



CEC European Managers
Opening speech by Ms. Annika Elias
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Dear friends and colleagues, Dear guests, Dear Doctor Diz,

It is a pleasure and honor for me to open the thirtieth General Assembly of CEC. First of all I would like to thank Doctor Pires Diz and SNQTB, the Portuguese national member of CEC for hosting the General Assembly here in Portugal. SNQTB is a loyal and longstanding member of CEC and it is a pleasure to visit Lisbon, your beautiful capital. Dr. Diz and his colleagues will tell us a little more of their work here in Portugal later on in the meeting, and we all look forward to hear about that.

Last time when we met at the General Assembly was in Berlin three years ago. A lot of water has passed under the bridges since then. Some of our hopes for the near future have been fulfilled and some have not. Europe is still a struggling economy, and although some countries are looking at better times, the economic crisis still has a firm grip on many of us. Problems concerning unemployment, social welfare and education are very much on the agenda of the European countries, affecting everybody, managers included.

When we met in Berlin, I spoke about the value of good leadership and how competent managers and experts are more needed than ever before to take Europe out of the crisis. Since then the violence and terrorism has become a part of the life in Europe, as well as the tragedies linked to migration and refugees, making good leadership on all levels of society higher in demand than ever.

At the heart of social unrest and violence there is always the problem of people not having jobs and not having a hope for the future. With the help of a well-developed social dialogue on all levels, managers can help in creating good workplaces that welcomes diversity and at the same time makes strong, competitive companies, with more job opportunities.

One of the two pillars in CEC is our role as social partner. As such we have been present in many meetings and discussions in the social dialogue during the last three years. We are a small organization, but with an important voice that deserves to be heard even more.

A true dialogue needs many voices. As a representative of the European managerial workforce, CEC can be the voice of the managers and experts.

They bring a different perspective by being employees, who at the same time through their position in the companies often share or are able to see the perspective of the employers. In this way the managers can be a bridge between employers and employees in the social dialogue, as well as in the workplace and in society.

And the voice of managers is also important because when the result of the social dialogue (directives and agreements or codes of conduct) will be put in place in the workplace, it is the manager who has to actually do it. Managers who succeed in motivating co-workers and create means for people to perform to the best of their abilities are one of the keys to increased growth and stability in Europe.

As you all know, I come from a country, Sweden, where the social dialogue has served us well for many years. It is built on a mutual trust that is of course easier to reach in a small homogenous country than in the vast European Union.

But still, I am convinced that the unique political and social model that Europe represents, needs to be developed further in order to be preserved. The social dialogue is, with all its flaws, the best instrument at our disposal. And the voice of the managers and experts need to be present.

In CEC we have a wide range of different member organizations. National cross-industry social partners, sectorial federations, managers associations representing high level management. Big and small, old and new.

The diversity within CEC is an asset, but also a challenge. We represent a multitude of European managers, on different levels, in private as well as in public sector and in many different types of industry. The one thing we have in common is the leadership and the position in our respective companies, as a bridge between employers and employees. This is an asset that we could make much more use of!

We have decided that CEC will stand firmly on two legs: One focusing on the social dialogue in Europe, representing managers as employees, and the other one focusing on the special role of the managers, representing the leadership level in the companies. Europe needs competent, engaged and skilled managers if we are going to build a strong economy and a functioning welfare society once again.

The success of CEC lies in constantly keeping these two missions in focus at the same time. This is how we will be the strong voice of the European managers.

During the last three years we have started to work with the CEC members that on a national level are more focused on managerial issues than on the social dialogue. The idea is to share knowledge, to promote our positions on leadership and management and to build strong networks between our members. This will benefit CEC as a whole, as well as our national members and federations.

I would like to end by thanking all of you, the members of CEC, for the confidence you have given me and all of the team, Luigi, Ludger and Juan, to lead CEC during the last three years. We are managers and we know the value of the trust and loyalty you have shown us.

But we could never have achieved anything at all without our excellent staff, Georgette and Matteo. With great competence, knowledge and quite a lot of

patience, they run the daily business of the CEC office. If anything has been achieved these last three years it is much due to them!

It has been my pleasure to serve as your president and I would like to end by reminding all of us, that although we sometimes disagree, we as CEC are part of the great European Union, created to bring peace and progress to all its citizens.