



CEC EUROPEAN MANAGERS

A call to European citizens for the European elections of May 22nd – 25th 2014

Presented at the CEC European Managers Executive Board meeting –
Athens, 10th April 2014

A call for Europe

CEC European Managers has a long tradition of Europeanism: its foundation in 1951 as CIC happened at the same time as the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, the embryo of the current European Union. Since then, the process of European unification has achieved goals that would have been unthinkable when everything started: Europe has experienced an impressive phase of economic growth and improvement of living standards, ensured that the respect of human rights and the practice of dialogue instead of confrontation between States became and remained the rule for countries with sometimes obscure past political experiences and liberated unprecedented spaces of individual freedom. Europe has then become (and still is) for many countries in transition a source for political ambition and a strong driver for reforms, rapidly imposing itself as a model for future projects of supranational integration.

Regardless of the causes behind it, the recent financial crisis has hit Europe and its citizens very hard, and its social consequences in terms of unemployment, cuts in public spending for welfare and increase of poverty levels have sometimes reached dramatic levels. The general perception of these problems being totally dependent on the Euro and the common economic and financial architecture of Europe has shadowed in many countries the acknowledgment of the undeniable advantages associated with being part of this Union and the great economic and social development that EU membership brought.

At the end of May, European citizens will be asked to vote for the renewal of the European parliament: 751 MEPs who will have to take crucial decisions together with the other European institutions to steer Europe out of the crisis and regain popular confidence in the European project. The risk is high that these elections will see a significant electoral rise of anti-European political forces campaigning for populist and maybe luring, yet unreasonable and potentially disruptive proposals such as the abolition of the Euro and the adoption of measures restricting the free circulation of citizens.

We don't believe that Europe can afford now to interrupt or maybe reverse its integration process. Any political platform suggesting a withdrawal of Europe in a world where economic competition among giants is increasing will prove painfully ruinous. And, most importantly, we fear that the request for a different Europe that many citizens are voicing becomes a Trojan horse for less Europe, less freedom, less rights, less prosperity.

Managers are responsible members of the societies and communities in which they are active; even in this situation, we know they will adopt a responsible attitude and decide to vote for those political forces that consider the future of European countries as inevitably linked with a further progression of the European integration.

We now call on all European citizens, to remind them that this vote will mark a decisive moment for the definition of the future life prospects of hundreds of millions of people. Let us consider the countless positive aspects of our everyday life that we all owe to Europe, and let us make sure that future generations will be offered the chance to experience even more of them.

Each vote counts. Vote for Europe!