



Congress 2021 in Lyon /// **Conference** /// 70 years of CEC European Managers

The role of managers in building Europe's future

**Lyon, 8 October 2021 – Hotel Novotel Gerland Musée des Confluences
9h30 – 12h30**

The European idea has started building up more than 70 years ago, around the time when European managers have decided to engage in European affairs creating in 1951 the Confederation Internationale des Cadres, which later became CEC. After an initial approach based mainly on the economic and industrial aspects of the European integration process, reflections on Europe have focused during the 80's on social issues, such as working conditions and employment. Social dialogue structured itself at EU level, with the participation of managers' representatives (the role of which had already been recognized via the Gil-Robles resolution).

The European Union has expanded its frontiers since, going through economic and financial crisis and spells of disenchantment. The notion spread that the EU had to build its strength on social pillars too, with social dialogue operating as a main driver. And now, after several years, it seems evident that social dialogue faces difficulties in delivering concrete results, in a context where decision-makers seem to prefer exchanging with citizens drawn by lot or not always informed experts.

The health crisis our societies have been experiencing for a year and a half adds to this scenario, showing how inadequate and risky some past choices relating to public health, industrial autonomy and environmental protection have been. To face these challenges, managers, as a category of the workforce, feel particularly committed to deliver and ready to contribute to the debate.

The Conference on the Future of Europe can pave the way for concrete opportunities for citizens' participation in decision-making. This initiative, initially launched in May 2020, represents one of the priorities of the EU political agenda for the months to come. France, which will be holding the rotating Presidency of the EU in the first semester of 2022, attaches a great importance to a successful and meaningful organization of the Conference, which is expected to come to a conclusion in spring 2022. The various positions developed during the many events organized in France around the Conference will contribute to shaping the



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political priorities of the French Presidency. In parallel, all other EU countries have planned similar initiatives.

Our decision to organize this event is therefore particularly timely. In cooperation with CFE-CGC, together with experts from civil society, representatives of managers' associations and EU institutions, we will discuss managers' capability and willingness to act, through what means and how they intend to play their role in shaping this common European future.

Agenda

Videomessages by **Eva Maydell**, MEP and President of the European Movement International, **Christa Schweng**, President of the European Economic and Social Committee and **Clément Beaune**, French Minister of State for European affairs.

9h30 – 9h45 : **Welcome and introduction**, by Maxime Legrand, President of CEC European Managers and François Hommeril, President of CFE-CGC

9h45 – 11h00 : **First section : How can managers discuss about Europe both on the workplace and as individuals ?** How do they contribute to its construction ?

The section will bring an insight on the experience of the European Works' Council as a place for discussing the implications of the EU on the workplace as well as on the action of CFE-CGC as a national social partner organization and a "civic actor".

Foreseen speakers (moderated by Maxime Legrand)

- Veronique Biarnaix-Roche, Secretary of the Rio Tinto EWC and CFE-CGC delegate in the French Economic and Social Committee (le *CESE*)
- Anne-Catherine Cudennec, CFE-CGC National Secretary for EU and international affairs
- Pierre Maupoint de Vandeul, merchant marine officer, expert in maritime affairs, President of CFE-CGC Marine

11h00 – 11h10: coffee break

11h10 – 12h15 : **Second section: debate on the Conference on the Future of Europe**
(moderated by Matteo Matarazzo)

- introducing the Conference on the Future of Europe: objectives, structure and timeline
- Presentation and debate on the selected **topics**: towards a position of European managers

12h15 – 12h30 – **conclusions**



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Elaborating CEC's contributions to the Conference on the Future of Europe – **background notes**

What is the starting position of CEC in the COFOE's **topics** mentioned below?



1. Climate change and the environment

The transition towards a carbon neutral economic system is a scientific necessity, as the multiplying effects of climate change on our daily lives demonstrate. Importantly, it is also a historic opportunity to create long-term value in line with planetary boundaries and social needs. This requires a new understanding of the sustainability challenges and opportunities by designing pathways that deliver simultaneously on its multiple dimensions. As CEC European Managers' study "Sustainable Leadership in Europe" has shown, the environmental dimension performs particularly weak in managerial activity. Furthermore there are gaps to fill between sustainability ambition and reality in management.

For this process to be successful, it is essential to strengthen the know-how of managing this transition, as CEC underlines with its Sustainable Leadership EU Project. Managers are in the frontline; they need to be empowered to better develop employee potential, drive sustainable innovation and seize opportunities from regulation. Otherwise, legislation, including on sustainable corporate governance, will remain a tick-box exercise, without creating a structural impact. New types of instruments have to be activated to support managers on this path – legal and fiscal sandboxes for sustainability innovators, building sustainability business ecosystems at local and regional scale or exploring innovation in the areas of the circular, regenerative and commons economy.



2. A stronger economy, social justice and jobs

As the prospects for a strong economic rebound after the Covid-crisis appear for the EU, it is fundamental that policy-makers at all levels create the necessary framework conditions to allow for the recovery to become structural. A quantitative understanding of economic growth is no-longer acceptable, as it contrasts with the need to transition towards a socially fairer and environmentally more sustainable model. Creating new sustainable jobs will also require managers driving sustainable business innovation.

As far as employment is concerned, at a time when technological change accelerates the evolution of the world of work, our social security systems need to progress. To continue delivering, the EU social model must move towards universal social protection, that ensures all workers adequate levels of social protection irrespective of their employment status or place of residence. And conversely, contribution to financing social protection must be a requisite applying to all economic actors, independent from their formal classification or location.

Social dialogue, and the free interaction of its actors, is essential if we want employment and social rights to remain fit to deliver. Supporting collective bargaining and the good functioning of a solid system of industrial relations helps elaborating the most effective solutions to employment-related challenges, combining the respect of domestic specificities and the necessity to develop minimum common standards.



3. Values and rights, rule of law, security

At this time where foundational values and rights are threatened, the EU needs more bridge builders able to build future-oriented pathways based on shared values. In this respect, the workplace, and managers particularly, plays an important integrative role, as leverage for systemic change to happen at all levels of society, increasing the sense of belonging and

contributing to countering isolation and separatism.

Europe is based on the principle of being united in diversity, leaving no room for discrimination of any sort. The integration of such diversity into a society where everyone can express its potential is at the same time a source of economic prosperity and a driver for social cohesion. For the economy to deliver at its full potential, the skills, competences and knowledge of all must be put at use, respecting everyone's specificities.

As regards gender equality and female participation in the workforce, CEC European Managers have been campaigning for a long time for increasing the uptake of managerial responsibilities by women: it's a shared responsibility, that starts with facilitating work-life balance and business practices and should include specific legislative initiatives such as quotas.

The underrepresentation in the job market applies to other minorities, the diversity of which must be dealt with a specific diversity management approach that instead of pushing towards an idealized, neutral majority culture, creates space for an effective integration.



4. Digital transformation

Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence could become major enablers for innovative business models, sustainable reindustrialisation and also the measurement and guidance on sustainability performance. The potential positive effects for society are huge, but demand to be managed with vision, competence, strong ethics and a shared purpose. In consideration of the competing visions on digital development beyond

Europe, it is important to invest in a digital transformation process that in all its facets is inclusive and human-centered, contributes to sovereignty and delivers positive long-term impact for Europe's often decentralized economic system.

Next to improving the EU's digital infrastructure, creating a digital single market and investing in digital skills, digitalisation should be embedded into the EU's industrial strategy. This will require building upon our economy's strengths and current economic structure, for instance catering to the needs of SMEs and developing strategic autonomy in digital key areas.

Providing the necessary training to those who are responsible for designing and implementing digitalization is a prerequisite for this transition to serve the general purpose, leaving nobody behind. Managers are undeniable actors in the process of adapting companies to the new digital realities and have specific responsibilities when it comes to the employment-related aspects of digitalization; equipping them with the right tools is of paramount importance.



5. Education, culture, youth and sport

Skills, training and education are at the intersection of the twin digital and sustainable transitions. Their improvement represents a clear example of a transversal objective, that creates the least divisions among different types of stakeholders.

Individuals – irrespective of their employment status – need to adapt continuously their competences throughout their life, updating their skills to the new reality in which they live and work. Traditional educational and training schemes must evolve to provide more transversal skills, enabling people to build their professional career, create new jobs or adapt existing ones to new circumstances. Also, the role of informal learning has to be strengthened.

An enhanced cooperation between training providers, economic actors and social partners is essential to ease anticipation of change and avoid skill-mismatching. But rather than simply projecting past skill demands onto the future, we need new methods (such as skill backcasting)activating new methods to provide key groups, such as managers, with skills for a VUCA world, in which new opportunities are created in line with the EU’s green and digital objectives.

Finally, the time has come for creating real opportunities for mobility in education for all: by providing individuals with life-long learning opportunities valid everywhere in the EU and extending the successful model of the Erasmus project to all categories of “learners”, including workers, managers, apprentices.