Bank

system might be the combination of quick decision-making and the reduction of service providers for the whole system: in the worst case, an essential function could collapse, causing huge costs and damages to the European financial system, to the credibility of the ESCB, the Eurosystem and the ECB and to the employees of the NCBs.

The demands of the Standing Committee of Central Bank Unions

- Analysis of effects on jobs, working conditions and staff in NCBs must be carried on before decision-making in the ECB.
- Transparency, better communication and co-operation instead of NCB's specialisation for a safe European System of Central Banks and safe jobs.
- Stop outsourcing and increase insourcing to achieve an efficient reduction of risks.
- Respect the principles of subsidiarity in organising functions, tasks and activities among Central Banks within the ESCB.

A new supervisory framework for the European Union

The problems of solvency and liquidity that affected the credit and financial institutions, as the major causes of the recent financial crisis, have highlighted the crucial and essential role of the Central Banks in sustaining the financial system.

These problems have also shown that prevention and management at national level of a “global crisis” have had their limits. As a result, the Single Supervisory Mechanism was established in 2013 after a quick consultation procedure at European level, giving the ECB the most powerful tool ever seen in Europe in this field.

During the past and even today, the financial system has also been affected by other pro-cyclical effects. The internationalisation of the financial markets has dramatically increased their complexity and inter-linkages. The National Central Banks, under the ECB's direction, have implemented market-orientated policies, cut staff numbers, closed branches, and outsourced activities. The National Central Banks suffered in the past from the lack of political will to introduce stronger rules to keep control on the financial markets.

Despite these negative developments, National Central Banks staff have always been strongly committed to their mission and are now playing a decisive role in tackling the present financial and economic crisis. They are making huge efforts and sacrifices to face this challenging situation and to restore the public's confidence in the financial markets and the financial system as a whole.

The SCECBU and all the Trade-Unions of National Central Banks are paying special attention to the current set of regulatory and supervisory measures that have been introduced in the European Union, as a consequence of the recent financial and economic crises.

They welcomed and agreed with the latest developments at European level to strengthen the role of Central Banks in banking and financial supervision as presented in the De Larosière Report and its Recommendations, the European Communications No. 114 (Driving European recovery) and No. 252 (European financial supervision), and, thus, led to the creation of the SSM.

The SCECBU, as a major stakeholder in the social dialogue at EU level, representing circa 50,000 employees in the National Central Banks, invites the European Institutions, the ECB included, to take heed of the opinion of the staff representatives regarding any decisions that could have an impact on the working conditions of our members.

In fact our colleagues were affected by the consequences of the decisions taken by the ESCB in terms of a reduction in the quality of their jobs, or by being made redundant.

The SCECBU believes that the National Central Banks and the ECB must concentrate their efforts on increasing stability and effectiveness of institutional actions instead of an “efficiency” merely based on abstract organisational theories, in order to prevent another crisis and other similar negative events, as well as to restore and maintain the European citizens’ confidence in institutions, markets and the euro.

The demands of the Standing Committee of Central Bank Unions

- For both macro and micro prudential purposes, all National Central Banks must be involved in safeguarding the stability of the financial system, as the primary reference body for all financial institutions.
- All National Central Banks must be involved, at least at operational level, in any supervision activity, in particular in those countries that perform supervision by means of separate authorities.
- The provisions included in the Recommendation No. 19 of the De Larosière Report must be applied also to all National Central Banks. In particular, each Member State must facilitate the increase of remuneration, the creation of a common supervisory culture among the different stakeholders and ensure that all National Central Banks and the ECB implement an appropriate and attractive personnel policy.
- The Single Supervisory Mechanism must be a mechanism based on a strong co-operation amongst the Central Banks. The ECB, unlike the other Central Banks, has never had experience in this matter, and is a *primus inter pares* in the framework set up by the European Parliament in 2013. Therefore, the experience, the quality of staff and the distribution in the territory of the Central Banks must be taken into due consideration in order to achieve the best results for the SSM and, consequently, for European citizens.
- National Central Banks, to address their responsibility to the public, must provide appropriate jobs, working conditions, terms of employment and training for their employees.

Banknotes

Production, distribution and handling of euro cash as a free means of payment are public services and have to be offered and delivered by public means. Only that can guarantee the lasting quality and secure availability of cash to the European Citizens. The public has the right to demand high quality and reliability as far as the task of producing and/or handling cash is concerned. Providing reliable means of payment for the public is the everyday job for any Central Bank. National Central Banks must have the means – in personnel as well as in other resources – to grant this service to the public.

Working conditions for printers and cashiers at the NCB sites have undergone dramatic changes in the past. In spite of this, the high goals demanded by the ECB and the NCBs have been reached. Printing and handling knowhow is now widely spread within the ESCB. This hoard of knowledge and professionalism has to be honoured by the ECB and the NCBs. Otherwise this knowledge is no longer under the control of the ECB and the related NCBs.

After the introduction of EPPS a public pool of printing houses can no longer ensure the fulfilment of the requirements in terms of public money services for European citizens. The SCECBU recognizes that the competition from private printing houses, with their lower salaries and inferior working conditions, is unfair and presents a clear threat to the future viability of the public printing houses.

With regard to the paper mills, the SCECBU defends the maintaining and developing of the public pillar. Currently, there are three public paper mills, which are EUROPAFI, Valori di carta and FNMT. Only the first two of them are subsidiaries of NCB. Many security features are integrated in the paper at the beginning of the process and public paper mills need to develop “research & development” in the same way as it should be done for public printing house.

The Congress gives the mandate to the Executive Bureau to take all the initiatives for defending of the public pillar, both for the printing house and the paper mills. The SCECBU will have to strongly incite the ECB to ban monopolies of private companies manufacturing security features. Looking ahead to Euro 3 banknotes, all the public paper mills and printing house must have the means to produce security features and the ECB must have price control to avoid that the dumping of private companies should degrade working conditions.

The quality and security of banknotes directly depend on the working conditions and the wages of workers. The SCECBU, together with its social dialogue partners will bring this demands vis-à-vis the ECB.

“Money is not a commodity”. Moreover, the provision of flawless currency is no playground for neo-liberalism. Taking public interest into consideration, quality should always be placed before profit. The common practice of “hire and fire” within private companies is not intended to keep an even level of service and quality such as the public has the right to demand.

Taking into consideration that modern reproduction techniques develop rather quickly, the task of inventing foolproof security features for the next series of euro notes (Series III) should be completed as soon as possible. Furthermore, the very specific procedure of printing a currency that is as broadly spread as the euro needs to be given the highest attention. In this explicit case, it is unacceptable that the ECB only relies on private companies for inventing new security features. A strong involvement by the Central Banks in the production, sorting

and provision of money to the public is one pillar of Central Banks' responsibility. Central Banks must be a reliable partner for further strengthening and securing a dependable currency.

The demands of the Standing Committee of Central Bank Unions

- Put a stop on any outsourcing activity of production, sorting and/or handling of the euro banknotes.
- Undo any step that has led to the handing over of printing activity and cash handling to the private sector (banks, cash transport companies).
- All banknotes should be printed by the public printing houses.
- A speed up of the process of the preparations for the Series 3 Euro banknotes.
- Build up an "Eurosystem-wide" technical centre for inventing security features and procedures to enhance the security level of the euro banknotes.
- The ECB should promote the use of banknotes as a trustworthy and accessible means of payment.

IT Services

The provision of IT Services has grown dramatically over the years as all organisations have moved from paper-based activities to computer-based activities and most of the staff in the ECB and the NCBs now conduct their daily business through computers. Furthermore, all day-to-day banking operations such as Real Time Payments, Market Operations, Supervision, Authorisations etc. are completed using the most up to date technology and systems. In the light of this, IT has become the backbone of the ESCB.

The arrival of the CoViD-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020, which caused extensive lockdowns in most European countries, stressed even more emphatically – and somewhat dramatically – the role of IT as the backbone of the ESCB. Indeed, most operations of the European Central Banks had to be carried out via teleworking and meetings had to be held by teleconferencing, thus absolutely relying on IT and communication technologies. Furthermore, it is now clear that the legacy of this unfortunate period of the pandemic, as far as the way of working is concerned, is a rapid acceleration towards remote working, where IT and communication technologies play a fundamental role.

The exponential growth of IT services over the years has led, in general, to the expansion of IT departments in the ESCB as technology services providers. However, this expansion was not always met by an analogous expansion of staffing levels, often resulting in the significant increase of the workload of the IT staff. It is often the case that IT systems and services are not backed up properly, resulting in an unnecessary increased risk of failure. In order to reduce the workload of IT staff to an acceptable level adequate resources must be provided.

In recent years, the SCECBU has become aware that the ECB and NCBs are increasingly outsourcing IT services and engaging external staff or IT Consultants to carry out work which should be – and was traditionally - undertaken by the internal IT staff. It is also the case that IT Consultants often exceed their expected role and weight of influence. The SCECBU view this development as detrimental and is negatively impacting on the welfare and morale of the IT staff and on the integrity of the service that they provide. The SCECBU is of the opinion that external IT consultants should only be engaged where the technological expertise

required to introduce/set up a new system or perform IT tasks is not available from internal resources. Indeed, the SCECBU encourages the ECB and NCBs to provide relevant training and educational courses to allow its members to enhance their current skills and remain at the forefront of new technologies.

Another issue of concern to the SCECBU is the handing over of storage and possible control of ESCB related data to external private data companies. The SCECBU believes that this practice seriously undermines the security of data and greatly increases the chance of data breaches, thereby creating an unnecessary risk to the ECB and the NCBs.

Finally, mobility within each NCB and between European institutions, which would result in an improved acquirement and distribution of knowledge, is not sufficiently encouraged.

The demands of the Standing Committee of European Central Bank Unions

- Put a stop on any outsourcing activity of IT systems and services and only engage with external staff or IT Consultants where the technological expertise is not available in-house.
- Undo any step that has led to the handing over of the control of data from ECB/NCBs to private companies.
- Provide adequate resources to IT services to ensure that the workload for individual staff is at an acceptable level.
- Explore utilisation of technical solutions that could improve the work/life balance, without loss of quality of work.
- Provide relevant training and educational courses and promote upskilling of our IT staff.
- Promote mobility within each NCB and encourage mobility between European institutions.
- Consider setting up an “ESCB IT Technical Team” with the relevant technological knowledge who could provide the IT expertise for the ECB and NCBs for major projects.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity is a topical subject and rightfully so, because experience has shown that companies that nurture a culture of diversity and inclusion are more productive and innovative and offer better perspectives for personal and professional growth to their staff members.

Many aspects of diversity exist: gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, education, professional background, nationality, ethnical and cultural background, religion, etc.

In a growing number of NCBs the awareness is rising that diversity is an asset, but many are only just starting to develop and implement strategies to foster diversity. It is quite logical that the ECB is one or many steps ahead of the national central banks, because from the beginning it has been a melting pot of the different nationalities of the EU member states,

whereas the national central banks historically only recruited national citizens. That is why we encourage the NCBs to follow the example of the ECB and we think it is essential that the different aspects of diversity and inclusion remain a recurrent theme in the HRC.

The HRC is an excellent platform for the exchange of tips and best practices to foster diversity, e.g. the Schumann program. However, diversity in itself can only be fruitful for both employer and employee if embedded in a culture of inclusion. This means that all staff members should be valued as full members of the team, regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, cultural background, etc.

Here there is still a lot of work to be done, because most people are very unaware of the load of unconscious bias they carry. Therefore, awareness trainings on unconscious bias are essential for all staff, not only for staff working in HR. For example, it is expected that the issue of age will gain importance as employees have to work more years and face more technical challenges. We can profit from an exchange of generations and should avoid a generation gap.

Although points of view about the methods and strategies applied may differ, the SCECBU is committed to support efforts to foster diversity in the ESCB.

The demands of the Standing Committee of Central Bank Unions

- Regular surveys in all central banks.
- Facilitate work-life balance, allowing men and women to take care of family and home by:
 - avoiding meetings outside normal office hours,
 - providing additional days for paternity leave,
 - providing the opportunity to switch between manager and experts career back and forth, depending upon personal circumstances that may change during your professional career.
- Improve gender equality by:
 - changing competitive environments to collaborative,
 - creating more transparency in salary bands.
- Specific trainings to increase the awareness of unconscious bias.
- Efforts to make job offers appealing to a more diverse public.
- An inclusive approach to the different forms of diversity, be it gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnical background, etc.

SCECBU's proposals and actions for the ESCB future trends

The Eurosystem has developed since its creation in June 1998. During this time the SCECBU has noticed that there has been increasing competition between NCBs for the provision of certain services.

The SCECBU is deeply concerned about such NCB competition, because is mainly based on comparisons between costs related to staff.

Taking into account that the traditional NCB functions are diminishing on the one hand, and the ECB is continuously strengthening its power over the NCBs on the other hand, the SCECBU will keep monitoring this trend of NCB specialisation and also the trend of relocating labour to wherever it is cheaper as is done by multinational companies. The SCECBU will act to prevent any further negative effects on jobs, which will might derive from the ECB's future decisions.

Keeping in mind that financial stability as well as research and banking supervision are activities known as 'the noble ones', they would seem to be those adapting best to a changing context. Therefore, the SCECBU members are worried about the loss of functions or quantity of work as far as other activities are concerned. Certain Central Banks are already encountering the negative effects of these developments.

In short, it is clear now that this trend will concern all parties and all the activities included in the main ESCB mission. The principle of "operational decentralisation", which is the right way of organisation within the European Central Bank System, is highly at stake. Central Bank activities are different from one country to the other, however, the principle of subsidiarity must be the first one to be respected. We don't accept the degradation of any Central Bank from a provider of public services into an enforcer of monetary policy only. It is the job of a Central Bank to preserve its economic and social role. If we wish to build a European social model it is clear that a centralised model led by an isolated European Central Bank and taking its endless dialogue with the markets into consideration would be disastrous for the future of National Central Banks. The SCECBU will continue to defend a decentralised model in order to allow the European Central Banks to maintain a close dialogue with the citizens.

In the system the SCECBU believes, the National Central Banks should keep their different structures, according to their respective national traditions. A Central Bank would then have a very important role in two domains:

- the implementation of the tasks related to banknote production and circulation, payment systems security, development and setting up of monetary policy as well as monitoring the stability of the financial system and capital markets. Several years' experience has shown that these tasks can be effectively performed in a decentralised way;
- NCBs must take actions in order to set up real social responsibility in upholding their main missions by respecting the employees will and Trade Unions' rights.

The global pandemic that started in 2020 has disrupted the world of work. From the surveys carried out by the SCECBU working groups, it is clear that NCBs are accelerating the implementation of the New Way of Working (NWOW), in many cases without consultation with the trade unions.

Whether the level of activities, functions or jobs, harmonisation is underway within the ESCB, but for better or worse? The SCECBU calls for the establishment of a structure bringing together all the social partners of the ESCB in order to be able to clearly define the contours of a shared corporate culture which is currently under way without the involvement of staff representatives.

The SCECBU will continue to strongly support Trade Unions and the staff of ESCB in their fight for social rights and the rights to negotiate on behalf of their members. Furthermore, the SCECBU will use its influence at any European level to prevent these negative trends and to safeguard the future of NCB staff.

DIGITAL EURO

The ECB is currently carrying out a multi-year investigation regarding the introduction of a Digital euro. At the ESCB Social Dialogue meeting in May 2021, a presentation was given that outlined the current position regarding a Digital Euro. It stated that a Digital euro would be a central bank liability made available in digital form for use in retail payments; it would complement, not substitute, cash and wholesale central bank deposits and it would create synergies with industry and private initiatives. It iterated that a Digital euro was not necessary so far but that the Eurosystem needed to be prepared should the need to introduce a Digital euro arise in the future and the risks of issuance and not issuance would have to be addressed. A public consultation was held and it received a record number of participants who, in the main, outlined their willingness to test or contribute to the design of a Digital euro. A Digital euro project team has been put in place. The SCECBU welcomes the early engagement with the ECB regarding the introduction of a Digital euro and, in particular, notes the statement that a Digital euro will complement cash.

The demand of the Standing Committee of Central Bank Unions

- The SCECBU demands to be consulted in a timely manner on the possible implications of the introduction of a digital euro on workload and working conditions.

A more regular and more potent intervention with the European Institutions

The SCECBU is convinced that the role and activities of NCBs and the ECB are so unique and specific that they need to be defended in all *fora* and European institutions. As we did in the past, we must continue to meet Members of the European Parliament and of the European Commission.

SCECBU's goals

We must build our relationship and strive for more meetings with the members of both institutions. We need to intensify our efforts to throw more light on the pernicious impact of the policies carried out by the NCBs on the activities of a public utility.

Relations with other International Trade Union Organisations

The Congress stresses the specific relationship of the SCECBU with UNI-Europa and EPSU, partners of the ESBC Social Dialogue.

Taking into consideration the leading role of the SCECBU during the last mandate, cooperation between the three Federations needs to be improved while leaving each federation the freedom to speak on behalf and in the interest of their members.

The SCECBU will continue to work with UNI Finance and EPSU on points of common interest and common actions.

Consolidation and Integration

The Congress endorses the SCECBU with the political and organisational means to have an impact at all levels and certainly far beyond the borders of Frankfurt.

To achieve this aim the SCECBU is acting on a daily basis, representing the member organisations within all central banks and helping the colleagues who, until now, do not have a genuine staff representation in their central bank. This is our first goal because without a genuine representation the staff cannot express itself and be represented within the ESCB social dialogue in Frankfurt.

SCECBU's goal

Our integration efforts aim to include the staff of the Central Banks of Bulgaria, Estonia and Croatia.

The Past shapes our Future

Globalisation, flexibility, outsourcing, dismissals, early retirements, inversion of the population age pyramids, loss of corporate culture, lack of training programs, loss of purchasing power, threat on existing pension schemes, membership decrease in some countries, rise of individualism, closing down of branches, etc. These are some of the ongoing problems, which appear to be never ending, that trade unions are facing, in or outside the central banks.

This is why the SCECBU calls for ongoing awareness and mobilisation initiatives to be taken at national and European level, taking into account the local trade union traditions and practices.

Even the paradigm of the NCBs has strongly changed over the last decade and these two last years of pandemic. New forms of work, mainly based on so-called collaborative schemes, are more and more being implemented within the ESCB. The new recruits are the ones most

affected by this situation, especially if we take into account how the ECB has implemented SSM.

This new reality brings the need to bring on board young trade unionists who are more capable of dealing with such situations. On the one hand, they are imbued with the spirit of internationalism and consider trade union work to be a mission and not just a job and, on the other, they are closer to the new working and communication methods.

Findings of the YUS Seminar

The participants of the YUS Seminar met on the eve of the Congress in order to brainstorm about the “current state” of trade unionism and working conditions inside the national central banks and what strategies could be formulated to encourage youth union membership within the NCBs.

From the discussions held, we hereby give the main findings from the debates:

- 1) There is a wide disparity in terms of working/social and pension conditions, as well as career path between the young and older workforce
- 2) Competition and confrontation amongst trade unions affect the trust on and the image of these organisations. There is a need to communicate in a more efficient way
- 3) The way Unions communicate is important – transparency and trust is deemed to be of the utmost imperative
- 4) Young staff tend to use the NCBs as a stepping stone to further their careers elsewhere
- 5) Young staff are afraid to join the unions as they believe that this will affect their career within the bank
- 6) In some NCBs, new recruits are offered a special salary package which, in turn, will have a long-term impact on the Union’s ability to represent and negotiate in a general way
- 7) There is a wide disparity in the fees charged by the Unions in the different NCBs
- 8) Negotiations on salaries, working conditions etc. carried out by the Unions with their respective NCB vary widely
- 9) Introduction presentations for new recruits with the Unions takes place in very few central banks. One delegate even described how their central bank is using GDPR as an excuse to withhold the names of new starters, therefore, denying the union the right to engage and recruit.

From the findings above, the delegates developed the following strategies:

1. Communication is vital for the trade union movement – unions need to adapt and use on a greater basis the new technologies and social networks
2. The unions need to streamline their communications by using short messaging that is to the point but must also capture the attention of the younger membership
3. Unions must provide to their members key facts and communicate with them in an efficient way
4. Communicate using humour, irony and sarcasm and presented in a graphical manner

5. Unions must give accurate feedback on their meetings with the NCBs. The feedback must be given in a timely manner
6. Youth committees should be set up in each NCB to create networks for the younger members
7. Trade Union committees need to have a balance of both younger and older members so that succession is achieved
8. Trade Unions should find a mechanism to hold meetings with their membership outside of bank control
9. Trade Unions need to find some tools to protect our workers from harassment
10. Trade Unions need to debunk the idea that being a member of a trade union is an impediment to achieving your career goals
11. Trade Unions need to market the benefits that being a member brings to each individual
12. Trade Unions need to promote initiatives to try and curtail the use of short-term contracts by the NCBs
13. Create a network of delegates inside each NCB
14. Promote activities such as sporting and cultural event, child programmes for staff, travel outings etc.