EDITORIAL

The 5th of March was the day proclaimed by the European Commission to be a fresh new start for the social dialogue in Europe. More than four hundred participants were gathered in the impressive Charlemagne building in Brussels for a day of proclamations, speeches and networking. Before the meeting, President Junker had already set the tone when he said “I am the President of the social dialogue”.

For those of us who were present, it was evident that the European Commission puts a great value in a functioning social dialogue. The example of the Nordic model was quoted by President Schulz in his speech as a proof that through trust and openness it is possible to build a strong economy, by combining a good climate for business with social reforms and welfare.

There is however one big flaw with the social dialogue on the EU-level. The employers’ side is always represented by the whole scope of the economy, BusinessEurope, UEAPME and CEEP, whereas the ETUC still claims to be the only voice for the employees. In a modern society, where managers, academics and white collar workers almost always outnumber the traditional blue collar workers, the social dialogue will be dysfunctional without their voices being heard.

In the meeting of March 5th Ludger Ramme, Deputy general secretary of CEC, had the opportunity to voice our positions as an invited speaker in one of the workshops. For the future it must be a priority for CEC, in collaboration with Eurocadres, to strengthen our voice in the social dialogue on behalf of our members, the managers of Europe.

This is my last editorial as President of CEC. During this mandate we have focused on defining a new platform for CEC, by adopting a new vision for the future.

The diversity within CEC is an asset, but also a challenge. We represent a multitude of European managers, on different levels, in private as well as in public sector and in many different types of industry. The one thing we have in common is leadership and the position in our respective companies, as a bridge between employers and employees.

I would like to close this editorial by thanking all of you for the trust you have put in me as President of CEC for three years and wishing the new team all the best for the coming years.
The necessity to establish a European mechanism for social dialogue arose at the time when the European Community was advancing towards the creation of the internal market. Around 30 years ago, President Delors organized the first high-level meeting with the representatives of employers and employees in Val Duchesse, which marked the beginning of the involvement of European social partners in the process of policy-making at European level. In the following years, the role and legitimacy of European social dialogue will be formalized in the European treaties.

A well-functioning social dialogue is a fundamental trait of the European social model, which in its turn is one of the bases of the European social market economy. Since the start of his mandate, President Juncker stressed the importance to reinforce the social dimension of the EU, focusing among the various issues on the relaunch of social dialogue, both at European and national level. The Conference represented the first concrete demonstration of this renewed interest of the European Commission, with more than 400 participants from all EU countries, representing social partners, NGOs, national and local governments gathered in Brussels, in the Charlemagne building.

The first session was opened by Mr. Dombrovskis, vice-President of the European Commission responsible for the Euro and social dialogue, Mr. Schultz, President of the European Parliament and Mr. Ugulis, the Latvian Minister for Social Affairs who chairs the Presidency of the Council, as well as by representatives of EU social partners. Institutional representatives focused on the importance to revitalize social dialogue at all levels, acknowledging its contribution to the definition of those policies that affect more closely employment and social affairs and pointing out that countries with a solid system of national industrial relations have weathered the crisis better than the others. More specifically, Mr. Dombrovskis explained how a renewed social dialogue fits in the overall objective of supporting growth as a result of an increased competitiveness, while President Schultz reminded the risks of the mounting anti-European feelings of those Europeans hardest hit by the crisis, who can no longer perceive the advantages of being part of the Union.
This introductory session was followed by 6 thematic workshops, focusing on several aspects correlated to the functioning and potential new areas of intervention of social dialogue such as the strengthening of industrial relations, the improvement of the involvement of Social partners in the European Semester or the interaction between social dialogue and better regulation.

In the workshop dedicated to the digital single market Mr. Ludger Ramme, Deputy Secretary General of CEC, was invited to participate and share the vision of managers on the issue. Mr. Ramme pointed out that the growing diffusion of digital technology to all forms and aspects of the working activity offers great advantages in terms of potential competitiveness growth. It is the duty of workers’ representatives, Mr. Ramme added, to make sure that as many of them as possible can benefit from the positive consequences of this evolution, while guaranteeing the safeguard of their working rights. Another consequence of this process that has a great importance for trade unions is how to allow for the representation of employees in a constantly changing environment, where physical presence on the workplace is for many no longer an obligation.

The high-level conference was closed in the afternoon by President Juncker, who restated his profound commitment to ensuring that the social dimension of the EU receives the same level of policy attention as the other pillars of the EMU, insisting on the need for Europe to establish a minimum common ground for social rights and thus achieving a “triple A” rating for its social performance. Social dialogue, continued President Juncker, is a fundamental component of this policy orientation; social partners have therefore a great room for demonstrating their capacity to deliver and bring concrete results, as the European Commission will support bipartite activity but will not replace it.

This high-level event might represent a new start for the role and involvement of European social partners. CEC European Managers is ready to play its part and prove the willingness of European managers to contribute to defining effective policies to help Europe overcome the crisis and find more suitable solutions for the benefit of workers and businesses.
CEC European Managers presents the results of its European project “Promoting Women in Leadership”. The presentation event organized in Brussels on 24 February.

On the 24th of February 2015, the CEC European Managers celebrated the publication of the final report of the EU project ‘Promoting Women in Leadership – Strategies and Best Practices to increase the Share of Women in Middle and Higher Management Positions’ promoted by CEC European Managers, together with Eurocadres, Ledama and CFE CGC.

More than 50 guests were present at the launch reception, which took place at the Renaissance Hotel in Brussels, and at the exchanges that followed on the European project focusing on one of the great challenges for Europe: gender equality in the professional world. The event was hosted by MEP Anna Hedh, of the S&D group of the European Parliament.

This European project, funded by the European Commission, proposes actions to promote women in leading decision-making jobs, in order to increase the proportion of women in positions of middle and higher management as a means to face the challenges of demographic change in the future. After its successful conclusion, two publications are available: a study, analyzing the current state of women representation in managerial positions in seven European countries as well as the effectiveness of legislation adopted to promote the part of women achieving managerial posts; and a compilation of best practices (based on personal interviews with female managers and HR directors) adopted by five selected European companies to improve their share of active female managers.

Mr Martin Jeffiën, President of Eurocadres, and Mr Christophe Lefèvre, National Secretary of CFE CGC, were representing the project partners; they both stressed how the issue of the project is in line with the priorities of their respective organizations. Ms Signed Caspar, from DG Employment, briefly commented on the way the project was implemented, focusing on the effective cooperation between employers and employees that was at the basis of one of the two reports, i.e. the collection of best practices. The two studies presented during the event, executed by Ms Mirella Visser and Dr Linda Senden, deal with different perspectives on the possibility for women to advance in middle and senior positions within management.

The final part of the event was dedicated to a panel discussion, moderated by Ms. Visser; between Ms Annika Elias and Ms. Malin Rogström, representative of the Sandvik Group, one of the five companies participating in the collection of best practices.
In her closing speech Mrs Annika Elias, President of CEC European Managers said: “It is quite difficult to sum up in a few words the results of the project, but for CEC European Managers there are three key items that I would like to share with you all today. The importance of addressing this issue on all levels, as the problems need to be addressed at the same time on societal level and by companies. The importance that all measures taken must be in accordance with the corporate culture in the company, as there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach. And finally, the importance to get relevant, reliable and comparable data from the companies, on national level and on EU level”.

Ms. Elias concluded: “Words put down on a paper must translate now into real deeds. Europe and its companies cannot afford to waste the intelligence and competence of the women any longer. We are facing a lack of managers in many areas within the next decades. At the same time there are a lot of well educated women ready to contribute. To make this happen we call on the legislators as well as on companies and social partners to make use of the results of the report and start working!”

The report can be downloaded on www.cec-managers.org or by scanning the QR-code.

The annual ACEO General Assembly has been held on February 24th, 2015. According to the scheduled agenda, the results of the year 2014, the action plan and the budget for 2015 were presented and were unanimously approved.

After the election that took place on the same day, the new ACEO’s Board of Directors is comprised of the following members: Chairman, Nikitas Konstantellos, CEO, ICAP Group; Vice Chairman, Apostolos Petalas, CEO, FOURLIS Group; Secretary General: Vassilis Rabat, Chairman & CEO, XEROX HELLAS; Treasurer; George Ghonos, Managing Director Southeastern Europe McCain Foods and Tassos Evaggelou, Regional Director Western Europe, DIAGEO, Marica Lambrou, General Manager of Business Imaging & Professional Print, INTERSYS and Spiros Philippas, CEO, BMW Group Hellas as Members of the Board.

ACEO represents the top managers working in Greece. Its members, professional CEOs, manage companies covering all sectors of business activities in the country.

ACEO aims to contribute to the continuous improvement of the level of top management and to make good use of the knowledge and the experience of its members for the benefit of the Greek economy.
FICT meets in Paris on 5th March 2015

FICT, the Federation of managers in the transport sector member of CEC, organized a meeting in Paris last 5th March to discuss some important issues concerning the industry. The first theme is the risks posed by contaminated air in the interior of aircrafts. The problem was further highlighted following the decision to investigate the death of a BA pilot which could have been caused by the contaminated air breathed in for years on board aircrafts. Together with the organizations GCAQE (Global Cabin Air Quality Executive) and INAIL (Italian Agency for Safety and Health at Work), FICT has been following this issue in Italy.

FICT will now attend to the 1st meeting of the EU/CEN group in Brussels on 20 April 2015 on the development of a new cabin air quality standard, in the prospect of organizing together with CGAQE, INAIL, and other EU organizations, a technical meeting in Brussels with DGTREN on the hazards posed by exposure to contaminated air (for more info, please contact Ms. Golinelli, Vice-President for the Air Sector; at golinelli.stefania@alice.it).

FICT has also decided to focus on the problem of the unfair competition in Europe in road transport and maritime shipping cabotage (for further information, please contact Mr. Philippe Queune, Vice-President for Road Sector; at philippe.queune@gmail.com). An important document regarding cabotage navigation in Europe has been approved during the meeting.

Mr. Per Jorghensen, President of FICT, said: «FICT is positive that - on a European level - the possibilities of securing a certain level of uniformity between European countries are examined, minimizing the cabotage transport and at the same time increasing the employment opportunities as well as maintaining and develop the level of knowledge and management. Carriage by sea is crucial for Europe’s security of energy supplies. In relation to the increase of the vessels circulating, as well as the environment on the sea, the FICT also focuses on transport safety».

Finally, he added that “FICT is prepared to assist in securing the potential of the local shipping trade, by working to minimize bureaucracy and to obtain the right conditions to attract investments to the harbour industry and to the shipping trade as a whole.”

Innovating the country to ensure a firm recovery

Last Monday 9 February, CIDA (the Italian confederation of managers member of CEC) organized a meeting, "Innovating the country to ensure a firm recovery. During the debate, deputies and representatives of the government have exchanged with CIDA on the most recent measures adopted by the government.

What strategies managers suggest to "innovate the country in order to ensure a firm recovery"? To boost the economic recovery, the reduction of the tax wedge would be helpful to trigger a virtuous circle connecting salaries, productivity and the growth of domestic demand.

Mr. Silvestre Bertolini, President of CIDA, said «We need to simplify contracts and develop a single labour protection system; we need more effective public employment services, modern welfare nets to support job-to-job transition of workers, and we need to strengthen professional training while adopting measures to ensure more flexibility to those workers who quit their jobs».

CIDA President added: «Last year, 10,000 managers working in the industry and services sectors have lost their jobs. We urge the government to set a « relocation contract » for those workers in a condition of involuntary unemployment applicable also to managers. A special fund would be created at INPS, the Italian national welfare institute; redundant workers could obtain from the Institute an individual professional relocation voucher, to be redeemed at any public or private employment service to obtain support in the search of a new employment».