



Council of International Fellowship

# Council of International Fellowship 2024 Annual Report

[www.cifinternational.com](http://www.cifinternational.com)

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

BD: Board of Directors meeting of CIF International

CIP USA: Council of International Programs, USA

CP: Contact Person of CIF International

EC: Executive Committee of CIF International

GA: General Assembly of CIF International

IPEP: International Professional Exchange Program

NB: National Branch of CIF International

EDITORIAL BOARD: Executive Committee of CIF International

EDITORIAL ADVISOR: Paul Dolan, Birmingham, UK.

Approved by the Board of Directors, April 12, 2025

## Contents

Contents .....	3
Introduction .....	4
International Professional Exchange Programs (IPEPs) .....	5
CIF National Branches.....	14
Development of regions .....	14
National and international activities/projects (apart from IPEPs).....	15
New opportunities, aims and goals for the coming year(s) .....	17
Comments about the cooperation between NBs and CIF International .....	18
CIF Contact persons .....	18
Organizational Activities .....	19
General Assembly.....	19
Board of Directors meetings.....	20
Executive Committee .....	22
Committees .....	23
Election Committee.....	23
Social Media and the website .....	24
World News .....	25
Financial Report .....	26
List of committees and working groups .....	29

## Introduction

Dear members and friends of CIF

1960, when CIF was founded, the people wanted to build a world without war. There was an immense development in many directions, a lot of progress also, but we are still far from offering a good life for all. There is war, terror, hunger, climate crisis, individual struggles. They have serious consequences and concern all of us more or less intense.

So what is our reaction? What can we do?

As individuals, as members of particular groups in our countries, we might find fulfilment in all sorts of ways that help us and help others – through work, social, domestic and family activities, in nature, in culture, and through friendship, through supporting others. We can individually work towards understanding, avoid waste and over-use of our environment, help with individual problems, organize prevention and so on.

As an organisation, what can CIF do?

Voluntary work has been proven to be an effective tool to strengthen the sense of community, thus combatting the individualism so prevalent in the current age. When people come together with a common purpose, they form a sense of belonging and unity. CIF's statutes, all the voluntary work and engagement of CIF International and its national branches and contact persons, have always been geared towards **peace and understanding through personal exchange**. CIF offers possibilities to learn, to understand human beings from other cultures, their methods of working, their attitudes and beliefs. CIF members try to listen, to respect and understand other humans and nature. Peace and understanding were Henry Ollendorff's and our predecessors' impetus; and it is ours too, and more necessary than ever before. This is not enough. Sometimes I dream: Aren't we far more than 50% of the world's population who want to live in peace? Could it be possible one day that these over 50% stand together and say no to war and convince the others that this is the better way for all?

Let's start this process today!

In International Professional Exchange Programs (IPEPs) we have not yet completely reached the participant numbers we had during the years 2010-2019, but we are getting there. We have programs in new countries, contact persons in new countries, we are developing our own organisation, we are more present in social media; and in particular, our IPEPs are attractive, providing, as one participant said, *"A great experience, more knowledge about social work, and new friends."*

The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee hope you will enjoy reading many details of a whole year of work in progress. May work and report bring a smile of joy, peace and understanding to you.

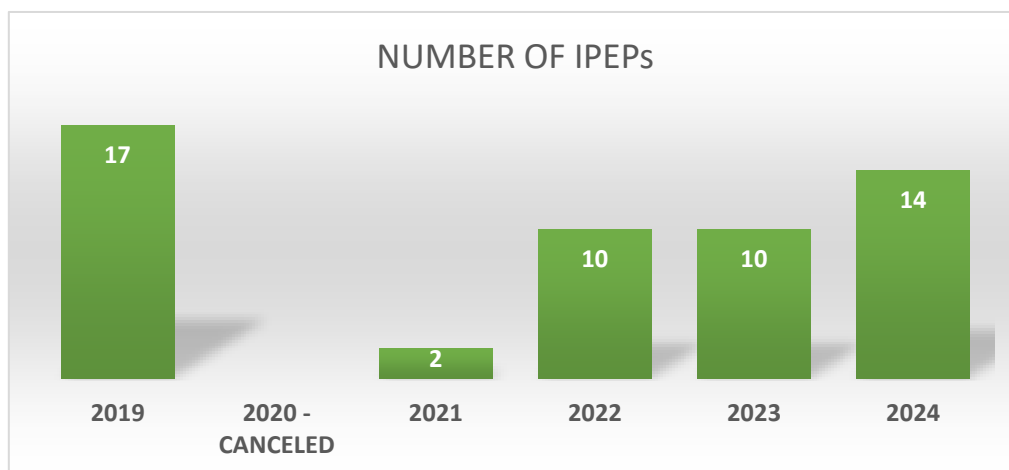
Elisabeth Fischbacher Schrobiltgen  
President

## International Professional Exchange Programs (IPEPs)

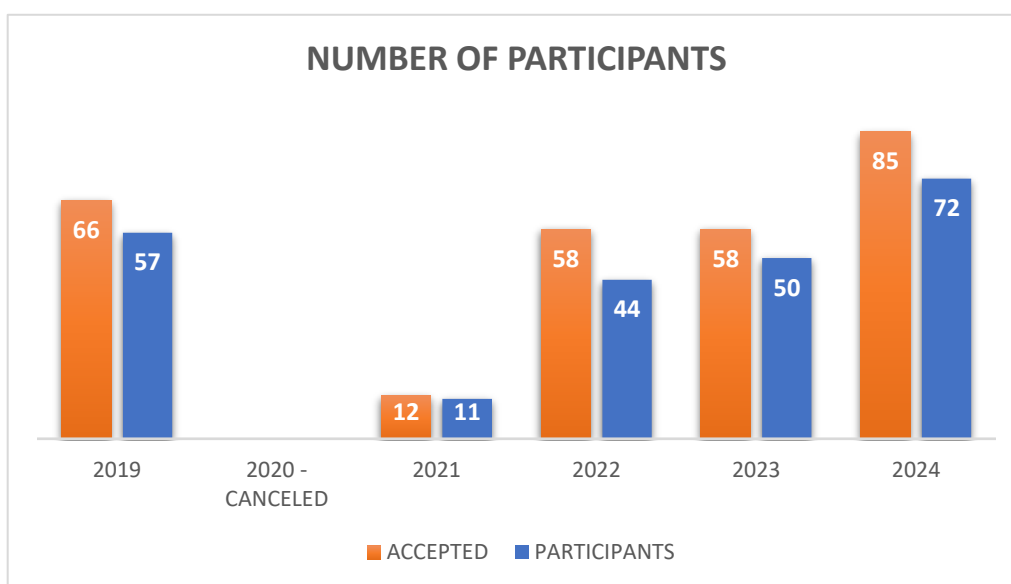
A total of 16 CIF International Professional Exchange Programs (IPEPs) were announced for 2024, 14 were carried out and two had to be postponed:

- Argentina, Austria, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hellas, India, Kyrgyzstan, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan and Turkiye completed their programs.
- Israel and Nepal postponed their programs to 2025, due to political reasons and for not having enough participants.

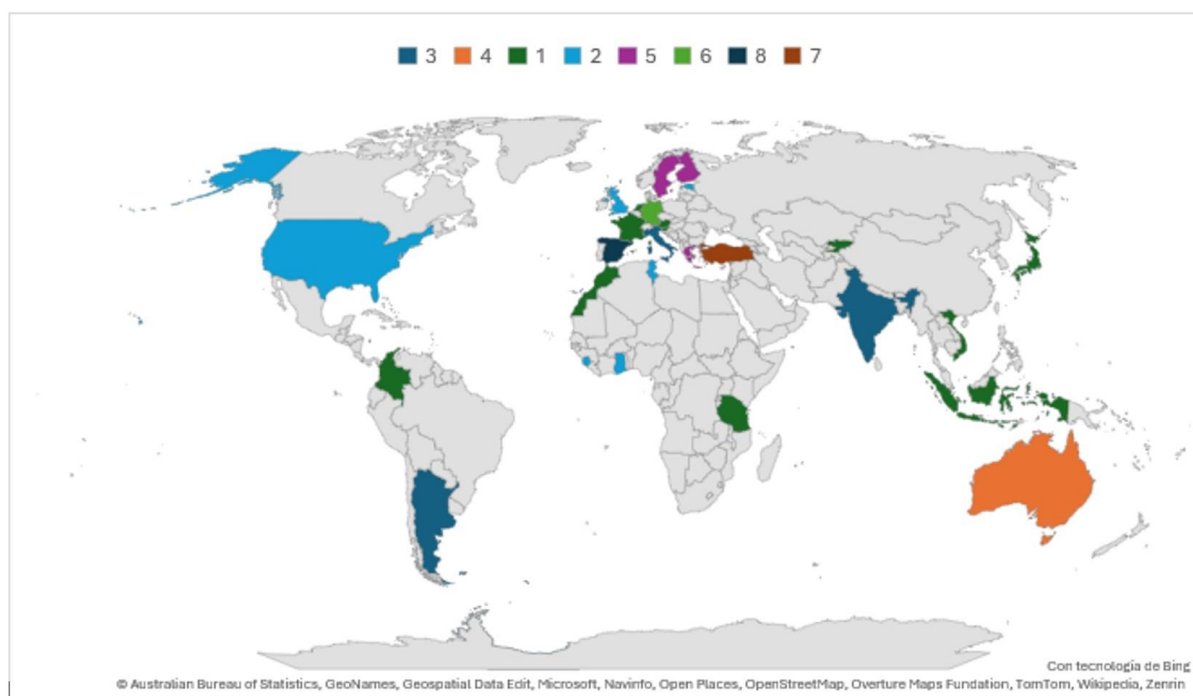
All 14 National Branches (NBs) provided information about the IPEPs by sending a Final Evaluation Report (FER) 2024.



83 applications were accepted (58 in 2023, 58 in 2022, 12 in 2021 and 66 in 2019) and 72 participants started and completed the programs (50 in 2023, 44 in 2022, 11 in 2021 and 57 in 2019).



Participants came from 27 countries: Argentina (3), Australia (4), Austria (1), Colombia (1), Estonia (2), Finland (5), France (1), Germany (6), Ghana (2), Greece (5), India (3), Indonesia (1), Italy (3), Japan (1), Kyrgyzstan (1), Morocco (1), Netherlands (1), Sierra Leone (2), Slovenia (1), Spain (8), Sweden (5), Tanzania (1), Tunisia (2), Turkey (7), UK (2), USA (2) and Vietnam (1).



59 participants were from countries with NBs, 4 with CPs and 9 participants from

countries without branches or contact persons. In these cases, the reference letters were from professional associations, universities or employers.

Sufficient applications were received to fill the places in most of the programs. Those which were not completed were due to late cancellations, mainly because of visa processing difficulties.

12 branches mentioned difficulties with the visa arrangements, which demanded a heavier workload from the organizers and for the candidates. 2 participants had to travel abroad to go to the embassy, which meant an extra cost in addition to the cost of the program. 6 selected applicants had to withdraw due to visa problems.

Other cancellations (5) were attributed to contingencies, such as health, family or labor problems.

As an example, CIF Estonia had selected 4 participants and due to last minute cancellations only one participant was able to come, with whom the program was carried out, with good results.

**CIF Kyrgyzstan** conducted its first program. They received 25 applications and selected 7. Organizers and participants highlighted it was a very good program.



CIF Kyrgyzstan Participants

**CIF Scotland** had a program after a gap of seven years. They received 22 applications and selected 4, but due to a late cancellation they had three.

### **General information on the characteristics of the IPEPs**

The IPEPs were two to four weeks long, and the average duration of a program was 18 days.

They were implemented from January (1) to November (10 from April to May, 3 in September and one in October).

Most of them were in English, except Argentina, in Spanish, and France, in French. Participants got information about CIF and IPEPs through:

- Friends or colleagues
- CIF International and NB websites
- Social media
- National branches
- Local Professional Associations
- Former participants

The programs were organized by a coordinator and members of the National Board, with tasks and responsibilities distributed. They were all unpaid.

However, it was pointed out that the number of active members available was not always sufficient for the work the IPEPs organization requires.

Some branches also could count on collaboration provided by universities, professional associations and volunteers.

Everybody agreed that the participants received enough information before their arrival: general characteristics about the program, the agenda, the group of participants, host family living and the country. Previous connections by emails, what's up and virtual meetings were considered very positive as channels of information and for the knowledge of the participants. In addition, this allowed the evaluation of the language required for the program.

For the selection of the candidates, there was considered the possibility to offer them work and observation spaces according to their interests and professional field. Those branches with many applications pointed out the difficulty of choosing between *"so many excellent candidates"*.

All applicants used the Common Application Form.

The structure and contents of the programs remained the same as in previous years. With minor variations it consisted of:

- An introduction/orientation period when they usually stayed together mostly in a hostel, or in a centre usually located in the countryside or in areas outside the cities. This period was organized mainly for presentations, to link the group with each other and with the hosting branch.





CIF Germany Participants in the hostel

- A general program during which they received general information about the social services system in the hosting country, with a mix of agency visits, lectures, workshops and meetings with professionals, where participants stayed as a group. All branches had contact with universities and some participants shared classes and lectures there. 9 branches reached out to professional associations, with different levels of participation and support, such as assistance for the participants to meet agencies and facilities for meetings (CIF Argentina, CIF Turkiye).



CIF India Participants visit to social work college

- An individual program where each participant followed an arrangement in their selected areas of interest; they visited agencies, met professionals and observed the field work. Some participants could get in contact with customers. Switzerland continued with a program focus on families and children, and so the participants stayed together in the same city and visited the same institutions.



CIF Switzerland Participants

- Finally, everybody had an evaluation of the program for which they used the CIF Participants' Evaluation Form.

For 5 branches stages took place in different cities. The duration of each stage varied according to the program length.

All the branches had host family living programs, and they worked according to the CIF Host Family Guidelines. Depending on the length of their programs, each participant stayed with at least one family or at most four. The families received information about the participants and the agenda. Prior virtual contacts were organized with them and some participated in group activities with the participants, such as the farewell party. It was noted that most of the families were experienced CIF members.



CIF Argentina farewell party

Each program included a variety of sociocultural activities such as sightseeing together with locals, visits to museums, historical sites, art centers, concerts and theatre, nature trips and picnics, collective lunches/dinners, a cultural evening, a farewell party, and other gatherings to cultural exchange. Swiss participants organized a performance about their perception of life in Switzerland, and presented it during the Cultural Evening with members, host families, lecturers and others interested.

From most of the reports it appeared that “peace” was a theme that was addressed, throughout the program, from different perspectives related to CIF principles and goals.

The programs were mainly financed by:

- Participation fees. 9 branches had a fee which supported 10-80% of the cost of the IPEP. It covered program costs, domestic travel, meals, and sociocultural activities. They supplemented the fee with support from local members, donations, and others.
- 5 branches didn’t have a fee, and they covered their expenses with contributions from local members, money from the branch, and funds from professional associations.
- All branches received volunteer support from their members and in some cases from universities, which contributed significantly to financing the program.
- 2024 was the first year that CIF International offered Financial Assistance for IPEPs. Five branches (Austria, Finland, Germany, Greece and Sweden) participated in it and a total of 7 participants received financial assistance.
- CIF India and CIF Switzerland had money available for IPEP participants. India received a donation from a former participant, and Switzerland had money from the government’s agency for international exchange MOVETIA and used it for the program as well as travel and fees for 6 out of their 8 participants.



## Evaluation and participant feedback

A positive evaluation of the programs emerged from all the reports.

*"...it was a great program with experienced participants, who provided great assistance to the functioning of the program" (CIF Kyrgyzstan).*

*"The program provided invaluable professional development opportunities, enhancing my adaptability and honing my intercultural communication skills..." (participant in Estonia).*

*"Networking opportunities, acquaintance with new cultural diversities, punctuality and passion for effective social work professional dispensation, dual vocational and educational training, the integrative approach with relevant stakeholders, the work to influence policy." (participant in Switzerland).*

*"I believe that by being co-hosted the participants had many opportunities to reflect on their experiences when together as well as having space to be alone or seek interests individually. They agreed that this was a positive aspect of the IPEP" (Anne Robertson, CIF Scotland, who hosted the three participants at her home).*

## Suggestions from participants

- Comments and discussions on the intensity of the schedule, and proposals to have no more than two visits per day, till 4 pm, and more free time.
- Due to the differences between countries, some participants found it complex to understand all parts of the social services system. They asked to have more information about it at the beginning of the program, and preferably written material e.g., brochures, power point, etc.
- To get in touch as a group before the beginning of the program, e.g. virtual meetings.
- To participate more in customer processes.



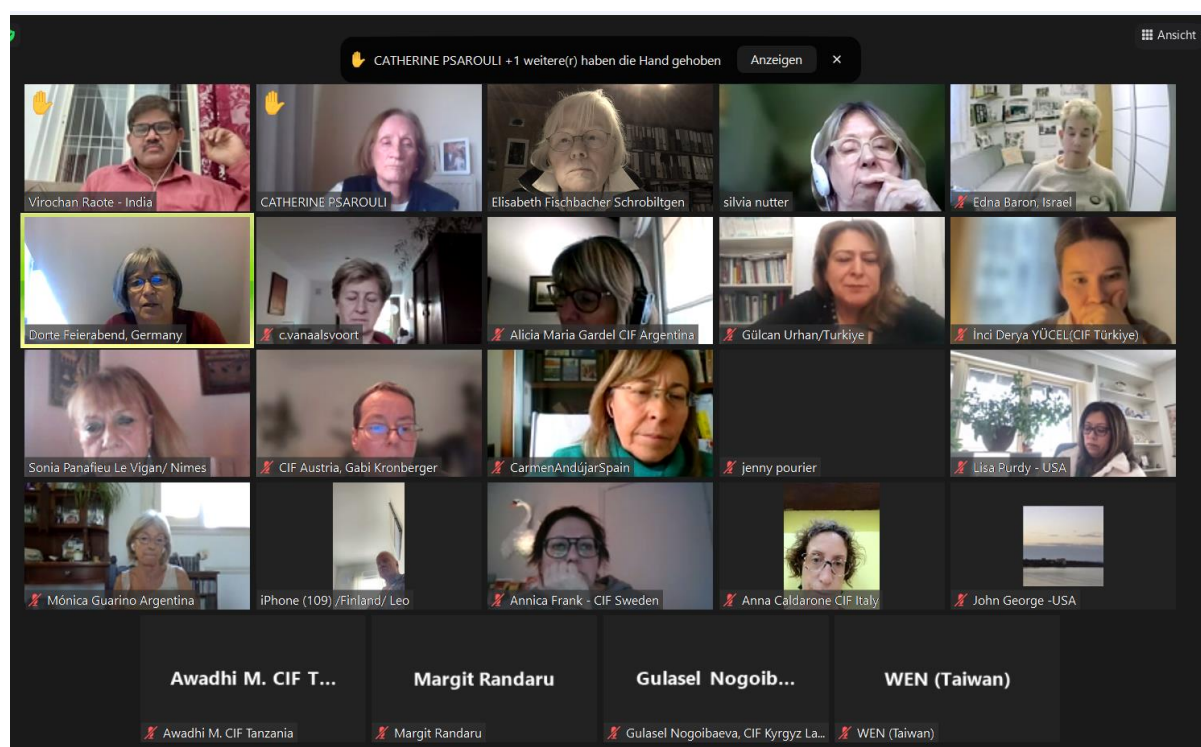
CIF Sweden Participants

## IPEP Coordinators Meeting

During 2024 there were three IPEP coordinators meetings, two online, one in person. Many experiences regarding handling of visas, reporting, late cancellations were exchanged, the situation of the IPEPs updated. The work load in national branches like Spain or India, with lots of applications became heavy, possible solutions were to be tried out and needed the understanding of the partner NBs.

In each of these meetings the handling of financial assistance to IPEP participants was a theme. Dispatching the money, the amount of money per person, the handling of money transfer, conditions like writing a report and many others, evaluation and continuation of the project and others needed a lot of attention and exchange.

Altogether these meetings were much valued, made CIF life more fruitful and lively. IPEP Coordinators participated even if it was midnight their own time. Thank you all so much!



## CIF National Branches

### Development of regions

CIF National Branches and Contact Persons make CIF International. Without their immense volunteer work and their enthusiasm CIF would not exist. CIF had 32 National Branches (NBs) and Contact Persons (CPs) in 18 countries at the end of 2024 - three new CPs in one year!

The development of national branches is most interesting. Often seeing a development trend, particularly in smaller NBs, made CIF International attentive to what is going on in different places. NBs are independent legal entities and therefore responsible for their own organization. Due to online meetings, letters to the members and many individual contacts, the relationship between NBs is better, more often and with this easier for newcomers to get acquainted. This means also more knowledge what is going on in different places, and more possibilities for support.

There are structures which can help such as the Baltic/Nordic Meetings. They are organized every second year, and all members can participate. Neither travel nor accommodation is very expensive, and they are excellent possibilities for professional and cultural exchange, fun and nurturing of personal relations. In 2024 **CIF Scotland** hosted the regional meeting from September 12-15, 2024 with great success and with the participation of 12 members from Sweden, 7 from Finland, 3 from Estonia, Norway, other countries and even the president of CIF International.

Due to the initiative of CIF Cyprus, Greece and Israel, something similar is planned in April 2025 for NBs and CPs in the **Mediterranean area** and with the same idea: giving an opportunity for the members to see each other, and to have a professional and cultural exchange without needing to travel to another continent. In 2024 the organizers had three online and one meeting in person.

**CIF France**, which for many years has maintained close contacts with **French speaking countries**, supports the exchange between them and assists in many different aspects.

In this context we can also mention **CIP USA**. They have several affiliates in different parts of the country and in 2024 decided to integrate CIF USA into CIP USA, forming a standing Committee CIF and so be stronger together.

## **National and international activities/projects (apart from IPEPs)**

Annual reports were requested from all the national branches; 30 reports were completed.

All NBs returned to regular times and activities and have been incorporating new methods and ways to promote but also to execute their IPEPs. All CIF NBs were committed to strengthening their national branch and expanding its impact. They reported online meetings with their members and other interested individuals. Increased contacts with professionals and universities have also been taking place, as well as contacts with social workers' associations and other related organizations and municipalities. In some countries there is a move towards recruiting newly formed professionals, thus graduates in social work but also in related disciplines in order to increase the number of members. There is also a move to reach out to students and involve them in IPEPs, local seminars and training, and of course in conferences. This aims to engage dedicated students who can contribute meaningfully to the mission and objectives of both CIF locally and to CIF International.

Resources and funding are also a major issue for many NBs. The economic situation in most of the countries has not returned to what it was prior to the pandemic and this is not to be expected soon. In addition, most of the countries have been facing additional challenges, either with physical phenomena like environmental issues or political situations, which cause grief but also extreme financial burdens to the public.

**CIF Algeria** has received and studied application files for the French IPEP, attended CIF's online meeting, promoted the NB in Algeria (through personal networking, social media and mail), offered support and guidance to new candidates and took part in conferences and meetings organized. There were no participants in 2024 due to visa problems. **CIF Austria** reported a number of activities with a great variety of delivery methods. In spring 2024 a cooperation with the FH Campus Wien (University of Applied Sciences took place; <https://www.fh-campuswien.ac.at/en/index.html>) There was a class called "International Exchange" with social work students being involved in the IPEP (the lecturer was Gabi Kronberger). On 21<sup>st</sup> September 2024 a day trip for all CIF Austria members and friends to "Kirchberg am Wagram" was organized, visiting the garden festival in the village with a guided tour. **CIF Cyprus** has been struggling with the legal departments regarding the regulation and updating of the association to comply with new laws. In addition they have been setting up the Mediterranean group meetings both online and face to face in Morocco. There has been success as more than 8 countries are interested and actively participating in the organization and execution of this event in April 2025. **CIF Estonia** stated that most of their activities were related to their IPEP especially after a 5-year gap.

They also had online meetings for members and recruited 2 new members to their board. **CIF Finland** organized a super celebration for their 60th anniversary on 9.11.2024 in Helsinki, with 60 members, host families, partners, a contact person for their financier, the "Talentia Union of Professional Social Work" and several members from Sweden and Estonia. **CIF Germany** had been engaged in member promotion and public relations work but also they have managed to publish a detailed article about CIF in one of the well known German social work journals. In addition, they have been working towards attracting younger professionals in social work fields, and mainly in strengthening their regional groups. **CIF Hellas** members, friends, host families, representatives of participating Organizations and Public services got together for the traditional cutting of vasilopita, the "New Year's Pie" in January 2023. **CIF India** not only organized an IPEP in January, but they are getting ready for a CIF Conference 2025 in Mumbai. **CIF Israel** had a very difficult time with all the disasters experienced in their country. Most of their activities had to be postponed or cancelled. Only hybrid meetings took place and they tried hard to introduce new members, keep the old ones active, discuss issues on the budget and activities and complete reports to be sent to the Israeli authorities. In addition, they started a connection with a non-profit organization "Women's Spirit", dedicated to helping women survivors of abuse to find employment and achieve economic independence, empowering them to break free from poverty and the cycle of abuse. **CIF Italy** organized two conferences: one in Milano face to face, and one online, in cooperation with the same university and the social worker associations, where they presented the organization and discussed the value and the meaning of the change experience in the professional training of social workers. Additionally, they had many contacts with the regional Social Workers Associations to explain CIF's activities and to improve visibility with the professionals. **CIF Kyrgyzstan** had their first IPEP which was a great success and this gave them a push to propose IPEPs every year. In **Morocco** a group of extremely engaged professionals had to found a new organisation "L'Association Marocaine pour l'amitié, l'échange international, le développement et l'insertion sociale" which was recognised by the Board of Directors as the CIF partner in Morocco. They managed to put together memorable EC and BD meetings full of energy, dedication, social interaction, cultural taste and good work done. The event was a great success and an opportunity for many of CIF from all over the world to exchange ideas, good practice, knowledge and a lot of friendship. **CIF Nepal** supported Braille paper supply, with about 500 USD, to visually impaired children who do not have sufficient money to buy papers. They raised funds among CIF Nepal members. **CIF Scotland** hosted the **Baltic/Nordic Meeting** in September 2024, shortly after their IPEP. **CIF Sweden** had two members who delivered a seminar on the national annual Social Work Conference where CIF was highlighted. Three meetings with CIF members took place. The Annual meeting in February, the Autumn Meeting in October and a Christmas party in December. **CIF**



**Switzerland** had a very good 2024, due to government support, which allowed it to invite participants from abroad and undertake many more activities. **CIF Taiwan** indicated that more social workers might apply for new IPEPs in 2025. Travel expenses are still extremely high. Social workers nevertheless are expected to have foreign experience; and now with the special assistance with funding from CIF perhaps more might be able join in. People are still worried about their English language skills. **CIF Turkiye** made significant efforts to redesign and enhance the CIF Turkiye website. One of the key activities of the year was the successful completion of the CIF Turkiye IPEP program in three major cities. Additionally, there were seven participants, who successfully completed their programs abroad, shared their experiences and engaged with members and applicants. **CIF USA:** After long discussions CIF USA and CIP USA decided to become a combined entity. CIP USA changed its bylaws so the members of CIF USA can become members of a standing "Committee CIF" of CIP with its own convener, representing the members on the Board of CIP USA. Let us see where this will lead!

### **CIP USA**

In 2024 CIP hosted 10 German TraX (Trans-Atlantic Exchange) members. (This is the original CIP and Germany program which started CIP in 1956). This program allowed CIP to host a wonderful participant in the CIP office for 2 months. CIP hosted a psychologist in Addiction from Brazil – her father came on their program in the 80's. CIP and its network of offices also hosted 6 U.S. Government funded Public Diplomacy Programs in 6 different areas with 36 participants in total. In total CIP USA hosted 383 participants in very different programs. Of these, 11 participants were in either Social work, NGO Administration, or Human Services and 18 were from their own government funded programs in related fields.

### **New opportunities, aims and goals for the coming year(s)**

All NBs are working towards increasing awareness of the organization and planning for new IPEPs, as well as other short local seminars and workshops to bring together their members. NBs are seeking opportunities to participate in joint projects with other CIF national branches, to collaborate, in alliance with other organizations such as the professional councils of the different regions, for the dissemination of the objectives of CIF and IPEPS. They also work towards strengthening the bonds with social workers organizations in their own, but also in the neighbouring countries in order to increase the bonding and the expand the networking of the professional development. This also will bring more members to the branches.

**CIF Estonia** is excited to organize a mini-program (2 days) for their members and they are also preparing to host the Nordic-Baltic meeting in 2026. Thus they don't plan to have an IPEP in 2025, but in 2026. **CIF Finland** wants to keep up the good work they are doing with their IPEP as well as other activities but also they wish to activate more of their members. They are thinking of sending out a questionnaire to them, asking them what kind of activities they wish to have in the future.

## **Comments about the cooperation between NBs and CIF International**

Most NBs indicated that cooperation between their branch and CIF International works well. Special mention is made of the monthly letters; they were found useful and a contribution to cooperation. The replies to specific questions were received quickly. Branches that have a member in the CIF Executive Committee seem to be most satisfied with communication. Many also look forward to the face-to-face meetings. One further comment is that CIF International works well and now all are curious to see the outcome of the merger of CIP and CIF USA.

## **CIF Contact persons**

CIF Contact Persons (CPs) work quite isolated in their countries and need information, practical support and exchange with others. This might take place with IPEP organizers receiving their applications, but it also needs a good network. CIF International began to develop this additional support by updating and ameliorating working conditions (they are still far from ideal), contacting new CPs, eager to build up a structure for easier specific exchange.

At the end of 2024 CIF International had 18 listed CPs. Four new CPs, from Australia, Sierra Leone, Indonesia and Lebanon were ready to take on this demanding task. Unfortunately, the contact person in Lebanon had to leave the country due to the war situation to return to Switzerland. For the time being he will try to continue his work as far as possible.

Eleven CPs sent their survey of the year 2024: Australia, Vietnam, Sierra Leone, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Kosovo, Lithuania, Pakistan, Serbia, Tanzania and Tunisia. They described the year 2024 as more active and a year they tried hard to recruit new members. Their initial efforts focused on bringing awareness to the public and to the associations of social workers in their country about CIF, to learn "who we are and what we do". Online meetings have been scheduled as the distances do

not permit face to face meetings. Some managed to hold quite a few meetings which helped the development and the unification of the group. Unfortunately no CP had the chance to participate in the BD meeting in Morocco ; but they did try to go online and exchange information. Financial support is still the strongest issue, as finances are so important for them to be able to travel to the countries of IPEP programs and of conferences.

**CP Australia** has been doing wonders with efforts to recruit social workers and find the old CIF members. She met with two of them and she also contacted the other 3 members who live in New South Wales, with the ultimate goal of reopening the branch in 2025. **CP Kosovo** also stated that the biggest challenge is to involve people in the program, considering that some of the social workers have a lack of knowledge of foreign languages to participate in IPEPs. This comes in addition to the financial difficulties faced by most of the participants. Another challenge is managing good agreements and discussions with institutions and universities while building awareness of CIF International and its benefits. **CP Madagascar** underlined the great difficulties they are facing still to find people, but also to get in contact with their Social work group and they express their need of an NGO from Europe or America who can actually work with them. **CP Tunisia** underlined the great assistance received from CIF France and the numerous exchanges they organize among them. **CP Vietnam** had a participant in the CIF France IPEP 2024. They also proposed one candidate for the Finnish IPEP 2025. Both of them are on the way to creating a NB in Vietnam.

## Organizational Activities

### General Assembly

2024 was not a year for a CIF conference and therefore it was not a year for a General Assembly. Nevertheless there was an online General Assembly on August 31<sup>st</sup>. The main reason for holding this event was that the General Assembly is responsible for changing the statutes; a change of statutes was necessary because CIF International wants to begin with more systematic fundraising. CIF International is based in Germany and its statutes have to follow German law. German law asks for precisely worded articles in the statutes in order to assure that the money is dealt with in the public interest. CIF International has always worked in the public interest, so the General Assembly had no problems with integrating the necessary changes into its statutes. At the same time some articles of the statutes needed some updating. The updates came from shared experiences in the last few years, again raising no problem for our members.

So it was a relaxed General Assembly. We were hoping that the four months until

December 31<sup>st</sup> 2024 would be enough time to get the necessary approval by the Vereinsregister and the Finanzamt in Bonn so as to be tax exempt by January 1, 2025. We underestimated the necessary time, but it is also true that a lot of work is necessary to really find people, organisations, funds which are willing and happy to support CIF International and its program "Financial Assistance for IPEP Participation". So preparations are about to start.

Minutes of the General Assembly 2023, and the Annual report 2023 including finance reports, were presented and unanimously accepted. At the end of the year 2023 CIF International had an asset value of € 79.316,14. This is a plus of € 2.447,25 composed of the operating result of € 2.270,77 and interest on the assets of € 176,48.

The Board of Directors was released unanimously from further responsibility for 2023.

## **Board of Directors meetings**

In 2024 CIF International had two Board of Directors meetings. The first, held online on April 20, approved the Annual report including the Financial report 2023. It also elected Merja Niemelä as the third member of the CIF Election Committee. The main reason for this meeting was preparing the necessary changes of our Statutes. For CIF International to become able to do significant fundraising, it needs not only to be registered with the German Vereinsregister in Bonn, but also to be tax exempted by the Finanzamt in Bonn. While CIF International has been registered for many years, it is not tax exempted. This is necessary for securing funding, being able to ask for money from public sources and also for being recognised as working correctly financially. For this purpose CIF International Statutes need to contain explicit recognised goals of serving the public interest, and commitments to using money, also in the public interest. The wording of certain articles in the Statutes has to be exactly according to regulations in German law. There were also other minor changes for simplifying the text, removing duplication, and adapting statutes to the current situation. A lively discussion was followed by forwarding the draft to the General Assembly on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

The second meeting was set for November 1 and 2 in Rabat, Morocco, followed by an IPEP Coordinators Meeting on November 3. This meeting dealt mainly with updating CIF guidelines, and developing new ones on Privacy policy. Instead of repeating here all the decisions, we would like to refer to the minutes of these meetings (you find them on the website members page) and conclude here with the main developments.

- The financial guidelines for meetings in person of the BD, for grants to participate in CIF Conferences and BD meetings, as well as for the guidelines on

expenses related to the work of the CIF Executive Committee basically were not changed. There were two exceptions:

- The reimbursement for participation in BD meetings could be higher in case the annual budget allows this.
- More volunteers are entitled to ask for reimbursement of expenses, such as the members of the Election Committee, Contact Persons, EC members.

To spend more money on this kind of activities is only possible if finances allow and decisions are taken annually by budget approval. Additional resources could be provided by BD meetings being in person only every two years instead of every year, and additional resources from activities to be developed, and from fundraising.

- The guidelines for Contact Persons contain explicitly more rights on support from CIF International through regular online meetings, and they have the right to apply for grants, to participate as observers in BD meetings.
- CIF International has developed guidelines on Privacy policy, based on governance of CIF's work; and handling personal data is in CIF International's Statutes, Article 16. It follows German data protection laws (DSGVO) and needs to be observed also by national branches and contact persons. For implementation not only in CIF International, but also in national branches and with contact persons, several actions will be necessary in 2025.
- Regarding elections of the Executive Committee it was proposed to change the mode of elections, but the BD decided to keep the present procedure.
- To update the two documents Code of Conduct and Ethical Principles was not really possible. Edna Bar-On put the two documents together; this made clear that this is an important step, but the result is that its content was far from useful. So facts were listed and a procedure developed for discussion in the BD. The BD agreed and a small working group was established, with Edna Bar-On as the convener.

Developments in national branches were discussed as well - and it became clear that even though they are independent, in certain situations their functioning needs more attention:

- CIF Russia closed due to the present impracticality of functioning.
- After a longstanding unclear situation the BD choose a new organisation, l'Association Marocaine pour l'amitié, l'échange international, le développement et l'insertion sociale, as the partner of CIF International in Morocco.
- After extensive discussions with its members, as well as with CIP USA and CIF International, CIF USA decided to dissolve its organisation. In summer 2024 CIP USA changed its by-laws so it can have individual members in a "Standing Committee CIF" which is considered a win-win situation for both: CIP will have many more professional resources, CIF will be better recognized, and both look forward to being gone strong organization. For CIF International this is a most

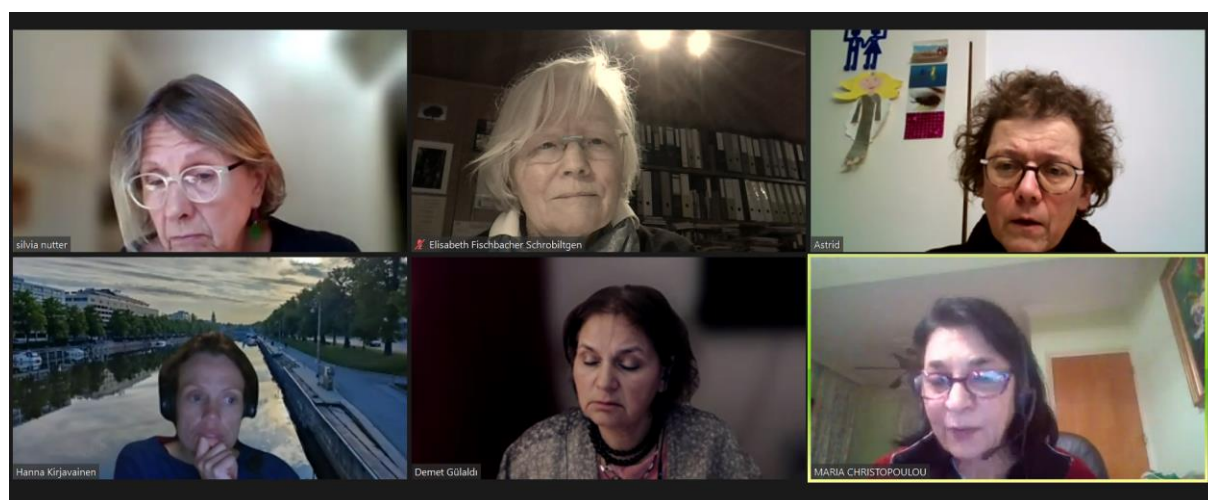
interesting experiment of having a national branch within an organisation, with additional and different goals too.

The budget 2025 was approved, including some 5.000 Euros for the Financial assistance for IPEP participation project (about half from left-overs from 2024, the other half from donations). Dates, contents and structures of the CIF Conference 2025 in Mumbai were presented and it was also decided on the BD meeting 2026 being around the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of CIP in Cleveland, Ohio, United States.

L'Association Marocaine pour l'amitié, l'échange international, le développement et l'insertion sociale with its president Mohamed Elaidi, its treasurer, Mustapha Boulahfa, and other members organized this meeting in a most impressive way, with great care, with warmth and a lot of personal resources. We even visited the Moroccan Parliament and we had Moroccan dinners of outstanding quality. And even a dancing night ... after all the work it was just great!

## Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) met eleven times online and once in person, in Rabat, Morocco.



The most important issues were daily business:

- The EC prepared for the two BD meetings 2024, and the one online General Assembly 2024
- It worked for the first time on the project 'Financial assistance for IPEP participation' and dealt with this and other themes in three IPEP Coordinators meetings, one in person, two online.
- It published the Annual report 2023 including financial accounts, and
- updated most official documents of CIF International.

- It developed a privacy policy which now needs some further discussion and implementation in national branches and with contact persons.
- It published one edition of World News and sent out the "Letter to our members",
- It constantly updated the website, participated in several WhatsApp groups, and
- it dealt with different, sometimes difficult situations in national branches, and inserted new contact persons.

## Committees

### Election Committee

2024 was rather quiet for the Election Committee.

Early in the year we waited for the appointment of our third member, Merja Niemelä, CIF Finland and former EC member. She replaced Mieke Weeda who had to withdraw in 2023.

In spring the Election Committee was asked to bring forward its proposals for updating the guidelines for the election of the Executive Committee. This led us to look at structural as well as financial aspects of our work. We suggested an alternative way to elect EC members, which was not accepted by the BD; but it became clear that there are other possibilities to ensure a good choice of candidates for the EC. In the future expenses for participation in BD meetings and CIF Conferences, for conducting elections, are to be partially reimbursed. This gives our Committee members many more opportunities to network and to get to know potential candidates.

Immediately after the election of Merja we started with the preparations for the elections 2025 in India. Then at least the Treasurer as well as the Secretary will have to be replaced, because they will have served eight years on the Executive Committee. We have approached all EC members who are still eligible for election, and contacted future candidates on our list to ask them about their potential candidature for the EC 2025-2027. The first interviews with new candidates have already been conducted, which makes us very confident about the election in India. For 2025, our focus will be on preparing for the election in November 2025.

The Election Committee works very well together in regular Zoom conferences and clearly coordinated steps.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in us.

Ilse Hoffmann-Klee, convener

Merja Niemelä

Catherine Psarouli

## Social Media and the website

The CIF International social media platform aims to increase visibility; activate existing members and attract new ones; and to share knowledge, experiences and news of CIF activities and events. Hanna Kirjavainen was in 2024 the EC member responsible for the website and social media. Jocelyn Dámaso Mendoza has also been active in this regard.

- Website: <https://cifinternational.com/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Socialmediacifinternational>

The Facebook page is actively updated and has currently 111 followers. On Facebook, there have been posts about forthcoming IPEP programs and other events, and reports about past events. In addition, the posts of national branches are actively shared. Besides Facebook, CIF International also has Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube accounts; but these are currently not updated.

In February 2024, a questionnaire about preferences and wishes for CIF International social media utilization was sent to the members. We got 54 answers. Based on the questionnaire responses, it seems that Facebook is the most common social media platform the members use (38/53 used it at least on a weekly basis); and according to the answers, Facebook was also the platform in which CIF should aim to be active. From social media sites the respondents would be interested in e.g., IPEP info; stories from the programmes and the impact on professional and personal life; travelogues; news from the national branches; news about events, conferences and fundraising; innovations, best practices and new approaches in social work. CIF's Facebook page shares the posts of national branches to increase their visibility and actively reports current events. Unfortunately, within the limits of the current team, it is difficult to add to the number of posts, as this should involve more active members from different countries. In the questionnaire, there was also a question about interest in joining the CIF social media team. Some people left their e-mail addresses, and they were contacted via e-mail but only one of them answered, even after a reminder was sent.

However, the plan to get more members active in creating content for social media is still valid, and as the number of our members increases every year, we probably will get also new members who are interested in this task. This could be discussed in the conference in India in November.

The CIF website is hosted by Pineapple Web Company, whose contact person is Julien Ferard. The website also has a document centre, to which only members have access, and which contains useful documents, such as newsletters and statutes. Currently, the structure of the document centre is not very clear, so the plan for 2025 is to clarify it and also share knowledge of the document centre, as its usage is not very common amongst members.



## World News



World News (WN) is the CIF magazine, produced once a year, with the main purposes being to inform, to exchange ideas, to create, and to sustain networks for and with CIF members and the general public globally. The World News has now been expanded with information not only on the actual events, but offering updates about the organization, including information on events, issues, accomplishments, projects, IPEPs and more. In addition, it now includes an additional part with evidenced based articles from all over the world on a variety of issues. This expansion serves better the aim of the World News to serve as a means of promoting more the professional aspect of the organization, while raising awareness about CIF and shared public image. Members and friends can use it around the world, as it can assist them

to better understand what CIF is, what it does, and to acknowledge the impact of CIF on societies in order to inspire them to become CIF members in their own countries.

## Financial Report

### INCOME

In 2024 CIF International had an income of **€ 7.842,63**.

The main regular income is the yearly paid membership fee (this year totalling € 6.675).

Every national branch is responsible for ensuring that 10 or 5 Euros for every member go as an annual membership fee to the bank account of CIF International, the amount depending on the financial situation of specific countries.

In 2024 the membership fee was paid in respect of 710 members. Some payments were also based on years before 2024. From countries where money transfer expenses are too high, CIF International agrees to have fees paid as a group, and even in cash when practically feasible.

In 2024 we had the following extraordinary income:

€ 1.167,63 as donations for the new fund "Financial assistance for IPEP participation", out of which 1'000 Euros were spent from CIF Switzerland for 2025.

The bookkeeping of CIF International is based on real payments/expenses and does not include "debts" of members fees.

### EXPENDITURE

In 2024 CIF expenses were **€ 12.243,28**.

The annual BD meeting, as well as the EC meeting, were held in Rabat, Morocco. This resulted in costs for travel and accommodation for the EC (€ 4.219,00) and for travel cost for the BD (€ 2.950,24). Many thanks to the CIF members from Rabat for their great commitment, and also to the BD members who did not claim reimbursement.

It should be also mentioned that all CIF members work on a voluntary basis, there are no meeting fees, and often no expenses allowance. Many also support CIF financially. We would like to thank all of them for their strong commitment, both at international and national levels.

CIF spent € 2.655,00 as financial assistance for IPEP participants.

The magazine of CIF International, CIF World News has only been published digitally since 2020. The layout of one issue costs € 450; in 2024 one issue was produced.

CIF spent € 1.603,64 on web and email hosting and maintenance of the website. Further costs were administrative expenses and bank charges, together amounting to € 365,40.

### RESULT

The operating result showed a minus of **€ 4.400,65**.

<b>BUDGET + PROFIT &amp; LOSS STATEMENT, IN EUROS</b>			
	<b>Profit &amp; Loss</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Profit &amp; Loss</b>
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Membership fee	6.160,00	6.700,00	6.675,00
Market of the nations	3.515,00		
Conference fees	2.660,00		
Conference fees for Peace project	665,00		
Fundraising		3.000,00	
Other Donations/Legacy	210,01	1.000,00	
Donations for fund Financial Assistance for IPEP participation	2.081,81		1.167,63
Other	954,79		
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.246,61</b>	<b>10.700,00</b>	<b>7.842,63.</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Travel & board EC	4.580,87	4.600,00	4.219,00
Travel & board BD	1.841,00	2.000,00	2.950,24
Grants	5.199,25		
Financial assistance for IPEP participants		5.000,00	2.655,00
World News (layout)	450,00	450,00	450,00
Internet expenses/social media	1.248,00	700,00	765,64
Social media group		200,00	
Website	255,11	500,00	838,00
Peace project	150,71	500,00	
Administrative expenses		200,00	205,29
Bank charges		100,00	160,11
New national branches		200,00	
Other expenses	250,90	100,00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.975,84</b>	<b>14.450,00</b>	<b>12.243,28</b>
<b>Operating result</b>	<b>2.270,77</b>	<b>-3.750,00</b>	<b>-4.400,65</b>

## ASSETS

This also affects the assets. At the end of the year 2024 CIF International had an **asset value of € 75.314,10**. This is a minus of € 4.002,04 composed of the operating result of - € 4.400,65 plus interest on the assets of € 398,61.

The money is held at the Sparkasse Koblenz in Germany. A small part, of around € 2.400, is invested with S Broker, the online broker of the Sparkasse financial group.

The assets include the following earmarked funds: HB Ollendorff/M Ollendorff Fund, S & P Unger Fund, Peace Project Fund, and the Fund of Financial assistance for IPEP participation. All these together in 2024 amounted to € 17.996,63.

<b>ASSETS 2024, December 31, in Euros</b>		
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
SPK Koblenz Bank Account	26.531,41	2.183,77
Money Market Account	25.247,93	20.741,37
Savings Bank Letter	25.000,00	50.000,00
S Broker Depot	2.536,80	2.388,96
<b><i>Capital of the Organization</i></b>	<b><i>79.316,14</i></b>	<b><i>75.314,10</i></b>
<b><i>Assets include the following earmarked funds</i></b>		
HB Ollendorff /M Ollendorff Fund	7.387,74	7.387,74
S & P Unger Fund	5.958,86	5.958,86
Peace Project Fund	1.400,59	1.400,59
Fund Financial Assistance for IPEP participation	2.081,81	3.249,44
<b><i>Earmarked funds</i></b>	<b><i>16.829,00</i></b>	<b><i>17.996,63</i></b>

The full accounts 2023 were presented by the CIF Treasurer, together with the confirmation of the independent audit, at the BD meeting on 20 April 2024, where they were accepted. The audit of the accounts 2023 was done by CIF Germany's members Dorte Feierabend and Conny Zwar.

The 2025 Budget was presented and approved at the BD meeting on November 2, 2024.

**Donations** are very welcome to maintain and improve the work of CIF International. Here is the relevant information:

Name: Council of International Fellowship e.V.

IBAN: DE02 5705 0120 0000 1884 25

BIC-Code: MALADE51KOB

Bank: Sparkasse Koblenz (Germany)

Donations can also be sent via Paypal to

**[treasurer@cifinternational.com](mailto:treasurer@cifinternational.com).**

For all further information please contact the Treasurer of CIF International, Astrid Sehmer: [treasurer@cifinternational.com](mailto:treasurer@cifinternational.com).

## List of committees and working groups

### **ELECTION COMMITTEE**

Ilse Hoffmann-Klee, Convener, CIF Germany

Merja Niemelä, CIF Finland (as of April 20, 2024)

Catherine Psarouli, CIF Hellas

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Elisabeth Fischbacher Schrobiltgen, President, CIF Switzerland

Maria Christopoulou, Vice-President, CIF Cyprus

Demet Gülaldi, Secretary, CIF Turkey

Hanna Kirjavainen, Member-at-large, CIF Finland

Silvia Nutter, Member-at-large, CIF Argentina

Astrid Sehmer, Treasurer, CIF Germany

**FINANCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** No meetings were held in 2024.

Astrid Sehmer, Treasurer, CIF Germany

Gabi Kronberger, CIF Austria

Lisa Purdy, CIF USA

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR IPEP PARTICIPATION WORKING GROUP**

Silvia Nutter, EC Member at Large, Convener

Elisabeth Fischbacher Schrobiltgen, CIF Switzerland  
Patricia Gandara, CIF Argentina  
Bahvna Mehta, CIF India  
Jessica Seitz, CIF Germany

### **SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION TEAM**

Hanna Karjavainen - [karjavainen.hanna@gmail.com](mailto:karjavainen.hanna@gmail.com), EC Member at Large, Convener  
Jocelyn Damaso - [jocelyndamaso@gmail.com](mailto:jocelyndamaso@gmail.com), CIF Spain  
Annette Dietrich - [annette.dietrich@hslu.ch](mailto:annette.dietrich@hslu.ch), CIF Switzerland  
Gabi Kronberger, - [cifaustria@yahoo.com](mailto:cifaustria@yahoo.com), CIF Austria  
Merja Niemelä - [merjamarittaniemela@gmail.com](mailto:merjamarittaniemela@gmail.com), CIF Finland  
Silvia Nutter - [silnutter@gmail.com](mailto:silnutter@gmail.com), EC Member at Large  
Lisa Purdy - [lisa@cipusa.org](mailto:lisa@cipusa.org), CIP USA  
Montserrat Succar Guzman - [pepcifcostarica@gmail.com](mailto:pepcifcostarica@gmail.com), CP Costa Rica