

## **Chair's Report**

### **EFTRE General Assembly, Dublin 2019**

It is now three years since the last meeting of the EFTRE General Assembly in Vienna in 2016 and since then, Executive and Board meetings have been continuing as outlined in our Secretary's Report. I want to thank all those Board and Executive Members who have arranged and hosted these for us so generously and efficiently, especially Marios Koukounaras-Liagkis (Greece) Olof Franck (Sweden) and Florin Tomoioga (Rumania). In return, where possible, EFTRE members have offered free seminars and workshops for local teachers and students as part of these meetings which we hope have been both useful and enjoyable.

As always, the bulk of our work has been to prepare and develop the next Conference. But EFTRE has always sought to be more than just its triennial gathering, important and worthwhile though that is. Other projects have also demanded our attention, particularly in relation to establishing a clearer framework for our organisation and in maintaining communication in the three yearly period between each conference, both with our members and others.

#### **Conference**

The organisers of this wonderful event here in Dublin and later in Belfast too – Sandra Cullen (Ireland) and Norman Richardson (Northern Ireland) – have been co-opted onto the Executive during the last three years and my first task must be to thank them as well as the rest of the team for all they have done to ensure that this is such a success.

Now that we are here in Dublin, I also want to thank all Board Members and friends of EFTRE who have contributed to our programme by delivering keynotes, offering workshops or helping in other ways – your involvement in this way helps us to keep costs down, but above all enriches and enhances what we can offer to our delegates.

#### **EFTRE Constitution**

In the aftermath of the last General Assembly, the Executive worked hard to review and revise the EFTRE Constitution which is now available on the website. It was necessary to do this to make us more efficient and to better reflect the ways in which we work now. We are pleased with the results and hope you will be too.

#### **Communications**

Our website ([www.eftre.net](http://www.eftre.net)) provides the main vehicle for EFTRE communications and I want to pay tribute to Paul Hopkins who first set up the website for us and also to former Executive Members, Phil Lord (Wales) and Janika Olschewski (Germany) who have acted as website managers in recent years. I am delighted that Outi Raunio Hannula (Finland) has agreed to take on this role, but she will be relying on all of us to send her materials to be included on this key platform for us. Presentations from this conference will be added soon so they are available for you to engage with again and use in your own contexts and of course you will find presentations from previous conferences too. In addition, articles in any EFTRE

languages are always welcome and fresh photographs focusing on RE around Europe in a variety of different contexts will also help to keep the site up to date. We need to ensure that all our current pages are relevant as well as being able to add new ones so suggestions for other areas of focus are always welcome. Outi is also managing our Facebook and Twitter accounts and can cross-reference information and other posts, so please do make sure you are signed up for all of these and encourage others to do the same.

### **New Projects**

One of our other main areas for discussion has been to consider how EFTRE can be of use to its members beyond the conference programme. We want to use the website and our social media platforms to build links between individuals and organisations within EFTRE so that they can collaborate on various projects together. Some events have already been made possible in this way but we wish to seek a slightly more structured way of facilitating these for the benefit of all our colleagues.

### **Finances**

EFTRE is a self-funding organisation and receives no grants or charitable support of any kind. All those who serve on the Board and the Executive do so on an entirely voluntary basis. They receive no payment for the work they do for EFTRE and the costs of their attendance at meetings is generally not covered by the organisation. They are either funded by their parent organisations at home or cover their expenses themselves, but in just a few instances, some small subsidies are offered to assist those who need help and to ensure that EFTRE is as inclusive as possible.

This of course limits what EFTRE is able to achieve but we seem to be thriving all the same! Despite – and indeed perhaps because of – all the challenges we face at home in ensuring that RE has its rightful place in the curriculum, EFTRE members continue to be passionate about what they do. Our organisation works because we all care about RE and we care about each other and that means we have the enthusiasm to continue.

Our Treasurers - Euro Account: Hugo Verkest (Belgium) and Sterling Account: Norman Richardson (Northern Ireland) – have been careful stewards of our funds and that will also mean we can look forward to the future. We are hugely grateful to both of them.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, I want to thank everyone for being here and for your support for EFTRE in so many different ways. Particular thanks go to all members of the Executive, not least our wonderful Secretary Elisabeth Faber (Denmark) who is unable to be with us here – we send her our very best wishes for a swift and full recovery. I also want to thank the Board Members for all their contributions.

Finally, as some of you may know, these last few months have been very challenging for me and I have been unable to attend all meetings or to offer the kind of contribution I wanted to make. The support of my EFTRE colleagues who are also dear friends has been a wonderful support to me and I cannot thank you all enough for your good wishes.

**Lesley Prior**  
**London, August 2019**