

*Dear Friends and members of the Jean Monnet Network 2.0,*

After nearly two months of Covid-19 tribulations, I'm glad to resume our correspondence.

We, at FGV IUU, endured the lockdown effects with basically all FGV staff in home office mode, what, after having cancelled the Rio meeting, did not look as the best way to pursue the Network activities.

We considered proposing a few webinars, but our perception was that there was not enough common ground yet for interaction through this modality. Even so, we worked on our themes and –as you will be soon informed- concluded a brand-new website for the Network.

We plan –given this substantial delay- to ask the EC for an extra 2/3 months' time, beyond the previous closing date for the Project.

A further argument is that we've also suffered a most serious exchange-rate negative effect.

Some of you have asked us about the first instalment, given that the EC had sent it to us and we were in the way to hold the Rio meeting.

As we cannot have a bank account in Euros, the EC payment has been transformed into Reais, and duly deposited. To our great despair -if I may be so dramatic-, the Covid-19 turbulences started to affect the Brazilian currency, with the Real suffering, against the US dollar and the Euro, amidst high volatility, losses of 20 to 30% !

This situation, very unfortunately, persists.

We decided not to make the transfers to your centres, what would mean an equivalent loss of the expected amount in Euros. We remain in this standstill, but I'm open to hear your views.

My general decision though is to wait until a more reasonable rate comes round, but if a centre wants to have its share now, I have no objections, in principle, to send it. I warn that it is likely to get considerably less than expected. The total amount received is going to be divided as before -but in its Reais value; the loss with the new conversion may be nasty.

In order to resume activities, we must also review the schedule of our meetings.

I see no prospects of holding, in the short run, the one in Rio. Some of you suggested having it anyway, two or three months from now. I am sceptical about the feasibility of this idea, and I would prefer to move it to the end of the project, keeping, as best as possible, our original schedule.

A main question is then: does the host of the next meeting think it feasible to stick to the original dates? Or is a postponement envisaged? What about next-year hosts?

Once again, I am open to your views on this matter.

As regards content, I urge you more than ever to develop in this Project, together with the joint pursuits, independent ones, in order that each node of the Network becomes the hub of additional activities controlled by it.

The three nodes responsible for each theme remain as set before.

In my case, I shall presently send a revised agenda of issues, taking into account the undeniable changes brought by the pandemic. I invite the other two co-ordinators -as well as prospective contributors in all centres- to think in similar lines.

I do hope you have all survived the worst phase of the epidemic, and are well and healthy, in the company of your families and friends.

This has been a first one, other messages will follow.

Let's resume work !

Warm regards,

*Renato Flôres*