

Our approach

The question of Professional & Manager social responsibility has been carried out by associations, unions, aid groups and the international solidarity of students and young professionals. This concern is also present during career training. Some Human Resource managers, in an effort to fulfil their own responsibilities, have brought up similar questions.

In the larger international scene, responsibility is put at the heart of ethical behaviour in the world today, due to the interdependencies between individuals, companies, and their environment. In this context, it has become clear that associations, unions and training centres are incapable of individually creating a public forum for debate and action on the subject of responsibility of Professional & Managerial Staff (P&MS).

This agreed upon text is a part of the enduring research with respect to a convergence on a subject that seems to be at the heart of the present and future developments of the business and administrative world, of expertise and research.

Since the major objective of this Manifesto is to create a movement of international reach that aims at breaking a double silence, that is:

- the silence of P&MS who lack the real right to a differentiated and alternative voice, who do not manage to take the risk of voicing concerns individually in order to question the decision-making criteria which are not always of their own choice but which they are obliged to comply. The business policies and the strategic conditions of efficient cost management, in particular, induce constraints on their behaviour with the consequence of carrying over contradictions into their individual lives. P&MS are led to choose between wider ethical issues and the respect of the business orders they should obey, between security and efficiency, between their civic conscience, the prosperity of their enterprise and their professional prospects.
- the silence of the enterprises that very often touch upon the question of social responsibility in their communication policy but who nevertheless do not supply to their P&MS the means for the efficient exercise of their professional and social responsibility.

The objective of signing this Manifesto consists on creating a debate platform on the social responsibility of P&MS which would be enriched by different viewpoints and which would lead to a collective sense of action, organizing the confrontation of individual ideas and experiences in the workplace and beyond it.

The issue is to create a movement of ideas that favours the collective awareness on the subject. The success of this movement will largely depend on the media coverage of the Manifesto and on its reception by the public opinion.

Further on, it is also about laying down the concrete acts for creating a network of actors capable of carrying out the discussion on the responsibility of the P&MS in concrete terms, at the place of their work, expertise and training: that is, developing and increasing the number of decentralized places for exchange ideas, preparing intervention supports as well as arranging conferences in schools and universities, constituting documentary funds, capitalizing on experience feedback, setting up listening units and developing the practice of social and environmental reporting within the enterprise, etc.

Social responsibility of the Professionals & Managers

“Cadres” in France, as “*Professional and Managerial Staff*” in the Anglo-Saxon world, are characterized by four competences that support one another: technical expertise, autonomy, initiative taking and responsibility.

- Technical expertise concerns the practical deployment of theoretical knowledge and the know-how acquired in the field.

- Autonomy and initiative taking join one another in the formation of the capacity to act through an adjustment between already established rules and principles and those determined individually or collectively.
- Responsibility is a principle of action, anticipation, diligence and precaution in the professional sphere. If to be responsible implies the capacity to manage consequences then it also implies the capacity to anticipate, to foresee and to be accountable. Responsibility is a competence which should be legitimated and recognised.

Nowadays, the existing gap between the real responsibility of P&MS and their awareness of this responsibility seems to widen for two reasons: first, because their training prepares them less and less for thinking about questions such as intercultural dialogue, corporate social responsibility, social evolutions and the impact of the advances of scientific research on this evolution. Secondly, the P&MS do not dispose of public spaces for elaborating a collective thought on their responsibility and thinking about the conditions of exercising this responsibility.

Nevertheless in an economy increasingly founded on knowledge management, where the dominance of multinational enterprises depends less on the number of their employees than on their pivotal function in the organization of global markets, business and administrative P&MS play a decisive role.

P&MS are the vehicles through which innovations that contribute to the transformation of our society are introduced and diffused. They play a crucial role in the domains of research and development and for this reason they have caused lately the mistrust of our citizens.

The P&MS' responsibility to the society stems from this position and influence. And yet, as long as they are neither CEOs nor shareholders or clients, their objective responsibility does not necessarily imply a political or legal responsibility in case of crucial situations that sometimes may bring dramatic consequences.

Citizenship in the enterprise

P&MS are sometimes of a relatively low commitment, and don't have a real collective and international forum for developing a reflective attitude on their responsibility and for thinking about the conditions of exercising such a responsibility individually or collectively.

The financial scandals that strike every day the multinational enterprises, the crises in the domains of nutrition and health care that have shaken the countries of the European Union in the last years invite the P&MS, though, to share their knowledge with the rest of the employees as well as with their fellow citizens. Because of the knowledge they possess, they are directly related to the social request of the control of what it is at stake in the process of economic globalisation. Their expertise must become a means for meeting the expectations of society in order to build the appropriate responses to the uncertainties caused by techno-science and by what is at stake in the economic and social domains.

Beyond a legal definition, the ethical thought in the professional milieu must proceed out of an individual and collective dynamic. It is the accommodation of delicate or difficult individual situations with general principles, collectively admitted and revisable at any moment, that would permit to find solutions that are each time adapted to the context of action.

That is why it becomes indispensable to recognize explicitly P&MS' citizenship at the workplace through a right of intervention and a corresponding initiative. Such a recognized right of expression should be able to support the right of refusing or opposing without exposing them to the danger of reprisals or punishment. It is by assuming the consequences of free expression that general interest could be promoted.

First French signatories : *Young Business Leaders Organization (CJD) ; Young Business Leaders*

and Actors of Social Economy Organization (CJDES) ; The Ecole de Paris of Management ; Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humankind (FPH) ; Engineers Without Borders (ISF-France) ; Confederal Union of Engineers and P&MS (CFDT Cadres) ; General Union of Engineers, P&MS and Technicians (UGICT-CGT)

Approached signatories : *trade unions and movements, professional associations and training centres, firm managers, ...*