

AAFI-AFICS Activity Report 2023

This report will be fairly brief. In each issue of the newsletter we have included a "NEWS IN BRIEF" section to keep you up-to-date. When necessary, we also send out electronic information messages.

AAFI-AFICS in figures

Number of members: **3029** of which

Life members: **2653**

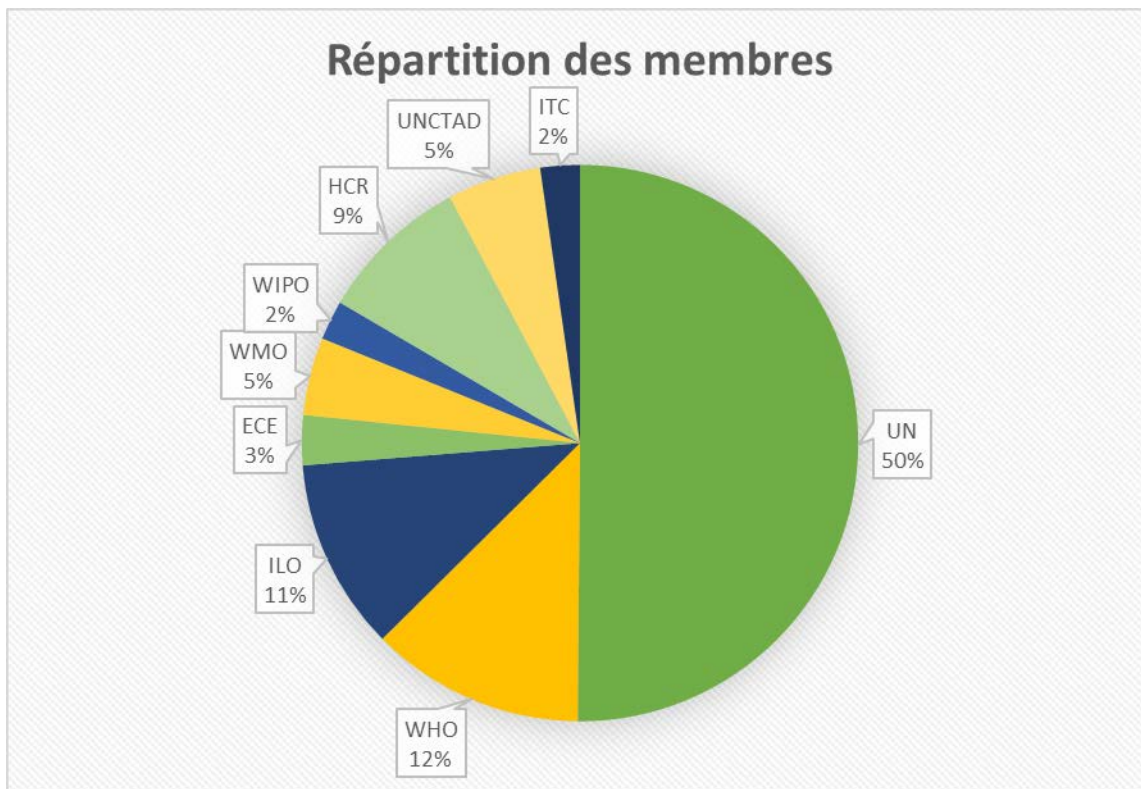
Annual memberships: 376

New members: 34

Deaths: 101

Men: **1319** / Women: **1710**

Of the members, 283 are over 90 years old, with **40 over 100 years old.**



AAFI-AFICS maintains the Bulletin's mailing list. However, publications are regularly returned, proof that we have omitted to incorporate changes in the mailing list. Despite this, we receive approximately 5 to 6 changes of address (e-mail or postal) per week. We sincerely thank those who assist us in keeping the database up-to-date.

The Pension Fund provides us with a quarterly death list which we publish in our Bulletin. The lists enable us to update our database. We have lost many colleagues with whom we have worked (101 in 2022).

Our opening hours are now Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 10am to 12pm.

We must absolutely find ways of attracting more new members (34 in 2023).

1. Hybrid Committee meetings

Afics Committee members do not have more access to the UN site by car any more than other pensioners. With the renovation work, access to the previous meeting rooms is only possible for a fee, to take into account the installation of modern technological tools and the compulsory presence of an operator. As a result, meetings are being held in smaller rooms in the H building.

It is important to note the participation of our sister associations, which enabled us to exchange views on the evolution of access conditions for retirees in the various Geneva organisations.

2. General Meeting of 8 June 2023

This meeting took place at the CCV. Information was circulated in our newsletters. Details were published in our October 2023 newsletter.

We had opted for a two-part session, the assembly followed by an information meeting on family carers. The participants were very appreciative of the information provided by the speakers. We are in the process of finalizing a booklet on this subject.

Participants gathered for an informal exchange of views, with music provided by the Ishraq ensemble ("*sunrise*" in Arabic).

3. AFICS assets

It has been very difficult to find investments for the funds due to the uncertain situation on the financial markets. A working group consisting of Anatoli Kondrachov (treasurer), Mohamed Rharha and Ventura Garcia (the auditors), Mohammed Sebti and Wolfgang Milzow (former treasurer of FAFICS) met several times and concluded that the assets should be retained in Switzerland to avoid exchange rate losses. The markets remained highly volatile, and the option chosen was to invest the funds either in term accounts or in safe bonds.

4. Renewal of the Committee

There was no call for nominations. However, we were pleased to be able to co-opt a new member, Clemens Adams, former Director of the UNOG Administration. The Committee is delighted with this arrival, which will enable us to strengthen our contacts with the Administration. The Committee is statutorily entitled to co-opt 4 members between two elections.

We were sad to lose two of our honorary members, Klaus Netter, our expert on Swiss AHV and tax, and Yves Beigbeder. Yves sent us a popular weekly column covering world politics.

5. Newsletters

3 Bulletins were sent out in 2023. They are available on our website. https://afics.unog.ch/AAFI-AFICS_Publications_F.htm

Approximately 40 members receive the Bulletin in electronic form only.

6. Contact with our members

We often receive information about their activities and are delighted to see how lively our retired members are.

Thanks to the hard work of Evelina Rioukhina and Marithé Horvat, in 2023 we published several newsletters covering cultural and sporting activities in Switzerland.

7. Certificate of entitlement

Juan Mateu was mainly responsible for searching for pensioners who did not return their **Certificate of Entitlement** (CE) to the Pension Fund. We would like to thank him warmly for his commitment.

More than 80 pensioners were contacted. This commitment is of great importance as it not only strengthens our bond with the Pension Fund, but also we would like to point out that when a pension is suspended, it takes a lot of time and paperwork to reinstate it.

We are aware that it is difficult to move into this world where everything is done via the INTERNET. However, we recommend that you at least create your own electronic space in the Pension Fund to enable an easier retrieval of your documents, and also that you switch to the Facial Recognition Certificate. We plan to organise information sessions with the Pension Fund.

8. Active participation in FAFICS

In 2022, Pierre Sayour became vice-president of FAFICS, enabling him to actively contribute to the debates.

The new FAFICS Secretary has established numerous ways to communicate more effectively with the Federation.

We have supported applications to join the Expertise Pôle created within FAFICS. All vacancies are filled from the Expertise Pôle, whether for the FAFICS Standing Committees or for representation on the Pensions Fund.

A hybrid Council meeting was held in Vienna.

We deeply regret that the Fund now only finances travel for two FAFICS representatives to attend the July meeting of the Joint Committee. This is incomprehensible given the large proportion of retired members (1/3) in the Caisse. FAFICS therefore finances the expenses of the other two members, and the two alternates participate in the meetings on a virtual basis.

9. Representation of AAFI-AFICS at UNSMIS

Within the insurance company, we have a co-opted member (Pierre Vangeleyn) and a substitute member (Mohammed Sebti). This gives pensioners a real say in the insurance company's activities. It should be remembered that no distinction is made between working people and retirees within UNSMIS: we only talk about member-policyholders.

The other organisations all have pensioner representation on their operating bodies and inform the Committee of specific situations.

Relations with the Pension Fund

We remain in close contact with the Pension Fund (weekly exchanges and e-mails to resolve special cases). A Head of Customer Services has just been appointed: Denise Gustin Gardella.

We would like to mention that the benefits paid in Switzerland were finally increased in April 2023 after a 15 year freeze, despite an increased perception of price rises. However, the Fund

is obliged to apply the figures officially provided by the various countries. These are published in the United Nations Statistical Bulletin. We are continuing to discuss this issue with the Fund, which is penalising dual-income pensioners living in Switzerland. In April 2024, there will be no increase for pensioners living in Switzerland.

In 2024, we are planning sessions to explain the process of setting up the Digital Certificate with Aliamane Bacar Said.

10. Outdoor activities

Our external activities focus mainly on the City of Geneva.

- The Carrefour International meetings at Cité seniors take place once a month. Evelina Rioukhina now runs this activity, offering a range of well-researched topics.
- Odette Foudral is also actively involved in the work of the Geneva Senior Network Platform. She has been able to correct the negative perception of international civil servants by pointing out the STAFF ASSESSMENT deduction on salaries paid, equivalent to tax at source. Many of our members live in the canton, and it is important that they have access to the facilities offered by the city.
- Evelina Rioukhina is actively engaged in the Cité senior's sports training for the Escalade race, as well as training to defend Geneva (the Grand Prix de Berne (the team will leave for Berne on 18 May).
- Odette Foudral is also a member of the Age and Migration Platform working group.
- Vitalja Gaucaite represents AFICS in the NGO on ageing. This is significant as the problems of ageing go hand-in-hand with difficulties in finding, for example, an (appropriate) place in an EMS/Retirement, Nursing home.
- The lunches at Les Lauriers, organized by Margarete Hahnen and Jocelyne Déruaz were greatly appreciated. This represents a major investment of time in terms of follow-up.
- We were able to participate in the joint UNOG and ILO seminar on preparing for retirement in November (in virtual form). This year Dev Ray and Odette Foudral managed the seminar, which had to be held in English in a huge, empty room. It was stressful and unexpected, as we pointed out to the organisers. Obviously, it doesn't have the same impact as an indoor seminar. Our presentation can be accessed on the website

<https://shorturl.at/nv346>

11. Our association's groups

Several groups come together, enabling our members to share common ideals.

- SHAKESPEARE Group led by Jack Martin
- Nyon group is dormant, waiting for a leader
- Ferney group led by Carl Freeman

We hope that other groups can be formed. There may be others, and we'd love to hear about their activities.

12. Targets for 2024

- Publication of the list of members
- New format for newsletters on our website
- A new edition of our Retirement Guide (already being prepared)
- Finalisation of the booklet on family carers
- Participation in pre-retirement seminars (ILO-UN and UNHCR)
- Participation in Geneva activities
- Closer links with other players in the lives of senior citizens
- Contacts in France to support pensioners
- Wills and inheritance seminar in September
- Improving our presence at the Office
- Improving contact with those who do not have an e-mail address
- Lunches

All this will only be possible if the Committee feels supported by its members.

I would like to end this report by thanking the team that keeps our association going:

- Margarete Hahnen for database management
- Doug Helland for site management and technical preparation of the newsletter
- France Henry for her help to policyholders who can no longer complete their UNSMIS claims for reimbursement
- Evelina Rioukhina, who is on call at the office and prepares discussion topics for the Carrefour International.
- Jocelyne Déruaz, who has taken over the organisation of lunches and this meeting and is preparing the September seminar.
- The auditors, who enable us to present our accounts clearly and accurately

Our association benefits from the support of the UNOG administration (offices, computer equipment, telephone, printing and mailing of our Bulletin) and car access for those who work on a day-to-day basis. We also benefit fully from the support of the Publications Division.

Odette FOU DRAI, 31 March 2024

Appendix 1

The AAFI-AFICS Committee

Article 16 of the Articles of Association

The Committee is the executive body of the Association. It consists of

Art 16 (3) Former members of the Committee appointed as honorary members by the Committee

Honorary chairmen	Gilbert FERRARI
Honorary members	Elisabeth BELCHAMBER David COHEN Samuel MBELE-MBONG Gerald WALZER

Art 16 (1) Eighteen members elected from among the members of the Association

Chairman 1/ Vice-Chairmen 1/	Odette FOU DRAL Katia CHESTOPALOV Pierre VANGELEYN
Secretary 1/ Treasurer 1/ Members	Vacant position Anatoli KONDRACHOV Clemens ADAMS (co-opted member) Olgatte ABDU Ravindra CHOPRA Denis CORCELLE Jocelyne DERUAZ Juliana FRANCO Juan MATEU Wolfgang MILZOW Dev RAY Evelina RIOUKHINA Mohamed SEBTI Monika SPYCZAK-VON-BRZEZINSKA Jav SUNDARESAN

Art 16 (2) One member appointed by the executive body of each association of former officials invited by the Committee to take part in its work

ITU	Fabio BIGI, Peter RANSOME (deputy)
WHO	Jean-Paul MENU, Sue TYRREL-BLOCH (alternate)
ILO	Pierre SAYOUR, Catherine TIBERGHEN Abdoulave DIALLO
AFIS-CCI	Bernard ANCEL
GATT-WTO	Peter WILLIAMS, Paul ROLIAN (alternate)
WMO Amicale	Monique SCHALK, David HUME (alternate)

Art 16 (4) A maximum of four additional members co-opted by the Committee if it decides that an additional member or members are required to discharge specific responsibilities or tasks, or to ensure the smooth running of the Association. Such additional members must undergo the election process at the first appropriate opportunity. 1/

1/ Art 20: The Committee shall elect from among its members a Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, a Secretary and a Treasurer, who shall constitute the Committee's Bureau.

Special responsibilities

Social action	Odette FOUDRAL	odette.foudral@sfr.fr
Health insurance	Mohammed SEBTI	msebti@bluewin.ch
	Pierre VANGELEYN	pvgl@orange.fr
Health insurance	France HENRY	aafi-afics@un.org
UNSMIS		
Updating member data	Margarete HAHNEN	aafi-afics@un.org
Pensions	Mohammed SEBTI	msebti@bluewin.ch
	Pierre SAYOUR	piersav@hotmail.com
FAAFI relations	Odette FOUDRAL	odette.foudral@sfr.fr
External relations	Odette FOUDRAL	odette.foudral@sfr.fr
	Evelina RIOUKHINA	aafi-afics@un.org
Information seminars	Jocelvne DERUAZ	aafi-afics@un.org