



## CEC TRIENNIAL CONGRESS 2009

### PUBLIC CONFERENCE:

### "THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS TO STIMULATE CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION - AN ANSWER TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS"

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June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 – 10:45-16:00

European Parliament, Brussels

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### WELCOME INTRODUCTION: GEORGES LIAROKAPIS CEC PRESIDENT AND MEMBER OF EESC

It is a pleasure to welcome you in Brussels on the occasion of the CEC Triennial Congress. The European Parliament has made this impressive room available to us and a representative of this institution, Ms Neyts, a former member of the European Parliament, is honouring us with her presence. I pass her the floor to welcome you.

#### *Ms Neyts Speech*

A few words on the subject of the CEC Congress. The year 2009 is the year of creativity and innovation in Europe. But it's true that the deep financial crisis draws much more the attention, with good reason. The interest for innovation and creativity remains aside whereas a beginning of solution to the current financial crisis could lie in our innovation capacity.

This is the subject that CEC – and its executives and managerial staff network- has chosen for its triennial Congress. Through an educational and interactive program prepared by Prof. Hugo Tschirky, we will broaden our perception about creativity and innovation and then address how to stimulate it so as to be as creative as possible.

Europe can only cope with global competitiveness through innovation and creativity. The European research is of high level. Public authorities spend large amounts of money to encourage innovation. European companies wish to be more innovative but obstacles to innovation remain while not being clearly identified. Executives, managerial staff and other professionals recognise that being innovative and creative are quality criteria for career development, stress resistance and to remain employable in the long term.

The CEC seeks answers to the following questions:

- Are the European funds for the Lisbon strategy used in the most effective way?
- What is lacking to Europe for becoming as innovative as Japan?
- Is there any particular state of mind for innovation?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of Europe in this regard?
- How does one become creative?

We often think, wrongly, that innovation and creativity is a subject only for persons with special talents, for researchers in white scrubs or for scientists working with random methods and awaiting a miracle. Three ideas will challenge this common belief:

- Innovation and creativity are not exclusively related to products, services or technologies.
- Innovation and creativity can also exist within an organization, but this requires qualitative management changes.

- Innovation and creativity apply on processes especially, i.e. the way of creating, leading and managing a company or an organisation.

We will see that innovation and creativity are not abstract concepts but a consequence of certain aptitudes. The larger the number of individuals within a group sharing these aptitudes, the more the chances of being creative and innovative.

To pass all that on you, we have called Prof. Hugo Tschirky, from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich. Mr Tschirky has gained a worldwide reputation in leading technologies. He has also developed an international education program for future managers of technology driven companies. He chairs, among others, the fields of General Management, Technology and Innovations Management, and Executive Management Advanced Development and gives Masters courses in Business Administration in Switzerland, the United States and Japan. He has also held the position of CEO at Carl Zeiss.

After the conference, discussion groups will be created and their work will serve as a tool for debates in the afternoon. The objective is to find ten ideas to stimulate creativity and innovation, ten functional ideas that we could implement immediately.

To help develop these ideas and ensure a better appropriation by everyone, Prof. Tschirky will be helped by:

Prof. Dimitris Assimakopoulos Professor of Information Systems & Technology Management, Founder and Director of the Laboratory for Learning and Innovation in Networks and Communities (LINC Lab), and Director of the Doctorate of Business Administration programmes in partnership with the Universities of Newcastle (UK) and Tongji (China), at Grenoble Ecole de Management. Dimitris Assimakopoulos has also served as the Associate Dean for Research at Grenoble Ecole de Management and currently serves as the Secretary General of EDAMBA (European Doctoral programmes Association in Management and Business Administration). Dimitris Assimakopoulos has also been very involved in the MATRI project supported by CEC.

Jean Michel-Camin is inventor and engineer at France Telecom. He has been elected member of the Work Council of his company and elected member of the European Work Council of France Telecom. He is inventor of 4 patents and is the author of a thesis on value creation through the innovation field.

Paul Meller is an experienced reporter specializing in economic and technology issues. A former correspondent for the New York Times, International Herald Tribune and Dow Jones Newswires, he now mainly writes for International Data Group, a leading technology news publisher, and Science Business, an on-line specialist Magazine.

