



# 7 Managers Priorities for the 2024 European Parliament Elections

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS  
**6-9 JUNE 2024**





***As the world around us  
changes faster than ever,  
social partners must again  
be at the heart  
of our future***

2023 State of the Union Address

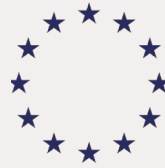
PRESIDENT OF THE EU COMMISSION

**Ursula von der Leyen**



Since its creation in 1951, **CEC European Managers** has been representing the interests, concerns, and hopes of Europe's managers.

As a recognised **European social partner** and leadership voice in EU affairs, **CEC European Managers** understands it as its responsibility to advance European integration and cooperation based on democratic values.



Today, Europe is facing unprecedented challenges such as the consequences of the war in Ukraine, inflationary trends, or the effects of global warming on supply chains.

This complex reality demands leadership and partnerships of change across sectors.

## **Managers' Priorities for the European elections in 2024**

is a call for pragmatism, dialogue, and adapted ways of governance.

Most European citizens, **including managers**, expect a firm engagement for our democracies, social market economy, and sustainability of our future economy.

Through this paper, **CEC European Managers** wishes to shed some light on these priorities in the context of the **2024 European Parliament election**.

## 7 KEY PRIORITIES

1. DIGITALIZATION

2. ENSURE GENDER - AND DIVERSITY - INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

3. SMART CHANGE

4. SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

5. DEFENDING DEMOCRACY AND PROMOTING SOCIAL DIALOGUE

6. TACKLE LABOR SHORTAGES

7. OPEN INVITATION TO COLLABORATE WITH CEC EUROPEAN MANAGERS

# 1. DIGITALIZATION



As we approach the upcoming **European elections**, we seek your collaboration to support responsible **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** development, fostering leadership competencies, transparent governance, and collaborative innovation ecosystems.

AI has integrated into management, offering productivity gains and task reorganization.

Managers value these opportunities to **enhance decision-making**, support teams, and promote business development.

However, in this context, leadership roles are shifting towards soft skills, context understanding, ethical considerations, systems thinking, futures thinking, **team empowerment** and life cycle design.

With the **AI tools in their hands**, leaders need to adapt them to the specific purpose and needs of the organization.



## LIFELONG LEARNING FOR TECHNOLOGICAL ADAPTATION

**CEC European Managers** strongly advocates for the **European Union** to champion a culture of lifelong learning by investing in programs that enhance leadership competencies and promote diversity in **AI development teams**.

Initiatives addressing **unconscious bias**, ensuring data diversity, and encouraging ethical considerations should be prioritized.

## ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE AI

**CEC European Managers** supports **responsible AI adaptation**, emphasizing the need for a sustainable vision in Europe. Addressing challenges posed by monopolistic platform economies, **fostering AI systems made in Europe**, and promoting collaborative innovation ecosystems are crucial. **Wise human leadership** and social partnership play a vital role in this strategic orientation.



## ENSURING HUMAN OVERSIGHT IN AI DECISIONS

Regulation and agreements promoting the "**right to a human manager**" are recommended to handle **AI-system-related requests**.

Responsible leaders and developers **behind AI systems** should be visible, liable, and accessible. **Clear legal frameworks** and responsibilities are crucial, especially in high-risk areas.

## PROMOTING SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP ON AI

Enabling conditions for constructive social partnerships around **AI development** is essential, as it is a **driver of innovation** and **shared value distribution**. In the absence of social partnership structures, public policies should **promote social dialogue on AI**, emphasizing shared knowledge and **negotiated agreements with trade unions and/or workers'/manager representatives**.

## 2. ENSURE GENDER - AND DIVERSITY - INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

In the pursuit of a progressive and inclusive future for the **European Union**, we urge you to prioritize **gender equality**, **diversity**, and **inclusion** in all policy and corporate governance discussions.



# COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES FOR CULTIVATING INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Creating gender - and diversity - inclusive workplaces **requires a holistic approach involving leadership**, workplace culture, policy choices, and conversations in the wider society.

Addressing the impact of an aging population and current labor shortages necessitates recruiting, developing, and retaining talent irrespective of attributes

## ESSENTIAL ROLE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS IN EU'S GOALS

Diversity and inclusiveness are not only common sense but essential for achieving the **EU's ambitious goals by 2030** and fostering a strong European economy.

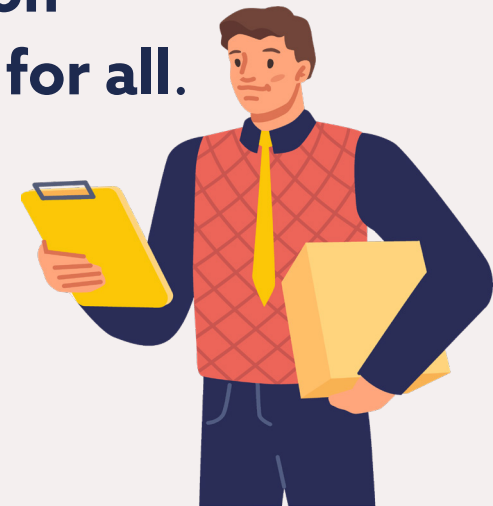
Research by the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** underscores the positive impact of equality, diversity, and inclusion on innovation, productivity, talent recruitment, retention, and workforce well-being.

# 3. SMART CHANGE

Companies and economic players are modifying their operational structures to cope with the complexity of their activities.

Through innovative thinking and thanks to the active involvement of social partners, the **European Union** can elaborate the most effective answers to tackle these challenges.

Smart change is about **embracing innovation** and technology while ensuring a **just transition for all**.



## FACILITATE GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

All European policies should aim to facilitate the development of **European companies** capable of competing on a global scale and producing strategic goods currently imported (batteries, microchips, etc.), **in synergy with the SME system.**

To this end, they must guarantee a "level playing field" by **combating harmful tax competition within the EU.**

## ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION

We call on **European leaders** to prioritize support for the digital transition to **increase productivity** and reduce consumption of raw materials.



## LEADERSHIP IMPERATIVE FOR NECESSARY CHANGES

Traditional tools for promoting innovation must evolve to maintain robust growth, employment and sustainability objectives.

**Managers play a decisive role**, and must show strong leadership to realize each of these necessary changes.

With the support of its **Smart Change working group**, **CEC European Managers** formulated some recommendations concerning technical and organizational smart change.

## CONCRETE SUPPORT FOR RESHORING AND INNOVATION

Political decision-makers are urgently called upon to provide tangible support for reshoring, innovation, research and development (R&D), and training, aligning with the **EU's Green Deal Industrial Plan**.

# 4. SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

Sustainable leadership encompasses a **holistic understanding of sustainability** that goes beyond the environment to include economic and social dimensions.

Our world is under pressure, and we need to change direction now if we are to preserve hope of a **sustainable future** and avoid disaster for future generations.

That's why **we need leaders who can act**, dare and take a sustainable direction without hesitation.



## EMPOWERING MANAGERS FOR SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

Managers are in a key position to make their business fit for the future.

Yet, the current lack of global leadership is accelerating climate change, besides other sustainability trends. While too often neglected, **involving leaders** can become a crucial resource for **solving the climate crisis**.

## CEC'S VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

Sustainable leadership is one of the key elements to reach the **Sustainable Development Goals** and fulfill the ambitions of the **EU Green Deal**.

However, our research through the **Sustainable leadership project** showed only a minority of managers has the skills and knowledge **to create sustainable business models**, products and services.



As highlighted in **CEC European Managers'** new [vision and mission statement](#) on **Sustainable Leadership**, we envision a world in which leaders act for a net positive impact by transforming the world of work sustainably.

**Sustainable Development Goals** have become the new compass for success in politics and business.

Leaders in the public and private sector measure, account and report on their sustainability impact (Triple Bottom Line performance) and **seize the opportunities of sustainable business models**, product and service innovation.

## MOBILIZING RESOURCES FOR CHANGE

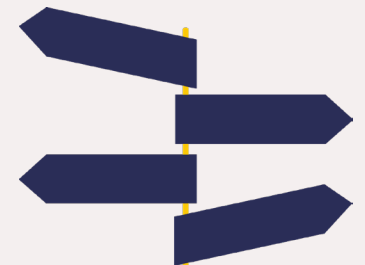
We urge policymakers to promote and invest in training that equips managers with the skills needed to lead ethically and environmentally responsible organizations, encompassing sustainability reporting, corporate social responsibility, and green business practices.

Today's challenge is to **mobilize the resources for change to happen on the ground.**



# 5. DEFENDING DEMOCRACY AND PROMOTING SOCIAL DIALOGUE

In the run-up to the European elections, **CEC European Managers** expresses its non-partisan, but firm support to **democratic forces** and encourages its affiliates to lead conversations on the value of democracy and **shared decision-making**.



## FORGING A DEMOCRATIC PATH

**CEC European Managers** traces its roots back to the aftermath of two World Wars, recognizing the pivotal role of managers during periods of far-right and communist regimes. In 1951, the French, Italian, and German federations of managers founded CEC's predecessor with a vision for a peaceful, democratic, and **prosperous Europe**.

Managers, responsible for millions of workers, are urged to **stand up for democratic values** and express non-partisan support for democratic forces.

## THE CALL FOR DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

**CEC European Managers** emphasizes the importance of legitimizing policies based on their impact and calls on **courageous European leaders** to unite citizens around ambitious, yet pragmatic visions for the **future of Europe**.

The focus is on **safeguarding human rights**, democratic institutions, and ensuring the fair sharing of the benefits of success.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF DEMOCRACY

**CEC European Managers** underscores the role of social dialogue in shaping the future **European agenda**, particularly in the face of social polarization, digital and green transitions, and labor mismatches.

The ability of social partners to anticipate and cushion shocks is crucial, and a **strong social dialogue** contributes to better-informed decisions, inclusive policies, and the legitimacy of decision-making.

## INTEGRATING SOCIAL DIALOGUE INTO EU DECISION-MAKING

**CEC European Managers** urges European institutions to involve social partners more extensively in political decision-making and **integrate social dialogue** into **EU legislative proposals**.

**Social convergence** is deemed essential for rebuilding citizens' confidence in the **European integration project**.

## BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Policymakers are called upon to prioritize democratic values, inclusivity, and fair distribution of success.

**CEC European Managers** encourages them to engage in ambitious yet pragmatic visions for Europe's future, incorporating social dialogue into decision-making processes.

The aim is to build a stronger, **more legitimate European integration** that addresses contemporary challenges and instills confidence among citizens.



# 6. TACKLE LABOR SHORTAGES

At a time when employers are facing increasing recruitment difficulties, **CEC European Managers** highlights the need for policies to focus on developing effective strategies to attract and retain skilled talent.



## ADAPT POLICIES TO EVOLVING EMPLOYMENT LANDSCAPES

We have set our ambition to succeed in the green and digital transitions, not least with the **Green Deal Industrial Plan**. Yet, it is in the digital, green and some other sectors that the labor market gaps are the largest.

It is precisely here, faced with this paradox, that the focus should be on building innovation capacity. We urge decision makers to design policies that **promote adaptability** and **innovation**, in response to evolving job requirements.

## ADDRESS THE LABOR MARKET PARADOX STRATEGICALLY

We pledge for the need to rethink our approach to job attractiveness and investment in skills. Beyond a fair wage, **European citizens need confidence**, prospects and a **positive impact of work on their lives** and living conditions.



The **European Year of Skills** is an invitation to take concrete action by investing in workers and managers.

We invite the **European institutions** to capitalize on improving the attractiveness of the **European Union labor market** to recruit workers from within and outside the EU.

## **SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP**

Ensuring social acceptance requires comprehensive measures for unemployed individuals in Europe who aspire **to contribute to building Europe's future.**

This in turn demands leadership and social partnership at all levels. To bridge the gaps, we need to design flexible lifelong learning offers. Skills are an investment. More than ever, **we need leaders who can take people on board and restore trust.**

# 7. OPEN INVITATION TO COLLABORATE WITH CEC EUROPEAN MANAGERS



**CEC European Managers** extends an open invitation to professionals, experts, policymakers and stakeholders to collaborate closely with us, contributing their insights and expertise to our shared objectives.

## ENRICHING DISCOURSE AND DECISION-MAKING

Your collaboration with **CEC European Managers** will not only enrich the discourse surrounding these critical matters but also contribute to shaping informed and effective decision-making for **the benefit of our shared European future.**

## SHAPING LEADERSHIP AND POLICY AGENDAS FOR THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

**CEC European Managers** emphasizes its role in providing relevant knowledge to managers and policymakers, positioning itself at the cutting edge of leadership and policy research.

The organisation expresses confidence in its **ability to contribute to comprehensive solutions** for the contemporary challenges faced by Europe.

## JOINING FORCES

Policymakers are urged to actively engage with **CEC European Managers**, recognizing the valuable resources and expertise the organization brings to the table.

The call is for collaborative efforts that not only enrich the discourse but also lead to more **effective decision-making**, ultimately benefiting the shared European future.



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LEADERSHIP.**



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