EDITORIAL

European elections – It’s our choice

Managers are often mobile. A united Europe is an everyday experience for us. As well as in professional and private life we often travel across invisible borders between countries. Due to these experiences we are well familiar with the opportunities and the challenges of an economically united Europe. We know how to classify the various problems and crises in an overall perspective and contribute to detecting effective solutions. Managers therefore bear the responsibility to protect Europe against polemic and exaggerated nationalism.

The CEC as the political voice of managers in Europe is committed to support and strengthen the process of European unification. There is no serious alternative to peaceful cooperation among nations. At the elections of the European Parliament on 22-25 May we will have the opportunity to strengthen and support the political forces with a constructive vision for the Europe of the future. We also have the opportunity to keep nationalist and chauvinist political parties out of the Parliament.

Managers should use the following arguments to convince other citizens that European elections are worth going to:

- The European Union (EU) it breathes the spirit of freedom in several ways. After Europe was liberated from dictatorships, the project of European unification stood as a synonym for freedom itself. With the guarantee of the four fundamental freedoms (free movement of persons, goods, capitals and services), freedom can be experienced by every citizen.

- The EU provides binding mechanisms to resolve conflicts at the negotiating table. This has led to more than 60 years of peace and prosperity.

- As EU citizens, we have the opportunity to find out about different cultures and to accept them, just as we are seen and accepted with our own national heritage by our neighbours.

- Due to the reduction of trade barriers the EU member states have been able to become stronger and more effective in the global competition. Now that the European Union as a whole has become a leading world economic and trade actor, no place would be available in the globalized world for individual national economies.

- Finally, Europe is seen and admired on other continents as a pioneer because of its integration success. The current challenges do not question the concept of Europe. However, the unification of Europe is still ongoing. There is a need for further joint efforts to achieve the full potential of a strong community. The challenges we face can best be addressed through the EU.

One of the greatest challenges to the stability of our continent is to make us all aware that the advantages of a strong EU outnumber the disadvantages by far. This is why the CEC calls on all managers to stand by and help to increase participation to the elections of the Parliament.

Thank you!
On Friday, March 14th CEC European Managers was invited to participate in a seminar on European social dialogue organised by AISLO (www.aislonline.org), an Italian think-tank doing research on labour and organisational issues. In the beautiful halls of Palazzo del Gallo, a magnificent renaissance-style palace located in the historic centre of Rome, more than 50 guests have gathered to discuss the functioning of the European social dialogue, its current challenges and its most important future prospects.

CEC was represented by its Secretary General, Mr Luigi Caprioglio, and by the Manager of the Brussels Office, Mr. Matteo Matarazzo.

During the seminar, organised under the patronage of FECC (the federation of construction managers of CEC), six panellists introduced different aspects of the topic: from a general historic analysis of the evolution of the model (contribution of Mr. Matarazzo) to the evaluation of the implications and mutual influences between the European and the domestic level.

European social dialogue is a fundamental trait of the European social model, and plays a pivotal role in shaping the features of national systems of industrial relations. Yet, its very existence is unfortunately little known to many European citizens, while even national experts and representatives of the civil society have a blurry, incomplete vision of the real meaning of European social dialogue and undervalue its potential.

In his contribution, Mr Caprioglio proposed some reflections on the main shortcomings of the system, which is currently undermined by the consequences of the economic crisis and the overall weakening of industrial relations in many European countries.

The interested participation of the guests, and the many interventions concerning how to improve awareness and actual execution at national level of agreements signed in Brussels, showed how essential it is for social partners (both at national and European level) to focus on implementation activities, of the outcomes of the dialogue. On the same line, it is necessary to ensure timely and complete dissemination of all information concerning the developments of social dialogue defined at European level.
The EESC (the European Economic and Social Committee) is the gateway of the European civil society to the European Union, a consultative body that offers European citizens, organised in different representation groups, the possibility to participate indirectly in the European legislative process. CEC European Managers is represented by its Secretary General, Mr. Luigi Caprioglio.

To ensure a more thorough and complete participation of all organisations of the civil society (including those that are not officially represented in the EESC), a Liaison Group was set in 2004 with the goal of providing a structured forum for political dialogue. Besides the regular activities that are part of the official role of this Liaison Group, a yearly conference takes place in Brussels with representatives of the wider and more diverse components of organised civil society, to offer a wider platform for discussion and interaction.

The 2014 meeting, with the title of «Beyond agendas and manifests», was organised in the perspective of the forthcoming European elections, which will mark a decisive moment for the future of Europe. Many participants voiced the concern that anti-European movements succeed at the forthcoming European elections, capitalising on the growing popular dissatisfaction with the functioning of European institutions and their perceived inability to find concrete solutions to the problems caused by the crisis.

The meeting, structured around three thematic workshops (European economy, Social Europe and the importance of citizenship in the definition of European policies), was at the same time the occasion for the EESC to present its Action Plan for Europe, a contribution to defining the priorities, areas of policy intervention and suggestions for institutional and political change for the next European term. The next five years will be crucial for Europe: the Europe 2020 strategy will come to its conclusion, and an assessment of the goals achieved and future strategic objectives for the Union will be at the centre of political discussion and policy definition.

Involving citizens (through the means of their representative structures) in the process of policy making is a distinctive trait of the European model upon which European social dialogue rests. Defending this model, ensuring that it can fully express its potential can also be an effective remedy against euroscepticism. CEC European Managers welcomes all initiatives putting citizens and their interests first, and will continue providing its contribution to keep the European social model functioning.

Hearing directly from the civil society: what Europe for us?

EESC and the civil society: CEC European Managers at the Civil Society Day

The plenary session

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After the approval by the European Commission, the European project introduced by CEC European Managers on women’s leadership and female representation in managerial positions of Europe is now advancing. The main aspects of the organisation have already been decided, and their practical implementation is currently being taken care of.

The project is structured around two studies: the first one will estimate the situation of women’s representation among managerial posts in some selected European countries and assess the speed at which it has changed over the last years, whereas the second will consist of a compilation of best practices adopted at company level in different European countries collected on a case-study method.

A presentation of the first results of both studies will take place during the European conference that CEC European Managers is organising (together with its project partners) in Cannes (France) on 25th, 26th and 27th June. The conference will gather around 100 participants (including academics, politicians, HR experts) from more than 15 European countries, who will come to share their experiences, provide or exchange best practices of policies allowing for a bigger presence of women in managerial areas and increase awareness on the issue at stake. A final presentation of the complete results of these studies should be available by the end of the year, together with a dedicated website.

Regular updates about the advancement of the project will be published on our website, where you can also have access to interesting material concerning the kick-off meeting of the project that took place last October in Madrid. This project is of particular importance for us, as it shows the interest of our organisation in increasing the visibility of CEC European Managers as a responsible European social partner delivering constructive contributions to the overall development of social dialogue and in finding possible solutions to policymaking and societal challenges.

Dominique Lejeune, board member of the European Federation of Managers in Building and Construction (FECC), passed away on December 22nd 2013 after a long-term illness. In his company, his area and at both national and European level he was eminently respected. As a member of the board of FECC, he had successfully achieved to bring managers of the building and constructions sectors together, improving their network and strengthening their political representation. He was a convinced European representative with a long and great experience in the construction branch. Inside CFE-CGC BTP, his sectorial federation in France, he successfully worked on the strengthening the ties with the European level and enhancing the political visibility of the category. All of his colleagues and friends level will miss him.
Ledarna, Sweden’s managers organization, decided in 2010 to make sustainability a top priority and to provide its members with knowledge, meeting places and tools to help them integrate sustainability into their management practices. Sustainability is a key success criterion for successful management and leadership, now and in the future. Issues like green innovation and social inclusion are top priorities within the European Union and its companies and organizations.

Sustainability might be one of the most challenging issues of our time but Ledarna believes it provides enormous possibilities for organizational development, attracting talent, saving money and reaching new customer groups. Managers are one of the most important stakeholders for CSR and sustainability since they are key decision-makers.

When Ledarna asked its members what they needed in order to integrate sustainability into their daily decision making and management processes, the most common answer was that they needed more knowledge and more time. Knowing that time efficiency is a key for attracting managers, Ledarna decided to develop a mixed learning approach.

Ledarna developed useful contents in a range of different formats such as podcasts, movies, e-learning tools and web based texts in combination with real life courses, during which members have the possibility to interact with other managers and discuss issues of common interest.

“Effective learning and development is best done in cycles of action and reflection, and it requires real-life application, so we also developed challenges that the participants to our courses carry out within their own organization. Contextual learning and anchoring actions in the individuals’ everyday work life is key to effective learning and change,” says Erika Svensson, leadership developer for sustainability and leadership at Ledarna.

A new trend in advanced training: improving management skills through training in community of practice

Learning groups in community of practice are becoming increasingly popular in Canada, and especially in Quebec. Over last winter the association of school managers of Quebec (ACCQ) has launched an experimental training scheme for school managers based on this training mode.

This experimentation, aiming specifically at connecting individuals sharing common concerns through a structured activity, resulted in a three-day meeting during which school directors could share and find solutions to real work-related problems.

Inspired by the concept of professional co-development defined by Champagne and Payette, this training was conceived on the basis of the reference document for school managers developed by ACCQ.

The evaluation of this experimental method has been rather positive, as all participants agreed on the fact that it allowed for the creation of new connections and the improvement of management skills. For this reason, considering the many advantages that are now acknowledged to the area of professional development, the various professional associations (particularly those representing managerial staff) have increased significantly the recourse to this training technique since last year.

Canadian Managers Confederation considers that this trend will represent in the future the leading strategy in terms of advanced training. For further information, please contact ACCQ at info@accq.qc.ca.