**UNIVERSITY WOMEN OF EUROPE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021**

**REPORT TO IrFUW COUNCIL**

 **November 2021**

**UWE Meet and Greet, 15 May 2021**

In 2020, the IrFUW were organised and excited to host the UWE Meet and Greet in May 2020. As with all plans in 2020, Covid caused the postponement of the event until at least 2021. In September 2020, following the UWE AGM, it was time to review the possibility of hosting the event in 2021. It was amicably understood that an in-person event may be unlikely to proceed as there were many travel restrictions still in place across most of Europe. It was therefore agreed to host the event online, instead.

The Meet and Greet committee gathered via Zoom to consider how or if our existing plans could be translated to an online forum. Significant effort and time had already been placed to arrange the original event, however the committee worked together to suggest a new theme, new speakers and of course some online entertainment that would satisfy the ‘social’ aspect of the event. With a high attendance expected, the committee worked hard to arrange the event. We also provided additional technical support to our speakers ahead of the event and completed test runs with the aim of minimising the risk of technical issues on the day. Leighanne Montgomery and Clare-Louise Wilkinson volunteered to provide the technical support during the live event and subsequently fulfil the ‘hosting duties’ too, which met it came live from Belfast.

On the 15th May 2021 the Meet and Greet took place via zoom and to great success! Over 103 had registered, with a representation also from Russia and Lithuania. The theme was “Celebrating European Women”. Our speakers were Sighle Breathnach-Lynch who spoke on ”The Oratory Dun Laoghaire” focusing on the Artwork and Dr. Angela Vaupel, St Mary’s University Belfast whose presentation was “Women in European Film”.

Veronica Campbell, ably assisted by her grandson Felix, gave a demonstration on making Irish coffee. Veronica gave a brief outline of the history of Bewleys Cafes and sourced only the best coffee beans to use in their famous coffees. A perfect accompaniment (and in keeping with the best Irish tradition) was Irish Brown Soda Bread topped with Smoked Salmon.

After a lunch break which afforded the participants the opportunity to try their hand at Irish coffee making, the afternoon programme commenced. A very talented young flautist, Sophie O’Neill entertained us to some Irish tunes.

UCD’s very own Colette Grant was accompanied by her husband Michael and sang “O Men from the Fields” (a poem by Padraic Colum set to music by Herbert Hughes and “Wee Hughie” ( a poem by Elizabeth Shane and set to music by John Larchet).

To conclude, we received an update on Plans for the UWE AGM in Finland, the Young Members’ Reports and NFA Greetings.

We received permission also to record the Meet and Greet for our archives. We have now also hosted a recording of the event on YouTube. The link can be shared via email upon request and may be added to the members section of the IrFUW website (subject to council discussion).

**Meet & Greet – BFWG/IFUWA/UWE -19 June 2021**

The President and members of the British Federation of Women Graduates (BFWG – The British Federation of Women Graduates) invited the President of Graduate Women International, Terry Oudraad, and members of University Women of Europe to join the members of the Indian Federation of University Women’s Association to stand in solidarity with India and other countries suffering from this humanitarian crisis, COVID-19.

On 19th June 2021, women across the world met together online to show their support for the people of India and countries still in the grip of the virus, BFWG President Jasmit Phull welcomed all the members which was followed by a candle lighting ceremony to pay tribute to all lives lost due to COVID-19. Terry Oudraad, the Graduate Women International President, addressed members followed by IFUWA President Ranjana Banerjee and UWE President Dr. Anne Negre. Dr Deepa Aggarwal, shared her recent true-life story, when she travelled from UK to India to look after her mother, who had COVID-19 - a truly moving story!

**UWE Conference**

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the UWE Conference was held online on 11th September in Helsinki, Finland by Finnish Federation of Graduate Women (SANL). The theme “The Effects of the Pandemic on Gender Equality” included four workshops.

1) Education (Chair: Anne Turunen)

What has the Covid situation done for the field of education? Let’s find out and discuss how the pandemic has affected young people who just have started their studies or are trying to launch their career? What are the different means to cope with the situation when studies are mostly done on distance and how the situation will be reflected in the future working life?

2) Work (Chair: Kirsi Jokikokko)

During the global COVID-19 pandemic working life has changed everywhere. Employers, employees and entrepreneurs have had to learn a new reality and ways of working have changed significantly. In this workshop we discuss what are the impacts of COVID-19 on working life. Are the changes permanent, what may change back. How shall we see the future in working life?

3) Health and Human Relations (Chair: Jutta Hartikainen)

How has the pandemic affected people’s mental health and relationships? Positive and negative outcomes. Is there a difference on outcomes between generations and genders? What about globally? Whom has suffered the most and whom have had its best effects? What are the best practices to share and learn from and what are those things that needs to be done as soon as possible?

4) New Possibilities (Chair: Pauliina Inervo)

What kind of ecological and digital improvements and services has the pandemic brought people in different age groups?

**UWE AGM - 12 September 2021**

The UWE AGM was conducted virtually on 12th September 2021 and limited to 100 participants. Representation of IrFUW was by President Frances Patton and Vice-President Maire O’Connell. CER Leighanne Montgomery was unavailable to attend the AGM and so a presentation was created ahead of the AGM and shared in advance. Two new organisations joined from France and Italy.

Further information on UWE AGM can be found in supplementary reports from either Frances Patton or Maire O’Connell.

**Constitutional Working Party - 15 October 2021**

An invitation was sent from the UWE Board to invite members to apply and join the constitutional working party (CWP) by the 15th October 2021. The role of this party if to update the UWE by-laws and eventually the statute. UWE Vice President Aisha Alshawaf is ex officio a member of the working party. The working party will run over three years and shall report to the board at least after each of their meetings. There are three members that applied with the requirements needed from different NFA namely Italy FILDS, Turkey and Romania all agreed to volunteer. Immediate past President Edith will be the convener of the group with Aisha on behalf of the board. The CWP is in the process of setting its first virtual meeting. The CWP welcomes any questions or suggestions from its members. Do not hesitate to forward those to CER Leighanne Montgomery and I will share with the CWP to include in its discussions. The CWP will provide further information and updates to all CERs once they get started.

**Leighanne Montgomery**

**Coordinator of European Relations**

**21 January 2022**