

CEEP CONTRIBUTION TO THE EU STRATEGIC AGENDA 2019-2024

Building up on our contribution to the consultations on the Future of Europe where our members asserted the potential of “doing much more together” in the EU, and in view of the historical EU elections, CEEP has articulated its [key priorities for the period 2019-2024](#). Employers and providers of public services and SGIs have a key role to play in turning our major challenges, such as digitalisation, decarbonisation, building a strong social dialogue, and the integration of migrants, into opportunities.

Based on the meeting between Council President Donald Tusk and the EU social partners ahead of the Sibiu Summit, we now wish to give our specific contribution to the EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024. CEEP calls for that agenda to set the priorities for an inclusive, competitive and sustainable Europe, relying on the following dimensions:

A Europe of values and freedoms

CEEP is fully committed to supporting the rule of law as one of the foundations on which the European project and the democratic values it stands for are built. The rule of law is an important guarantee for citizens, employers and workers. As stated in the European social partners [joint statement on the rule of law](#), the attractiveness and added-value of Europe is highly dependent on a coherent and reliable application and enforcement of our common set of rules and values. As a guarantor of stability and freedom, the rule of law is a pre-condition to a social and prosperous Europe, where social dialogue can develop for both employers and trade unions.

The Strategic Agenda must commit EU leaders to protecting our democracies and including the upholding of the rule of law amongst its key principles.

A fair digital transformation

The EU approach to digitalisation should serve as the guiding principle to long-term sustainable and economic success. Impacting all sectors and all aspects of our lives, a holistic approach is required to reap the full benefits of the digital revolution and the growing European data economy.

For the digital challenge to be turned into a real opportunity for Europe, it must be fair and inclusive.

To be fair, digitalisation needs to set a level-playing field for all actors, regardless of their legal status and ownership structure.

To be inclusive, digitalisation should support citizens in accessing training in order to gain access to the digital tools and ensure that remote areas have equivalent access to broadband as urban centres.

Public services’ providers, at the centre of the digital transformation, cannot reach that goal alone: the development of the European digital economy must remain a joint responsibility.

The Strategic Agenda must call for the development of a safe and secure EU data economy, where the rights and duties of each actor are clearly defined. Equal treatment for all players in the digital sphere, regardless of their legal status and ownership structure, should be the norm to offer citizens and enterprises a fair level-playing field.

A sustainable and inclusive climate strategy

The EU climate strategy can only be part of a sustainable development strategy based on three pillars, at the heart of CEEP members' action:

The economic dimension: CEEP members promote economic growth and employment in Europe by providing essential services. Their contribution is crucial in the fight against climate change and their quality contributes to the competitiveness of European industry.

The environmental dimension: the outcome of mitigation policies has been insufficient despite Europe's vigorous efforts (which emits less than 10% of global CO₂ emissions); it is therefore essential, while pursuing mitigation policies, to think about the adaptation of our economies and the resilience of infrastructure.

The social dimension: the involvement of Europeans is a sine qua non condition for the success of climate policies, as it is based on changes in consumer behaviour that will prove essential. The implementation of effective and efficient climate policies and a fair sharing of the financial effort are essential to increase citizens' support. With its historical proximity to citizens, CEEP members are particularly aware of this social dimension.

The Strategic Agenda must highlight the European commitment to the Paris agreements, call on Member States to continue the implementation, take a comprehensive approach towards more resource efficiency and innovative decarbonisation strategies, as well as explain and promote awareness on the societal changes stemming from the adaptation to climate change.

A Europe which leads by example

CEEP calls for an overarching strategy for sustainability, the full implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 and of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Providers of public services and SGIs have a key role in implementing the 17 SDGs and in ensuring the position of the EU as the leader for sustainable growth and development.

Additionally, between climate change and the instability in our neighbourhood, the EU must commit to developing and showcasing a sustainable and long-term model to include migrants and refugees into work and society.

Employers will be instrumental in those integration strategies. However, they suffer from the lengthy and cumbersome process of qualification recognition, the insufficient number of language and job-specific training opportunities, and the lack of coordination with public authorities.

Initiatives such as the 'European Partnership for Integration', launched by the European Commission and the EU Social and Economic partners, must be highlighted as role models throughout the world.

The Strategic Agenda must recall that, in a multi-lateral world, the EU has a central role to play in ensuring the development of a rules-based international order. By enforcing the highest standards, the EU will lead the way toward that objective.

To conclude, we call upon EU leaders to ensure the successful transformation of the European society. The EU and national institutions will need the support of social partners to achieve this. Public services and SGI providers and employers stand ready to pave the way for the sustainable and digital revolution ahead of us and commit to ensuring fair and just transitions.