



## PRESS RELEASE

30 January 2023

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### FRENCH FEDERATION OF CARDIOLOGY

**The French Federation of Cardiology (FFC), a non-profit organisation governed by the law of 1901 and created in 1964, has been recognised as a public-interest organisation since 1977. It brings together 27 independent regional cardiology associations, spread throughout the country, mainly around the following actions: preventing cardiovascular diseases, promoting cardiology research, providing information on life-saving techniques, and helping with the rehabilitation of patients. With the jurisdiction to audit the use of funds of organisations appealing for public donations, the Court of Accounts investigated a period spanning the terms of office of two presidents of the federation (2017-2021). Over this period, although several modernisation projects were launched, the one on strategic thinking is still to be carried out, as the federation is developing its programmes unequally, and leaving part of the funds raised unused.**

#### **Social programmes strongly affected by the health crisis and unequal development of actions**

The cardiovascular disease prevention programme, where spending fell by 45% between 2016 and 2021, has been heavily affected by the health crisis. The programme for funding cardiology research has been professionalised over the period, while taking on an increasing role in 2019 and 2020. All research projects are now selected following calls for proposals by the scientific committee; the challenge now lies in restoring rigorous monitoring of their progress over time. However, the fact-finding mission was not very dynamic.

#### **An incomplete overhaul of the statutes, and strategic thinking on the use of funds and reserves to be accelerated**

In this context, the federation needs to clarify its strategy and prioritise its actions in order to give a clear message to donors about what it intends to promote. Its strategic plan must be translated into an action plan with a precise timetable and budget forecasts. Especially since the FFC's cash position, which was already high before the health crisis, has increased significantly over the last two financial years (€24 million in 2020-2021) due to the combined effect of the drop in expenditure on social programmes and the increase in funds raised, in proportions that the health crisis does not fully explain. In line with the strategic thinking to be carried out, this cash flow level requires not only that expenditure on social programmes be

commensurate with the funds raised, but also that the federation has a policy of investing its reserves.

In addition, the necessary reform of the statutes was blocked by strategic disagreements and tensions within the Board of Directors, and by the federation's reluctance to change its governance by putting more focus on associative democracy. It must be completed quickly.

### **An annual use-of-funds statement whose cost allocation rules slightly overestimate the magnitude of social programmes, and internal audits to be strengthened**

The appendices to the use-of-funds statements set out the principles for allocating expenses exclusively or partially to social programmes, fundraising costs and operating costs, which constitute a frame of reference for the FFC. However, this frame of reference has not always been followed, which has led to an overestimation of the social programmes ratio. In addition, compliance with the objectives set out in donation appeals has not been systematic due to technical difficulties. Furthermore, the Court's audit revealed inconsistencies between the accounts and the financial information published for several financial years. This is all the more problematic as some of them had been indicated in previous reports.

Finally, despite the recommendations made in several audits, the federation's current management still lacks a risk management system. The audits conducted during the Court's investigation highlighted numerous anomalies which demonstrate a lack of internal control. In addition, the federation, which has begun to take greater account of ethical issues in its operations, must complete this process.

### **Dynamic fundraising, but insufficient implementation of obligations related to the protection of donors' personal data**

The donations received (excluding legacies and gifts) has increased by 13% since the 2018-2019 financial year reaching €6.5 million at the end of June 2021, at the expense of a 15% increase in fundraising costs over the period under review. The service provider rigorously manages the processing of donations and the issue of tax receipts, and access to the donor database shows a satisfactory level of security. However, there are still gaps in the compliance with the GDPR as regards obtaining consent and the data retention period.

**[Read the report](#)**

#### **PRESS CONTACT:**

**Julie Poissier** ■ Head of Press Relations ■ T 06 87 36 52 21 ■ [julie.poissier@ccomptes.fr](mailto:julie.poissier@ccomptes.fr)



@Courdescomptes



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