

14 October 2026

Brussels

Speech by Maxime Legrand at the Tripartite Social Summit

Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment

"Driving Europe forward"

Session: "Moderated discussion"

--

President von der Leyen,
President Costa,
Taoiseach Martin,
Ministers,
Distinguished colleagues,

As President of CEC European Managers and representing the Liaison Committee with Eurocadres,
I speak today for the joint representation of European managers.

Making difficult decisions is part of the daily responsibility of the managers we represent.
So we understand how difficult the choices ahead are. Europe faces growing risks, urgent
investment needs and limited resources.

Above all, we must learn to act together. Europe's challenge is not simply to make better
individual decisions. It is to make our individual decisions work better together. A team of

talented individuals does not automatically make a successful team. And Europe is no exception.

This is what managers do every day: turn separate choices into collective results. Europe needs that same discipline. This is how we should approach our next Multiannual Financial Framework: not only asking how much we spend, but what we can achieve together that none of us could achieve alone.

What kind of economic and social model do we want for Europe? One where economic freedom and collective responsibility compete? Or one where they reinforce each other?

"Businesses and those who run them need simpler rules, faster decisions and greater freedom to invest." But no company operates outside society. Competitiveness is not merely a private concern. It is a collective responsibility — and that requires participation.

If we rethink the rules governing businesses, we must also ask ourselves how decisions are made within them. Workers and managers must have a stronger voice in strategic choices and in shaping the organisation of work, especially as artificial intelligence transforms our professional lives.

This is why social dialogue is not a cost to be minimised. It is how good decisions become shared decisions, and how shared decisions get implemented. Europe must protect dedicated funding for social dialogue and support strong social partners in every Member State.

But participation must also bring opportunities: to understand economic decisions, share in business success and develop new skills. And collective choices should never weaken individual ambition or hold back personal progress.

Because what are we building Europe for, if not to give the next generation reasons to believe in the future? Young Europeans must still be confident that learning, working, taking responsibility and pursuing ambitious projects can lead to a better life, here in Europe.

Thank you for your attention.

Maxime Legrand

CEC European Managers president
