

Managers in Europe

vision, roles & values

Dirigente

Professional

Cadre

Leader

Leder

executive

Cuadro

Quadro

leader

Leider

Sjef

Führungskraft

Direttore

Ledare

Chef

Menadžer

dirigeant

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Abstract

We, the European managers, believe that the problems our societies are currently facing also bear enormous opportunities, if we manage to formulate a common and inclusive vision for a more desirable future. The challenge is to give meaning and to structure the complexity of today's situation in a way to allow for the full development of individual, organisational and societal potentials. With our contribution, we would like to put a strong emphasis on leadership that is needed for both formulating an inclusive vision and for an effective and sustainable implementation of the proposed initiatives in the following domains



Sixty years of European democratic governance have brought prosperity, peace and a platform to move forward together. We now need to use the questioning of the status quo to renew our European governance while building upon the undeniably successful and unique European social model. **>p. 3**



Making our model of the social market economy more resilient to the ongoing major global transformations means to learn from past crisis by reviewing the rules and investing in quality growth supported by technology. **>p. 4**



The rich diversity and creative potentials of our societies have to be made use of by providing a living basis to everyone while empowering minorities and women. **>p. 5**



The sharing and circular economy start to demonstrate that qualitative economic growth and a healthy environment go hand in hand. **>p. 6**



A dynamic and self-reflective society needs culture and education as a mirror and as an integrated system in which individuals are provided with the necessary competences for future challenges. A sustainable health system needs to focus more on prevention in all life domains. **>p. 6**



Without people that are able to make use of our complex world by giving meaning and structure, we cannot realise the necessary ambitions. We need more bridge builders that can develop people, organisations and policies from the resources we already have. **>p. 7**

Introduction

Europe is facing a phase of deep crisis of political, economic, social and identity nature. Within a global context marked by rising uncertainties, growing geopolitical tensions and long-lasting structural weaknesses, Europe seems to have lost the capacity to elaborate a common vision on its position on the global scene. Since mid-2000s, the European project has progressively lost its attractiveness, both among its citizens and globally as a model for economic development and political construction. The lack of a clear, shared and operational vision for a common future and the timidity of the solutions proposed at European level are having negative effects on the credibility of Europe as a functioning political entity.

In this framework, and in an attempt to counter simplistic responses to deep-rooted problems, we would like to present a document that briefly highlights our idea of where Europe currently stands, what its main challenges are and which direction the solutions we find appropriate should take. Inspired by their everyday activity of bridge-builders between the needs and expectations of employers and workers, European managers want to give their contribution to build solid connections among the various forces of the European society, and participate in the public debate on the basis of their competences and values. In fact, we believe that the involvement of the different groups animating our societies in the public debate is the best antidote to the growing indifference of so many citizens. And we believe that it is our duty and responsibility to participate in such a debate with solid, knowledge-based suggestions in support of policy-makers.

At this occasion, we would like to thank our Italian member organisation, CIDA, to have initiated the debate on this foundational document at European level through its study on managers' values and attitudes.

Where we stand today

The phase we are currently experiencing is characterized by a high degree of volatility, with economic, societal and political conditions evolving very rapidly. The world's complexity needs to be structured to deal with the problems we face today. Simplistic responses deviate from what really matters: to prepare for a more desirable, inclusive and sustainable future.

These changing conditions bear enormous opportunities for Europe. The challenge is to handle this complexity in a way allowing for the full development of humans, organisations and societies. If the analysis and proposals are complex, the objective of our call is decisively not: We are proposing an inclusive and sustainable vision for a more desirable future for which we need responsible leaders: in companies, in politics and within civil society.

Leadership means to responsively conceive, plan and put in place measures for the sake of organisational well-being, a positive social impact and the preservation of our environment. In this regard, the leadership we are facilitating will construct a future of opportunities on the basis of the capacities and resources we have today.

The large-scale societal visions expressed through utopias have proved contrasting the complex realities experienced by citizens. Even though we need the imaginary to create a vision for the future, it is essential to base it on what there actually is – in all its complexity. History teaches us how detrimental assertive assumptions about human nature or the essence of society can be.

Simplistic responses from anti-European movements are only a symptom of a number of underlying problems. Countering this rhetoric will not succeed by giving one-sided explanations of the reasons causing them. The problem is the one of not having found new means of overseeing and using the complexity of problems, responsibilities and hidden opportunities. In this respect, appealing to techno-determinism¹ is wrong, because it suggests that technology as an external force could solve our problems although they are made and developed in a social context and thus not external.

* "Techno-determinism" refers to the idea that technology (only) shapes the way societies work and evolve. This approach does not take into account the socio-cultural context in which technology is created and developed.

**A vision
based on
humans:
listening
and
respecting**

We now need to use the technologic advances as a tool to improve peoples' lives: from public data collection to the design of public policies serving people in a targeted manner.

European managers and professionals play an important role as facilitators and supporters of the organisations within which they operate, without ignoring the great issues that we are facing today. We would like to promote a mid to long term vision that encourages creative innovation as the main antidote to stagnation and isolation. "Managers in Europe – vision, roles and values" thus becomes a contributing tool to support the efforts towards Europe's democratic renewal.



The managers' vision for Europe

Europe has a very controversial history, marked by great tragedies and spectacular social, cultural and political advancements. After centuries of confrontation, what inspires the political project of the European Union is the acceptance and celebration of diversity, as a source of mutual richness. The many challenges Europe is facing today should not be considered as a natural catastrophe, but rather as the consequence of human action. And it is for this reason that they can be overcome through vision and strategies.



United in opportunities

Restore the credibility and confidence in European institutions by respecting the principle of subsidiarity and reaffirming the value of the European social model

European democracy, although questioned by anti-European movements (who couple the democratic system as such with its governance), has never been as strong as before. Precisely the questioning of the practiced status quo, expressed in recent elections and referendums, proves the strength of democratic innovation. The signal for a democratic renewal is clear. To ignore it is to ignore our own responsibilities.

**Confusing
governance
and
system is
detrimental**

We now have to take the next step – planning the democratic renewal by using the continent's enormous resources.

First and foremost, we have to renew the European Union by democratic means. It is necessary to ensure that the political discourse focuses on the fundamental "added value" of the Union, centred on the four liberties. By respecting the principle of subsidiarity, i.e. regulating at European level only those issues that cannot be sufficiently dealt with at national, regional or local level, we will regain the confidence of the citizens that the EU is beneficial for them, despite the ever frequent attempts of "EU-bashing" made by national politicians.

**Democratic
renewal**

Secondly, Europe needs large-scale investments in **education and training** using identified best practices without imposing a unique model. What we need today is the provision of information in educational matters. European education is creating awareness about European diversity, enhancing transversal skills through multi-perspective learning and favouring the diffusion of new digital learning models.

Finally, we need to ensure that the **European social model**, the basis for our common economic well-being, is strengthened. We need to organise the continent's pool of diversity through a fundamental renewal and reinforcement of the **European social dialogue** at all levels and, more broadly, of civil society representation, also through the European Economic and Social Committee.

Only then will we be able to use the transformative power of innovative practices for the whole of society. As one of the six officially recognized European cross-industry social partner organisations, CEC European Managers defends (also via its professional federations) the value and potentiality of social dialogue as one of the founding blocks of a social Europe. Our Members, both at national and sectoral level, participate in the different institutional mechanisms ensuring a balanced representation of all the categories of employees.

In this context, sectorial social dialogue plays a specific role in respect to the many changes brought by energy and digital transition: here, social dialogue can help anticipate the labour, societal and economic consequences of these changes. Because of their capacity to deliver a long-term vision, strengthened by their competences, managers need to be part of this scheme.

**The active
role of
European
managers**



For a new paradigm

Reforming our economic model to make it more resilient to the ongoing major global transformations by avoiding the mistakes of the past in order to preserve the principles of the social market economy

An increasingly monopolistic financial capitalism, deep economic differences in and amongst European countries and the surge of market concentration in many sectors: the symptoms of an economic system in need of change couldn't be clearer. We need to transform our economy into a system favouring qualitative, sustainable and inclusive growth that serves people.

Economic competition, development and innovation, and the reorganisation of production processes through digital technologies imply a scale of investments and an organisation of knowledge that can only be within the reach of global mega-regions. However, there is a risk that these phenomena bring fear and closure, in an attempt to defend the levels of wealth attained by raising barriers and adopting isolationist approaches. Such trends would cause irreparable damage to future generations, stifling that process of uniting and exchange between different cultures, which over the last sixty years has undoubtedly improved the living standards of all Europeans.

**Global
challenges
versus
isolation**

New times require new rules. The so called "**social market economy**" is a model that has nourished an economy that is still amongst the strongest in the world and that has generated a level of social protection that has no equal. However, it needs to adapt to 21st century for it not to remain a catchphrase.

**Orienting
our
economic
model**

A renewed social market economy has to guarantee sound competition, suit to deliberated social and environmental standards and be controlled by renewed institutions. Economic policies have to be rethought, because they are implemented by an increasing number of actors, both public and private and at all levels.

The digital revolution hosts an enormous potential, if considered leverage to social and environmental targets. New technologies are not essentially disruptive, but their drivers can be. Therefore, technological investments should serve the common good.

**Reinforcing
our
global
positioning**

Europe has to maintain and develop its industrial base and production through the mentioned innovative, qualitative and sustainable economic orientation. This positioning will make Europe a leader of technologies serving humans and the environment and thus, creating a new competitive advantage.



A pool of experiences

Getting the most out of the diversity that represents the richness of Europe, in an effort to reinforce an integrating, inclusive society capable of preventing social distress and making full use of its potential

Our modern European societies are characterised by **diversity** in all aspects. European countries have succeeded in establishing social systems marked by a high level of institutionally safeguarded pluralism. However, socio-economic disparities as well as criticism questioning the very essence of European diversity continue rising. Racism, sexism or any other form of discriminative behaviour and speech undermining human rights and democratic rules have to be fought decisively.

The problems of lacking integration, extremism and an increase in job precariousness cannot be solved with isolationist policies. The main challenge remains to create new opportunities for businesses and individuals, increase social inclusion and establish new spaces of dialogue, in particular via intra-European exchanges and mobility. Furthermore, in the wake of the major global migration movements, another main challenge adds up for Europe: integrating growing numbers of people with sometimes profoundly different cultural and societal backgrounds, in a mutually respectful and satisfactory way.

Create new opportunities and increase mobility

The role of States in social policies is to provide for a **living basis** for everyone. A climate of constant fear of socio-economic "downgrading" constitutes an explosive danger for social cohesion. The EU can, and already does, intervene by benchmarking national solutions and setting minimum standards.

Demographic change, including the ageing of the population, requires conceiving and adapting public services in Europe to the needs of an increasingly diverse pool of users. Therefore, administrations will need to get smarter to improve services. Furthermore, companies need support in infrastructure and **diversity** skills development.

Demographic change and gender equality

Particular attention needs to be devoted to making **gender equality** effective in all its aspects (including wages). Many different regulations have stated the need to rebalance the man to woman ratio in career progression. However, women in top positions still remain a minority and the recognition of their achievements is often disregarded or delayed. For these reasons, European managers renew their request to policy-makers to making gender equality effective, also via measures that promote a fair sharing of family responsibilities between men and women.





Preserving our future

Environmental protection is no longer in opposition with economic growth, but the source for producing qualitative wealth

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations has been a milestone with regards to the raising consciousness about the interdependence of society, economy and ecology. Besides the right to a healthy and intact environment, economic reasons have proved the importance of investing in **sustainable development**. Innovations in the domain of new technologies and the principles of the sharing and circular economy are starting to change the whole chain of industrial production, which makes the antagonism between environment and economy obsolete.

As for renewable energies, biotechnology or sustainable agriculture: preserving nature by learning from it can create qualitative growth. We all will have to learn the values and skills necessary to create qualitative growth in new circumstances.

The challenge will be closely related to timing: both public administrations and companies have to review and eventually transform their operations. Awareness-raising will not be sufficient to limit greenhouse gas emissions in time. Europe has to **take the lead** for the necessary transitions by political measures in Europe and negotiations at international level. The follow-up of the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC) will have to prove Europe's leadership in environmental protection.

Environmental protection is about the right timing



Getting ready for tomorrow

We need a modern and interconnected education system that equips society with competences necessary to invent new social and economic models. Strengthening the provision of culture increases creativity and self-reflection, needed in a changing world. A sustainable health care system starts from the beginning: prevention

Culture serves as a critical mirror to society, breaking down barriers between its different groups. Moreover, culture plays a major role in boosting **creativity and innovation**. Without a creative voice, a society may become all but dead inside. The importance of fostering creativity at the workplace is without doubt a huge asset for all workers, and for managers in particular.

Developing a critical sense

Education remains key when it comes to setting the preconditions for creating a more desirable future. From technical skills in the digital era to new creative spaces in which transversal skills can be acquired: the provision of these skills will need to be assured by new educational institutions, more exchanges and communication for lifetime.

Transversal skills are as important as "hard" skills

More than ever, we need to massively invest in education at all levels to increase innovation and cultivate democratic values. The diversity in European educational models needs to lead to increasing exchanges at all levels. At university level, we need to maintain academic freedom and financial support for all scientific disciplines. MINT disciplines are crucial for technological innovation, however also humanities are needed in times of fundamental social transformations. They provide **independent** research on existing and potential social, political, economic and cultural models.

With an ageing population and lifestyle habits putting pressure on national healthcare systems, it is of utmost importance to tackle the problems from the roots by increasingly **focussing on prevention**. Particular attention needs to be devoted to psycho-social risks at the workplace – an issue that specifically concerns managers. Creating supportive environments at work is key to tackling this problem.

Competence, vision, realisation & responsibility

Besides vision, we need people with the right competences to facilitate the changes. A new set of competences and skills is needed for holistic leadership to steer towards a more inclusive and sustainable future. Managers should have the capacities to facilitate competences, the capacity for a long-term vision and the ability to elaborate the right implementation strategies that societies need. And we are willing to put these qualities at disposal to serve society

Besides the public policies necessary to renew Europe, changes towards a more desirable future will occur through innovative practices inside private and public organisations. Here, irrespective of and in addition to their specific individual professional assignments, managers play a key role as **bridge builders** between employers and the workforce: they set business strategies, lead by example and facilitate spaces for innovation. Even though differences in management styles exist, we share the values of autonomy, responsibility, merit, competence, efficiency and dialogue as the foundation of a common European management culture that we are promoting. As active members of the society, we want to contribute to the renewal project through our competence, vision and implementation skills.

A critical spirit for the future

First, we would like to promote the competences that characterize leading management. In a fast-paced world economy, the ability to change and test one's own assumptions has become more important than ever. Therefore, a critical spirit able to make sense of various perspectives has to be cultivated in all educational institutions. **Transversal skills** enable to creatively engage with new situations and knowledge in a structured manner. Also emotional competences like empathy have to be taught in unconventional manners that are able to link personal experience to new models of learning throughout life.

Create innovation niches

Secondly, these competences create the space for innovative visions of the future. In times of stagnation and need for new models, we have to **encourage new settings** that produce inclusive and sustainable projects for society. Digital technologies may help to conceive new kinds of networks elaborating general and domain-specific visions. Here we see public administrations as facilitators, creating the necessary infrastructure to prepare the networks of tomorrow.

Implement through responsible leadership

And thirdly, we need competent leaders who implement these visions. Besides competence, a successful implementation requires experience and a strong sense of duty. Technological transformations and the complexification of tasks seem to make this notion obsolete. Quite the opposite applies: in times where possibilities seem endless, the decision on the direction to take becomes fundamental. Only managers with strong values and sense of **responsibility** will be able to take strategic measures in the direction of a more sustainable and inclusive future. Steering the right tools into the right direction becomes certainly more collaborative, but only few are able to see the bigger picture and to facilitate the development of the necessary competences.

Our values

European managers, who adhere to the action of CEC European Managers and its member organisations as representation bodies of their voice, intend to play a constructive and facilitating role as an independent component of the society characterised by its competences and professional skills in the construction of a renewed Europe. In performing their tasks, they follow the values listed below as a compass for their action.

This Manifesto is a proof of their commitment to the objective of building a renewed Union that better corresponds to the expectations of the people.

Freedom and equality of opportunities

To guarantee freedom, we need to empower people through positive measures creating spaces of security in which individuals can develop. Equal treatment and the implementation of truly non-discriminatory policies in all aspects of social life are the founding basis of such spaces. The commitment to fighting social inequalities resulting from abusive and speculative economic processes goes in the direction of countering the obstacles that hinder the full exercise of economic democracy.

Solidarity and inclusion

People and their needs must be at the centre of our action. Only a climate of mutual respect for diversity and personal development potentials can create the space for solidarity and inclusion. We need to work on inclusiveness through more participatory processes, a strong stance against intolerance and a trustful working environment. To put the individual at the centre also implies opening up to a new sensibility for issues like work-life balance and the continuous improvement of welfare systems to better serve the needs of the working personnel.

Responsibility and ethics - leading by example

In times of "fact wars" and ubiquitous information, responsibility gains in importance: facts have to be contextualised, be filled with purpose and aligned to a vision for progress. Managers have a key role in society and need to account to their responsibility through a positive social impact. Behavioural ethics is one of the fundamental values of managers, who must perceive the need to lead by example as a concrete form of civic-mindedness and, consequently, integrate the adherence to ethical values in the conduct of their business at every stage.

Transparency

Decision-making processes need to be visible and transparent, both in the public arena and at business level, to guarantee the democratic control of institutions and the society. Measures to increase transparency have to respect privacy and be subject to democratic control.

Progress

The idea of linear and purely quantitative economic progress has proved contrary to the needs and capacities of humans. We need to redefine progress through aligning the idea to values and domain-specific visions for it to be measurable. For progress to be sustainable, the process has to be subject to democratic deliberation. Strategies for economic growth must be based on a principle of efficiency in business management, which favours a long-term strategic approach over the fulfilment of an immediate business advantage.

Merit

We believe in a social and company environment in which each individual's competences are the basis for his/her professional success. The people we represent are characterised by their knowledge and skills, which are put at the service of the company they work for and the society they operate in. We need to increase social mobility and defy structures favouring success with no merit. A particular attention should be given to effectively implementing generational turnover, gender neutrality and non-discrimination as additional criteria for personnel selection and career advancement.

Sustainability

We need to mainstream sustainable thinking and behaviour into all domains of life and professional activity. It is our duty to hand over to future generations a healthy environment, an inclusive society and an economy beneficial to all members of society. The principle of development must become a fundamental objective for the improvement of the conditions for both the individual and the society, and must aim at ensuring room for an all-encompassing individual growth path.

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