

Management practices in companies and social policies in France: Lessons from an international comparison (Germany, Ireland, Italy, Sweden) and research

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• **REPORT (VOLUME 1)**

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RAPPORT

SUMMARY

As part of its work programme, IGAS launched a mission in January 2024 concerning the links that can be established between management practices and French national social policies. Indeed, managerial policies have an influence not only on the quality of life at work and the working conditions of employees, but also, apart from impacting company performance, have effects on social policies that can be measured with the employment rate, use of the health insurance system, absenteeism, sentiment of a loss of meaning at work and therefore ultimately the risk of withdrawal, high staff turnover, etc. To measure these impacts, the decision was made from the outset to make a comparison with other European countries, i.e. Germany, Italy, Sweden and Ireland, in order to compare France's situation with that of its neighbours.

At the end of these investigations, the mission made the counter-intuitive observation that the criteria for high-quality management, far from being dispersed and heterogeneous across the different countries, sectors or organisation sizes, actually converged in a quite remarkable manner. "Good" management is everywhere and is firstly described as one that is characterised by a high degree of employee participation on the one hand, and that recognises the work done on the other. Other fundamental traits of high-quality management are added to this central dimension of participation and recognition (autonomy, clarity of roles, decentralised decision-making, etc.), which ultimately form a limited number of principles. This strong convergence is probably linked to the new difficulties facing companies (manpower shortages, transformation of expectations accelerated by the Covid-19 epidemic, the search for meaning, individualisation of relations at work, etc.) and this is reflected in the countries and sectors of activity studied.

In addition, the quality of management practices produces significant but difficult-to-measure effects on company performance, while it is definitely a determinant of employee health, job quality and work quality. The fact that management practices have an effect on company efficiency and performance is widely highlighted by numerous econometric studies, as recently confirmed by the Dublin-based European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), DARES and France Stratégie. Beyond the effects on the economic performance of companies, the quality of management practices certainly has effects on individuals' situations in such areas as occupational health and safety, job quality or work quality and employee commitment. In particular, it has very significant impacts on employee commitment and therefore on the company's economic and social performance. This is a major point in the current context of a tense labour market and labour shortages, where job attractiveness on the one hand and employee retention on the other, are essential issues in terms of the employment rate and productivity.



The comparative review of management practices places France in a less than flattering position compared to its neighbours, as shown in surveys by Eurofound and the Bilbao-based European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), but also in the data produced by other bodies (Cnam, IFOP, APEC in particular) and in the convergent analyses performed by researchers. French management practices appear very vertical and hierarchical. Similarly, recognition of work, a decisive factor in management quality, is much lower than in the other countries in the comparison, and manager training is very academic with very little focus on cooperation, despite the progress that should be forthcoming with the new higher education methods being applied.

Although France's management results appear poor, it is not through a lack of public efforts and schemes that attempt to influence these practices. Regulation is more than ever the preferred lever by which the public authorities intervene. A comparison with Germany, Ireland, Italy and Sweden shows a better prioritisation of topics and a better-established use of social dialogue instruments.

While all countries are facing imminent managerial challenges, be it the crisis of meaning at work, managing teams in hybrid mode, taking account of the major demographic, technological and ecological transitions, there is no public policy on management per se, but rather policies that indirectly influence management. In France, regulations are one of the principal instruments used to act on management in the guise of social policies. This reflects a form of French paradox, in which a vast public arsenal established to influence management practices, albeit indirectly through employees right of direct expression and the obligations of companies in terms of quality of life and working conditions (QLWC), coexists with the reality of very ineffective working relationships.

In the other countries studied, statutory and regulatory instruments take a back seat and just focus on priority issues that impact management: in Sweden, the 2015:4 provision provided a tool to manage psychosocial risks in the workplace at a time when sick leave was on the increase; in Italy and Ireland, the law promoted individual remote working formulas for a better work-life balance; in Germany, the digital revolution is gradually being incorporated into companies' rules of social dialogue in order to give management clear markers.

In any case, it is the place of social dialogue that differentiates the countries studied with co-determination truly shaping management and management practices in Germany and Sweden, while in Italy, social dialogue is mainly present at the branch level. As for Ireland, the close proximity between managers and employees most likely offsets the low level of employee representation. In France, social dialogue has a more limited impact on management practices.

The mission also found that the measures targeting the management environment are sometimes more ambitious among our neighbours, with action by labour administrations that sometimes integrates a concerted approach around management practices, in particular in Sweden and Ireland. In several countries, the social partners also offer support and advice services to managers and employers, particularly in Sweden, where the SACO and Lenarda trade unions, dedicated to defending and representing white-collar staff, provide support to them both in their role of employees and of managers. The same is true in Germany where the joint initiative for a new quality of work (*Initiative für eine neue Qualität der Arbeit - INQA*) supports medium-sized companies in matters of management and work quality.

The mission has drawn up a series of recommendations based on the findings of its comparative analysis. Indeed, even if the limits to public action on management issues in companies are real, due to the necessarily indirect nature of the action of the public authorities in a debate that primarily concerns companies, the current context is rather favourable to such public intervention because:

- There is a consensus as to the reality of the crisis in the meaning of work. This has been the subject of numerous administrative reports, academic papers and position-taking by the most important players in the world of work, including business leaders.
- The recent and massive development of apprenticeship training, including in higher education institutions, is a formidable means of profoundly changing the methods used to train managers and, ultimately, their approach to management practices.

- There is a social demand from the representative organisations interviewed by the mission to change management practices, not only on the employee side but also, in different ways, on the employer side, with the two major issues being professional dialogue and co-determination.
- This social demand for changes to management practices is present in the companies themselves, and interviewees who intervene in work issues, regardless of their particular specialisation (ergonomist, economist, occupational psychologist or sociologist, etc.), tell of the numerous initiatives taken, particularly in the area of action learning. These professionals say numerous companies wish to transform their management practices but need a national technical support framework.
- European law, through the “Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive” (CSRD) applicable since 1 January 2024, and its non-financial reporting obligation, also prompts questions about professional management practices.
- Finally, even though the April 2024 draft national interprofessional agreement (ANI) on a new “pact for life at work” did not come to a successful conclusion, its content, highly focused on the need to change management practices to improve quality of life at work, is proof that the social partners, on both sides of the table, now see the subject as a major issue and share the desire to implement concrete solutions.

Thus, according to the mission, improving management practices in France requires a set of measures that are at once respectful of company practices, offer a better situation to employees and are consistent with the French social model while being inspired by lessons learned from experience abroad.

While management practices are only one of the factors that influence the impact of economic and social policies, the mission considers it useful to propose measures that combine provisions intended to support a working environment conducive to positive management practices on the one hand and more targeted measures to overhaul the French legal framework for management practices on the other.

As regards the working environment, the mission recommends:

- Promoting managerial policy in companies by taking the debates in the Assises du Travail forum on the issue of management a step further; this public debate could possibly lead to a new ANI report on the subject or the launch of a national programme to support managerial innovation and quality of life at work in the form of calls for projects based on the German “future of work” model;
- reduce power distances through changes to both the initial and continuous training system by incorporating training elements for managers into the educational models applied by schools and higher education institutions. These elements would promote an innovative vision of management with the aim of mastering the way social dialogue and professional dialogue and their interactions are engineered. This could be achieved through partnerships between ANACT (the National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions), INTEFP (the National Institute for Labour, Employment and Vocational Training) and the institutions that train managers, while at the same time reinforcing apprenticeship training as a training method for managers;
- provide greater support for managers in the current context in which they are under considerable pressure. Move towards a more participatory, innovative and decentralised management system, by extending APEC’s missions not only to providing advice to executives as employees, but also to advising them on the content of their professional management practices, placing executives and managers in particular at the centre of the transformation processes within organisations;
- break down the walls separating the various approaches in order to integrate management practices into public policies, in particular by setting improved management practices as one of the goals pursued in branch collective bargaining and in the national and regional occupational health plans;

- improve and transform management practices in the public sector as well, by increased transparency and clarity in the management policies pursued in each administration, by encouraging initiatives to establish forms of professional dialogue in public services and by putting management training actions in place to boost organisational skills and provide individual and collective support in the form of coaching.

In addition to improving the working environment, it may also be necessary to take statutory measures to improve management practices. The mission points out that non-finalistic, procedure-based legal techniques exist in the comparison countries and could be sources of inspiration. It details a number of possibilities for statutory changes, which are not intended to be cumulative, but to constitute one or more levers available to the public authorities and social partners at the end of a necessary consultation process:

- the possibility of including management practices in the topics discussed in the framework of the mandatory social dialogue on QLWC;
- the possibility of including management practices among the strategic orientations that are the subject of the information-consultation procedure with the Social and Economic Committee (SEC), unless a company agreement stipulates otherwise;
- the possibility of transforming the right to direct expression into a right to professional dialogue within companies;
- the possibility of extending the powers of the SEC in terms of work organisation;
- the possibility of reassessing employee representation on boards of directors and supervisory boards;
- the possibility of experimenting with formal statutory mechanisms to take into account the needs of employees in terms of work/life balance.



MISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Competent authority	Application date
1	Organise a meeting of work stakeholders to extend the debates of the Assises du Travail forum on the issue of management practices. These debates could possibly elaborate the content on which negotiations for a possible national interprofessional agreement could be based.	1	DGT	2024
2	Set up a national programme to support managerial innovation and quality of life at work based on the German “future of work” model. This programme, which would operate through national calls for projects, would propose collective support actions, funded 80% by ESF+ funds (as in Germany and other programmes of this type, particularly in Belgium) and 20% by companies.	1	DGT, DGEFP	2025
3	Systematically incorporate training elements for managers into the educational models applied by schools, higher education institutions and the skills frameworks established by companies. These elements would promote an innovative vision of management, for example a mastering of the way social dialogue and professional dialogue are engineered. Reinforce apprenticeship training as a training method for managers.	2	MESRI, DGT, DGEFP	2025
4	Extend APEC’s missions to advising executives on their management practices and developing support mechanisms for new managers as part of the vocational training policy in each branch.	1	MTSS	2025
5	Include the quality of management practices among the topics discussed in branch and company collective bargaining, as well as in national and regional occupational health plans and have ANACT disseminate these practices to companies.	2	MTSS	2025
6	Put measures in place to improve management practices in public administrations: 1/publish a document presenting the management policy of each public service, discussed and managed in the governance bodies. In particular, it could be incorporated into management guidelines for the “Human Resources Strategy” 2/support initiatives to establish professional dialogue in each department	1	MTSS, DGAFP	2025



No.	Recommendation	Priority	Competent authority	Application date
	3/develop management training actions (work organisation, individual or collective support in the form of coaching for public managers).			
7	<p>Amend one or more of the existing legislative and regulatory provisions, without adding new ones, based on the conclusions of a debate involving all stakeholders, with the aim of effectively and sustainably changing management practices in France. Examples could be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. include management practices in the topics discussed in the framework of the mandatory social dialogue on QLWC; 2. Include management practices among the strategic orientations that are the subject of the information-consultation procedure with the SEC; 3. Transform the right to direct expression into a right to professional dialogue within companies; 4. Extend the powers of the SEC in terms of work organisation; 5. Reassess employee representation on boards of directors and supervisory boards; 6. Experiment with formal statutory mechanisms to take into account the needs of employees in terms of work/life balance. 	1	DGT, DGEFP	2025

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REPORT

Introduction

Management practices have an influence not only on the quality of life at work and the working conditions of employees, but also on the results of social policies: employment of seniors, employee empowerment, division between working and personal time, capacity for innovation, etc.

These effects on employee commitment and their working conditions are also reflected in impacts on social policies: employment rates, use of the health insurance system, absenteeism, sentiment of a loss of meaning at work and therefore ultimately the risk of withdrawal, etc.

In addition, poor management can also have an impact on the economy through company performance, on the ability of employees to adapt to sectoral developments and therefore to make the economy more adaptable to an ever-changing environment, on the ability to innovate and on the ecological transition through the ability or lack thereof of companies to integrate and drive the necessary transformations.

Finally, social policies may aim to change management conditions (manager training policy, incentives for internal social dialogue within the company, etc.).

All of these elements have led the General Inspectorate for Social Affairs (IGAS) to include a European benchmarking study in its multiannual work programme with a focus on management practices. The recent context (COVID-19 epidemic, tensions on the labour market, crisis of the meaning of work, etc.) pleads in favour of a cross-cutting approach to management, a notion frequently mentioned to explain the state of working relationships and the desirable transformations. The aim is to analyse the link between management policies and practices and social policies, i.e. the impact of a company's management practices on social policies on the one hand, but also how social policies in turn must/can influence these practices. The choice was made to concentrate on areas of activity involving private sector companies, thus excluding the public sector from the investigations in order not to be dispersed across an excessively broad scope. However, the public sector is also confronted with managerial issues, and a number of the recommendations formulated by the mission also apply to it.

Fabienne Bartoli, Thierry Dieuleveux, Mikaël Hautchamp and Frédéric Laloue, all IGAS members, were appointed to lead this mission. They were assisted during the first part of the study by Gentjana Zallumi, intern at the National Public Service Institute and member of the General Inspectorate of Albania. In its research, the mission benefited from the work carried out by IGAS member Christine Daniel and her work for the mission, "*Research contributions. Management practices and social policies mission*".

What is meant by “management practices”?

There is no official definition in legal texts, let alone a single definition of management. The approach can be very restrictive, in this case designating the only relationships that are established between a manager and the persons placed under his/her hierarchical and/or functional authority, or on the contrary very broad, considering management as almost an equivalent of human resources management policies, in all their aspects - remuneration, training, social relations, etc. Furthermore, and by extension, management refers to the persons who are responsible for this, i.e. the managers.

ISO 30 400:2016(F) defines management as "*a process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling the outcomes of people, groups or organizations*". George R. Terry's definition¹ is almost identical to that of the ISO standard and supplements it with the importance of the proper use of human resources by management, so that an

¹ [George R. Terry, Stephen G. Franklin](#) *Principles of Management*, Economica, 2015



organisation can achieve the goals it has set. Peter Drucker² defines management as "*an activity aimed at achieving a collective result from people by giving them a common goal, common values, an appropriate organisation and the necessary training to perform and be able to adapt to change*". These definitions emphasise the importance of the human factor as a condition for an organisation's success.

The definition of management practices, often referred to as *leadership*, derives from management modes.³ These are the actions managers carry out in their relations with the team under their authority. Within this multi-faceted whole, the mission chose from the outset not to restrict its approach and to address not only management practices in the strict sense of the term, both in the daily practice of working groups as well as in the managerial strategies on which they are sometimes based, but also the work organisations themselves which often provide a vision and a framework for management practices. However, the mission generally excluded the broad acceptance of management as almost equivalent to a human resources (HR) policy, which would have broadened the spectrum of investigations too much.

What is meant by "social policies"?

Social policies refer to policies carried out by public authorities and social partners and having public interest objectives. Essentially based on risk pooling and management (illness, dependency, unemployment, etc.), these policies are very numerous.⁴ The DREES (the Directorate for Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics) social protection accounts of the social ministries define a scope that enables international comparisons to be made.

With regard to the objectives specifically pursued by the Ministry of Labour, the Minister's roadmap in 2022 indicated the following⁵ general objectives: attain the full employment goal, invest in the skills of tomorrow, strengthen the apprenticeship momentum, support the employment of seniors, work better.

The social policy objectives adopted by the mission have been broadly borrowed from those of the Ministry of Labour, although the mission may examine the secondary impacts on other fields of social policy more broadly speaking (for example, the objective of "working better" has impacts on the balance of social security's occupational accidents and illnesses branch - ATMP -, of the sickness insurance sector by avoiding sick leave and unemployment insurance by helping to keep seniors in employment in particular).

What are the countries and economic sectors in the comparison and why?

To make the comparisons, the mission chose to devote the first half of its investigations to the situation of France with regard to management practices. To this end, it conducted around sixty interviews with representatives of public authorities and social partners, business leaders, researchers and experts.

It subsequently selected four European countries to compare the findings for France, corresponding to well-identified social protection models. It made four trips to these countries with the help of the DAEI (European and International Affairs Delegation) at the Ministry of Labour, Health and Solidarity (MTSS) and social affairs advisors in these countries' embassies, supported by the economic missions' network:

- Germany;
- Italy;
- Ireland;

² Peter Drucker, *Devenez manager!*, Pearson Education, 2006

³ According to the Encyclopaedia of Decision Making and Decision Support Technologies; Chapter: Multi-Agent Simulation and Management Practices: management practices "*usually refer to the working methods and innovations that managers use to improve the effectiveness of work systems. Common management practices include: empowering staff, training staff, introducing schemes for improving quality, and introducing various forms of new technology*"

⁴ Health, old-age/survival, family, employment, housing, poverty/social exclusion.

⁵ Specific or more technical objectives, which are not very dependent on corporate management issues, have not been included (deployment of the CEJ, reform of unemployment insurance and support for RSA beneficiaries).

- Sweden.

Specific appendices are given over to the work carried out in these comparison countries. The mission endeavoured to cover the same field of investigations as in France, without being able to study the situation of each of these countries as thoroughly as it did for France.

The mission collected the data for this comparison by gathering abundant documentation and through on-site interviews and videoconferences. In order to improve the comparability of the companies surveyed, the mission opted for four sectors of activity each with different characteristics:

- Automotive;
- hospitality-catering;
- insurance;
- the digital sector.

At the end of its investigations, the mission can make several observations:

- Management practices recognised as positive and desirable are the subject of a very broad consensus (1);
- management practices have a proven impact on the results of social and economic policies (2);
- when looking at management practices in France, the findings are generally not very flattering (3);
- nevertheless, France has a vast range of public tools, intended to influence management (4).

The cultural dimension of management is important, and the mission observed a principle of prudence in its analyses, in order to avoid hastily transposing realities that are sometimes far-removed from ours.

Nevertheless, the information collected during our investigations in the four other European countries led the mission to formulate recommendations aimed at adjusting certain aspects of our management practices based on examples observed among our neighbours (5).

1 There is now broad agreement as to what constitutes “good” management

The mission consulted researchers, representatives of public authorities and social partners, business leaders and members of think tanks from several European countries with different national traditions.

At the end of its investigations, it feels that the criteria for high-quality management, far from being dispersed and heterogeneous across the different countries, sectors or organisation sizes, actually converged in a quite remarkable manner. Few if any dissonant voices were heard during the many interviews conducted in the five countries studied: “good” management is everywhere and is firstly described as one that is characterised by a high degree of employee participation on the one hand, and that recognises the work done on the other.

Other fundamental traits of high-quality management are added to this central dimension of participation and recognition (autonomy, clarity of roles, decentralised decision-making, etc.), which ultimately form a limited number of principles.

This strong convergence is probably linked to the new difficulties facing companies (manpower shortages, transformation of expectations accelerated by the Covid-19 epidemic, the search for meaning, etc.) and this is reflected in the countries and sectors of activity studied.

1.1 There are several types of management and work organisation, the national dimension being important

1.1.1 Analyses of management practices are abundant and fall within several fields of research and intervention

Management practices are the subject of a considerable number of analyses, supported by several fields of academic research. They are at the intersection of several disciplines (management sciences, occupational psychology, occupational sociology, ergonomics), and may be the subject of studies in such fields as history, law or economics.

The profiles of the researchers carrying out work in the management field are often hybrid between academic research and work with bodies having direct links with companies: private management consultancy firms, which they have sometimes created, business schools where they teach and/or contribute to the functioning of the school by creating chairs for example. This orientation, which is more or less present depending on the researchers, is partly explained by the research field, the companies and the role of the United States in the emergence of the first work on management.

Management practices are also the subject of a large number of essays written by practitioners or consultants. This is an area in which theories can be abundant, contradictory, sometimes driven by fashion or struck down and suddenly rejected.

1.1.2 Management practices are frequently classified into two large families based on the degree of control or autonomy left to employees

The fields covered by science and the reflections by specialists are immense, and the mission has neither the capacity nor the pretension to report on all of this knowledge.

It is therefore based on summary work, including the report by INRS (the National Institute for Research and Safety) given over to work in 2040⁶. The document classifies all developments in managerial theory into two major strongly coherent families: Taylorian organisations and autonomous organisations. These management methods have

⁶ INRS, *Le travail en 2040*, October 2023



developed successively since the beginning of the twentieth century, and have undergone both transformations and hybridisations.

While several classification criteria are possible, the INRS report builds its analysis on that of the degree of autonomy and control: while two general currents stand out, many variants can be attached to them:

- **Controlled and streamlined organisations** include, for example, Taylorism and Fordism, Fayolism⁷, "governance by numbers"⁸, Toyotism, the "rigid" variant of *lean management*;
- **organisations built on a high degree of employee autonomy** follow the theories of the school of human relations, the new management and organisation modes, the "flexible" variant of *lean management*, and the "liberated company"⁹ in particular.

This very general breakdown is reflected in the concepts related to leadership that several mission interviewees mentioned:

- **the notion of "transformational leadership"**, which encompasses four types of management practices: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration¹⁰.
- **Transactional "leadership** on the other hand, is based on exchanges: the manager assigns objectives to his subordinates, who are rewarded or sanctioned depending on their performance.

During the discussions, another vocabulary but what are in fact adjacent concepts, could be assimilated to these concepts, such as people-driven leadership and performance-driven leadership.

1.1.3 The national dimension is an important aspect of management practices

Relatively old research has established correlations between certain dimensions of national cultures and characteristics observed in management practices. Two authors in particular developed these ideas:

- **The Dutch psychologist Geert Hofstede¹¹**, whose studies began in the late 1960s analysed the cultures differences in more than fifty countries, on all five continents, through a sample of 60,000 employees in the first wave of his survey and 30,000 in the second. A country's culture is defined according to six dimensions that can be used to describe the management styles specific to each national¹² culture: "*These dimensions are considered to have an influence on the management style of companies, employee motivation, structures, as well as how to understand and manage uncertainty within organisations:*"
 - *The existence or not of a power distance between a subordinate and his/her superior. The power distance is measured by the perception that the subordinate has of his/her superior's power and its consequences in terms of behaviour (...).*

⁷ Henri Fayol was a French engineer, a pioneer in management sciences. His main book, *L'administration industrielle et générale* (1916) conceptualises the functions of "the administrator" from the command and control point of view.

⁸ Alain Supiot, *La gouvernance par les nombres*, Fayard, 2015.

⁹ Isaac Getz and Brian M. Carney, *Freedom Inc.*, 2009; Isaac Getz, *L'Entreprise Libérée: Comment devenir un leader libérateur et se désintoxiquer des vieux modèles*, 2017; Frédéric Laloux, *Reinventing organizations: vers des communautés de travail inspirées*, Diateino, 2015.

¹⁰ By reference to the so-called theories of the *Full Range of Leadership Model - FRLM*: Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio, *Transformational leadership*, 1998.

¹¹ The samples were made up of employees of the IBM company, called Hermès for the study. The survey was conducted in two waves, the first in 1967-1969 (60,000 people in 53 countries) and the second in 1971-1973 (60,000 people in 72 countries, of which 30,000 had already responded in the first wave). In the 1980s, the author and other researchers enriched this work, particularly in Asian countries.

¹² All text in italics is taken from the book coordinated by Olivier Meier, *Management Interculturel*, Dunod, 2019.



- *The relationships that individuals have with other members of the community (...). In an individualistic culture, company employees feel a need to find free time for their personal lives and look for ways to increase their freedom of action. These aspects emphasise the individual's independence from the organisation. Conversely, a community culture manifests itself in the search for a social role within the company and a need for support and assistance through coaching and training actions. (...).*
- *The degree to which a culture tolerates concerns about future events (...). Some cultures encourage risk-taking, others avoid or control it. This control of uncertainty can be reflected in the use of plans and forecasting tools (planning), the implementation of standardised procedures, the search for stability (...).*
- *The importance given to the values of success and ownership or to those of mutual support and cooperation [what Geert Hofstede calls "male or female orientation", depending on whether one's professional life is prioritised (over private life), the role of ambition, preference for individual decisions or even appreciation through the salary or cooperation between employees and the quality of working conditions (social climate, stability, reduction of anxiety, good relations between employees)].*

In more recent work, Geert. Hofstede and his colleagues offer two new dimensions for analysing and comparing national cultures.

- *"The first cultural differentiating factor (1988) measures the long-term orientation versus the short-term orientation. (...) The long-term orientation concerns companies attached to future issues and aims at achieving objectives (projection) (...). Conversely, short-term-oriented companies favour past and present-related values, such as consistency, respect for traditions, preservation (stability) or compliance with social obligations.*
- *This research was supplemented by the introduction of a final differentiating factor (2010): indulgence versus restraint."*
- **The French sociologist Philippe d'Iribarne** conducted research on the influence of the cultural context, inherited from history, on management practices. His reference work, *The Logic of Honor*,¹³ reveals cultural differences between three countries - France, the United States and the Netherlands. Its method is based on the analysis of three plants with the same type of production.

D'Iribarne says that in France, there is a logic of honour¹⁴, *"as demanding in the duties it prescribes as in the privileges it allows to be defended"*. The managerial culture is apparently characterised by a strong attachment to the job status linked to an expected degree of autonomy and a need for recognition. This dimension is apparently associated with "aristocratic pride": hierarchical relationships must be scrupulously respected, and thus offer little room for collective discussions and decisions.

The Americans, on the other hand, are apparently *"haunted by the ideal image of the contract which, passed between free men, remains just because the law has joined forces with morals to limit the power of the strongest"*. In the Netherlands, there exists *"a great objectivity, which goes hand in hand with a strong allergy to any form of pressure from any authority"*.

¹³ Philippe d'Iribarne, *La logique de l'honneur, gestion des entreprises et traditions nationales*, Editions du Seuil, 1989.

¹⁴ Reading note for the Chair for the Development of Organisation Systems (DSO), Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM), Laboratoire LIRSA. Reading note on the book "The logic of honor", not dated. This reading note includes a critical section that is not included in this report.

https://lirsa.cnam.fr/medias/fichier/diribarne2html_1263304768372.html

Cultural management logics in France, the United States and the Netherlands, according to Philippe d'Iribarne

Characteristics of cultural logic	Logic of Honour (France)	Contract Logic (US)	Consensus logic (Netherlands)
Sense of duty	Carry out one's duties as dictated by custom	Comply stringently with the terms of the contract	Seek agreement and adhere to agreements made
Hierarchical relationships	Multiple relationships, opacity in relationships	Like a customer-supplier relationship	Great resistance to pressure, transparency in relationships
Perception of control	Control aversion	Control of results accepted	Positively perceived control

Source : D'Iribarne, 1989 (note that this table does not appear in the book "The logic of honor", but appears in numerous research works)

Work on the national cultural specificities of management is relatively old. However, they were still used by several management consultancy firms in 2023-24, by training organisations and firms proposing to support companies in their international development. While globalisation leads to a hybridisation of national models, it also opens out onto the need for companies to better master the cultural differences that influence their management when managing multicultural teams or in business relations with other countries.

The national impact on management practices is also demonstrated in more recent work. Thus, the study by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), known as the Bilbao Agency, identifies in its survey on the levels of psychosocial risks management, determinants (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, level of wealth, involvement of public policies in occupational health, involvement of social partners, etc.) for which the national context is the first explanatory factor independently of other favourable or unfavourable factors taken alone¹⁵.

Beyond these general characteristics, management practices on labour markets and within companies are of course heterogeneous, and the statistical averages in each country do a poor job in reflecting this.

1.2 There is broad agreement as to the management principles that organisations recognise as being desirable

1.2.1 The analyses appear to be convergent around people-centric management

The academics interviewed by the mission described a growing trend in companies to favour so-called "transformational" leadership over "transactional" leadership, as in most western countries. This idea is supported by researchers as diverse as those at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in France or Trinity College in Dublin.

In 2020, a study by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (or the Dublin Foundation or Eurofound) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) described management practices associated with two beneficial outcomes for employees and employers: well-being at work and the establishment's performance (see below). The analysis shows that the institutions most likely to generate this win-win result are those that combine a high degree of employee autonomy, a balanced motivational strategy, a global training and learning strategy and high levels of direct employee involvement in decision-making, while

¹⁵ EU-OSHA, *Management of psychosocial risks in European workplaces - evidence from the second European survey of enterprises on new and emerging risks (ESENER-2)*, 2018



offering managerial support for these practices, with this support being underpinned by a dedicated corporate policy¹⁶.

Also in 2020, the study carried out by the Swedish Work Environment Authority highlights two types of management shown to be good for health in scientific studies: "transformational leadership" and¹⁷ "supportive leadership"¹⁸. These categories, derived from managerial theories, are open to debate, as is the way these categories are effectively applied and the good health criteria used. Nor does the study avoid questions about how relevant they effectively are. While the study concludes that it is necessary to avoid any imposing of ready-made solutions on situations that differ greatly, and advocates the principle of adapting to each context, it nevertheless identifies **factors common to "good management"**: exemplarity, attention paid to employee motivation and creativity, encouraging skills development, availability, trust. The study notes that empowering employees, by giving them room for autonomy, is at once necessary yet potentially destabilising for employees and requires on-going dialogue between managers and team members.

Still in Sweden, **the LO¹⁹ trade union presented the following fundamental principles to the mission, which in its view offer guidelines for the most desirable type of management:**

- A fair and transparent work organisation, including the possibility of asking questions when the employee does not understand the intricacies of the system;
- management is present, trusting its employees and committed;
- a high level of employee participation with a significant influence on their way of working and the work organisation;
- open and transparent communication within the organisation, with regular feedback to employees.

The professional association Lenarda²⁰ put forward the following principles of high-quality leadership: sufficient time to devote to the relationship, trust, clarity of missions, availability of the necessary resources, inclusion, dialogue, consistency, predictability, transparency, comprehensibility and legitimacy.

In France, the "Projet Sens" report, supported by several major companies, sets out ten commitments in the form of a "Manifesto to make work meaningful again".²¹ It is essentially about explaining employees' missions, showing how their work is useful in fulfilling the company's reason for being, taking into account employees' proposals, giving them career development prospects, selecting and valuing managers who care about their employees' feedback and having the support of corporate governance.

Many companies have said they are looking to achieve a "flat" organisational chart, or at least reduce the number of hierarchical levels. They expressed a clear preference for informal, friendly and non-conflicting interpersonal relationships.

The mission, which conducted interviews in widely differing business sectors (digital, hospitality and catering, automotive, insurance) in five different countries, remarked the strong convergence there was around these expectations. The management practices that are being sought after today are those that favour employee autonomy.

¹⁶ Eurofound and Cedefop, *European company survey 2019, Workplace practices unlocking employee potential*, 2020.

¹⁷ By reference to the theories of Bass and Riggio (see above).

¹⁸ The study does not link this leadership style to a particular theory, but to several factors that determine the psychological environment at work, such as the search for equality, consideration for people and the support from managers and other employees.

¹⁹ Landsorganisationen i Sveridge (LO) is Sweden's leading trade union confederation.

²⁰ Lenarda is a professional association dedicated exclusively to managers. It has 100,000 members, 40% of whom are women, 19 member trade unions, 80 collective agreements and 1,130 shop stewards in public and private organisations.

²¹ Projet Sens, "*Du sens à l'ouvrage, comprendre les nouvelles aspirations dans le travail*", report by Jean-Baptiste Barfety, June 2023



1.2.2 The reasons for this consensus are probably due to the imperatives of the contemporary economy

The massive nature of the consensus noted by the mission is most likely the result of numerous causes.

²²Several of the underlying trends identified by the INRS in its prospective study on work in 2040 feature among these causes. Indeed, the report lists the developments currently under way and documented and which justify the adoption of management practices aimed at enabling greater employee autonomy:

- An increasingly individual relationship to work;
- the emergence of remote working;
- an increasing aspiration to work independently, which however remains quantitatively limited;
- digital ubiquity;
- the emergence of new alternative management and governance modes;
- a more complex role for local managers;
- ²³difficulties in hiring and retaining employees.

The authors also identify trends that, while not currently present, could emerge by 2040:

- A hybridisation of the status of the self-employed and salaried employees;
- an expansion of new management methods that stand apart from traditional taylorism;
- an ambivalence of new technologies depending on the use that will be made of them.

These preferences for people-centric management are probably explained by current economic imperatives.

Labour shortages, notably linked to an ageing population, must be addressed through innovation in order to attract and retain workers. The pandemic crisis of 2020-2021 probably reinforced this need and objectively led to an acceleration in remote working. These elements have been incorporated into the reorganisations and intensification of work related to the new technologies.

Moreover, the uncertainties and opportunities engendered by the major transitions at work in Europe (ageing population, ecological crisis, shift to artificial intelligence) require workers to be more autonomous and adaptable. At the European level, the BEYOND 4.0 (2019-2023) and now the BRIDGES 5.0 (2023-2027) projects, bringing together research organisations and companies in around a dozen countries, attempt to define the changes required within companies in terms of relational skills that are coherent with the imperatives of the major transitions under way.

A number of the mission's interviewees highlighted changes in social expectations (a search for meaning, better work-life balance), going so far as to talk about new "generational" expectations ("generation Z" being often described as particularly affected by these trends).

1.3 The characteristics of "good management": participation, recognition, autonomy

Three of the principles listed above and related to preferences for "transformational leadership", stand out: employee participation, work recognition and autonomy.

²² INRS, *Le travail en 2040*, October 2023

²³ It should be noted that among the underlying trends noted in this INRS report, other factors are pulling in the other direction, i.e. towards less autonomy: ubiquity of result indicators, multiplication of the targets set for employees, rigidification and complexification of company management methods.

1.3.1 Participation: two contents, operational and organisational, and two methods, direct and intermediated

Participation is defined by Eurofound²⁴ as "the possibilities that workers may have to take part in organisational decisions that affect their work". It combines two contents relating to the work organisation:

- **Task latitude (operational content):** this is the ability of employees to exercise their own initiative in performing their own duties and tasks; this refers to the notion of autonomy without however autonomy being limited to this;
- **participation in company decisions (organisational content):** this is the ability of employees to participate, directly or indirectly,²⁵ in decisions affecting broader organisational matters.

Participation is possible in two ways:

- An **indirect or intermediated means**, when participation involves the action of employee representatives (employee representative bodies, trade union representatives);
- a **direct means**, where employees themselves intervene in the work, both in its operational content and its organisational content. This direct participation may take the form of groups discussing the tasks to be accomplished or corporate referendums, for example.

The distinction between indirect participation and direct participation is often described as a distinction between **social dialogue** on the one hand and **professional dialogue** on the other.

Other notions are used in sociology and management sciences, which, without precisely embracing the contours of employee participation, come very close to them and make them determinants of company performance:

- **The concept of the learning organisation** combines on-going development of employees' learning capabilities, their high degree of autonomy and participation by them in the decisions taken by the company. The presence of learning organisations coincides with a greater dynamism in the dissemination of innovations²⁶;
- **the concept of responsibility**, which covers both empowerment (giving employees power) and accountability (responsibility for the results obtained)²⁷.

In France, the interest in better employee participation has been underlined since February 2010 in the report presented by Henri Lachmann, Christian Larose and Muriel Pénicau on well-being and efficiency at work²⁸, which identified management as a major determinant of quality of life at work

²⁴ Eurofound (2020), *How does employee participation in decision-making benefit organisations?* European Working Conditions Survey 2015

²⁵ This distinction echoes that in the preamble to the 1946 Constitution. It can also refer to the works comparing professional dialogue (direct participation of employees) and social dialogue (participation via their representatives): see A. Johansen et al, *Social dialogue and professional dialogue: how to articulate them?* 2017. It also refers to the issue of co-determination, which is the subject of abundant literature in sociology and management sciences.

²⁶ France Stratégie, *Les organisations du travail apprenantes : enjeux et défis pour la France*, by Salima Benhamou and Edward Lorenz, April 2020: They highlight a French position close to the average within the EU 27 countries (43% of learning organisations in France compared to 40%), with the fewest being in the southern European countries. Countries in northern and continental Europe, on the other hand, have between 54% and 65%. Above all, the longitudinal study of the Eurofound surveys (2005, 2010, 2015) shows that France is experiencing a decline in this area (from 46 to 43%) in favour of lean production organisations (up from 22% to 32%). The authors explain this by the decline in employee autonomy and cognitive content at work, and the prevalence of a figures-based vertical management.

²⁷ Jean-Dominique Senard, "We live in a public limited company with unlimited irresponsibility", what is the source? 22 February 2024.

²⁸ Henri Lachmann, Christian Larose, Muriel Pénicau, *Bien-être et efficacité au travail – 10 Propositions pour Améliorer la Santé Psychologique au Travail*, report commissioned by the Prime Minister, with the assistance of Marguerite Moleux, February 2010



The consensus around this idea is now illustrated by the final report of the Assises du Travail²⁹ forum or the Haut-commissariat au Plan,³⁰ the findings of which were along these lines as was the empirical work conducted under the direction of Pierre Deheunynck and Franck Bournois among ten French companies that are competitive in economic and social terms³¹.

1.3.2 Recognition at work: a major factor

All the works above that make recommendations for management practices (see above) include recognition at work as a decisive element.

The studies show that **trust erodes the greater the power distance**. While employees generally say they have good relationships with their immediate manager, the situation is significantly worse with higher levels. The ability to recognise the work done is probably central to this mechanism.

In addition to remuneration, training or the possibility of entrusting new responsibilities to those concerned, several levers of recognition are indeed determined by **local management practices**:

- Recognition of the right to trial and error;
- encouraging individual or collective initiatives;
- feedback to value employees and help them progress (appreciation of efforts, celebration of successes)³².

1.3.3 Autonomy: an essential but conditioned factor

The ability of organisations to give employees autonomy is also one of the keys to quality management and the subject of a wide consensus.

Nevertheless, this autonomy is **dependent on the joint existence of democratic decision-making mechanisms concerning work issues and the effective presence of support** provided by management and colleagues.

Indeed, a high degree of employee autonomy does not, in principle, equate to “good” management, in the sense that this autonomy can be the corollary of a high level of precariousness, isolation, work intensity and conflicts of values (psychosocial risk factor) that individualisation may give rise to. In addition, autonomy in relation to managers may coincide with dependence on the algorithm, and conceal a loss of effective autonomy, as shown by some of the scenarios identified by the INRS when anticipating what the work environment in 2040 will be like³³.

²⁹ Conseil National de la Refondation, "Re-considérer le travail", report from the organizers of the Assises du Travail, April 2023

³⁰ Haut-commissariat au Plan, *La grande transformation du travail – crise de la reconnaissance et du sens du travail*, October 2023.

³¹ ESCP Business school, "Des entreprises pionnières, créatrices de valeur par l'emploi et les compétences", report, September 2022

³² IFOP-Fondation Jean-Jaurès, *Le nouveau rôle central des managers et l'enjeu de la reconnaissance au travail*, by Romain Bendavid, September 2022.

³³ INRS, *Le travail en 2040*, October 2023



2 Management practices have an impact on the results of economic and social policies, but this is not always easy to quantify

The quality of management practices produces significant but difficult-to-measure effects on company performance, while it is more clearly a determinant of employee health, job quality and work quality.

2.1 There is a correlation between good management practices and the economic performance of companies

The fact that management practices have an effect on company efficiency and performance is widely highlighted by numerous studies. In this context, positive management practices should be understood to mean the set of indicators presented in chapter 1.1 that enable us to determine whether good management is present or not, in particular by looking at such issues as employee participation, recognition and autonomy.

2.1.1 American studies were already showing a link between management practices and company performance

An econometric³⁴ study published in the *American Economic Review* by Bloom, Sadun and Van Reenen questions the productivity differential between the United States and European countries. It concludes that a **substantial part of these productivity gains comes from more intensive use of new technologies and better management practices in US companies.**

The study incorporates into its model the results of American companies present in Europe, where productivity is higher, not only because the use of new technologies is more intensive, but also because of different management practices, in the case of American companies present in Europe, with an identical human resources (HR) normative framework. *"Local labor market regulations influence people-management practices but do not completely determine them. If they did, there would be no systematic difference in the management practices of US subsidiaries in Europe compared to other firms"*. It is interesting to note that **the digital sector as studied by the mission and where the use of new technologies is the most intensive, is also the sector where management is the most horizontal, strongly contrasting with the vertical management practices that are still predominant in France**, with some exceptions.

This is confirmed by another US³⁵ study that shows that **management practices are a stronger determinant of performance than the legal environment, business sector or country of production.** The sample includes 700 medium-sized industrial companies in France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. The best management practices adopted here are based on the lean management³⁶ model applied in the field (with all the limitations inherent to this model), setting targets, monitoring results, decentralising the decision-making process and a significant proportion of female managers. Company performance is measured by total factor productivity, market shares, sales growth and stock market valuation. Good management practices are also linked to a better work-life balance (particularly through the financing of daycare centres and the possibility of working from home), more flexibility and greater decision-making autonomy granted to employees.

2.1.2 This correlation is confirmed by more recent studies

DARES (the Department of Research, Studies and Statistics) at the Ministry of Labour has produced a very comprehensive study³⁷ on the link between risk prevention, working conditions and company performance. This

³⁴ Nicholas Bloom, Raffaella Sadun, and John Van Reenen, *Americans Do IT Better: US Multinationals and the Productivity Miracle*, *American Economic Review* 2012, 102(1): 167–201.

³⁵ McKinsey (Dorgan, Dowdy and Rippin) in 2006.

³⁶ See 2.2.1

³⁷ Conditions de Travail, Prévention et Performance Economique et Financière des Entreprises, August 2020, DARES study documents.

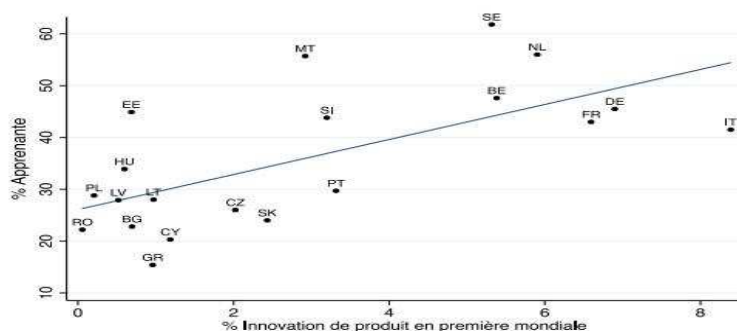


study recalls that many econometric studies have linked prevention and economic³⁸ performance, but believes that the results of the studies conducted in this way must be taken with great caution because there are more correlations than cause-and-effect links. The DARES study uses numerous administrative data, including the FARE file, DADS, the LIFI³⁹ system and the DARES working conditions survey itself. The study shows two things: on the one hand, **there are positive correlations between risk prevention and the economic and financial performance of companies, and on the other hand, the lack of recognition, constraints on working hours and organisation, economic insecurity and organisational changes are negatively correlated with the economic and financial performance of companies.** However, the DARES survey insists on **the caution with which these results must be interpreted** since certain limits are strong (no measurement of reverse causality⁴⁰) and other factors may be at play. *"The relationship between risk prevention and performance can, however, be explained by other factors, such as the quality of management, the quality of production, the social climate, employee engagement or the image of the company"*

France Stratégie⁴¹ (Salima Benhamou, Edward Lorenz) shows that **learning organisations** (assessment based on the European survey on working conditions), which **combine continuous development of employees' learning capacities**, their high degree of autonomy and participation in company decisions, **coincide with a more sustained and dynamic dissemination of innovations**, measured in the Community Innovation Survey (CIS) 2014.

Graph 1. Country ranking for world first product innovation by % of learning companies

Graphique 2 – % Apprenante par % Innovation de produit en première mondiale



Source : calculs des auteurs, d'après l'Enquête communautaire sur les innovations (Community Innovation Survey (CIS), Eurostat, 2014) et l'Enquête européenne sur les conditions de travail (EWCS, 2015) de la Fondation européenne pour l'amélioration des conditions de vie et de travail

Graphique 2 — % Apprenante par % Innovation de produit en première mondiale	Graph 2 - Learning % by world first product innovation %
% Apprenante	% Learning
% Innovation de produit en première mondiale	% world first product innovation
Source : calculs des auteurs, d'après l'Enquête communautaire sur les innovations (Community Innovation Survey (CIS), Eurostat, 2014) et l'Enquête européenne sur les conditions de travail (EWCS, 2015)	Source: authors' calculations, based on the Community Innovation Survey (CIS), Eurostat, 2014) and the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS, 2015) by

³⁸https://dares.travail.emploi.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/pdf/dares_document_etudes_conditions_de_travail_et_performance_economique_et_financiere_des_entreprises.pdf

³⁹ FARE is a compilation of the annual structural accounting data statistics of companies. The annual social data declaration (DADS) is a reporting formality that must be completed by any company that has employees. LIFI (financial links) describes the financial links between companies and provide information on French and foreign groups operating in France.

⁴⁰ The search for reverse causality is intended to verify whether the effect is not the real cause of the event. There is indeed a causal link, but it goes in the opposite direction to that which was believed. In this case, the DARES report indicates that it is impossible to carry out this search given the variables, and this puts the results in doubt. Is it because the company does more preventive actions that it is more efficient, or conversely, is it not because it is efficient that it does more of these actions (and has a greater capacity to do so)?

⁴¹ France Stratégie, *Les Organisations du Travail Apprenantes : enjeux et défis pour la France*, by Salima Benhamou and Edward Lorenz, April 2020



de la Fondation européenne pour l'amélioration des conditions de vie et de travail	the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
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Source : *Benhamou and Lorentz, 2020*

⁴²At the European level, Eurofound's 2013 ECS survey show that work organisation, employee participation and human resources policy are the three instruments which, in various combinations, enable management practices in companies to be qualified and have a strong impact on working conditions on the one hand, but also on the company's economic performance on the other.

Participation in particular leads to lower sickness-related absenteeism rates and also lower staff turnover rates, which, all other things else being equal, is not only beneficial to the country's social policy but also to the performance of the company itself.

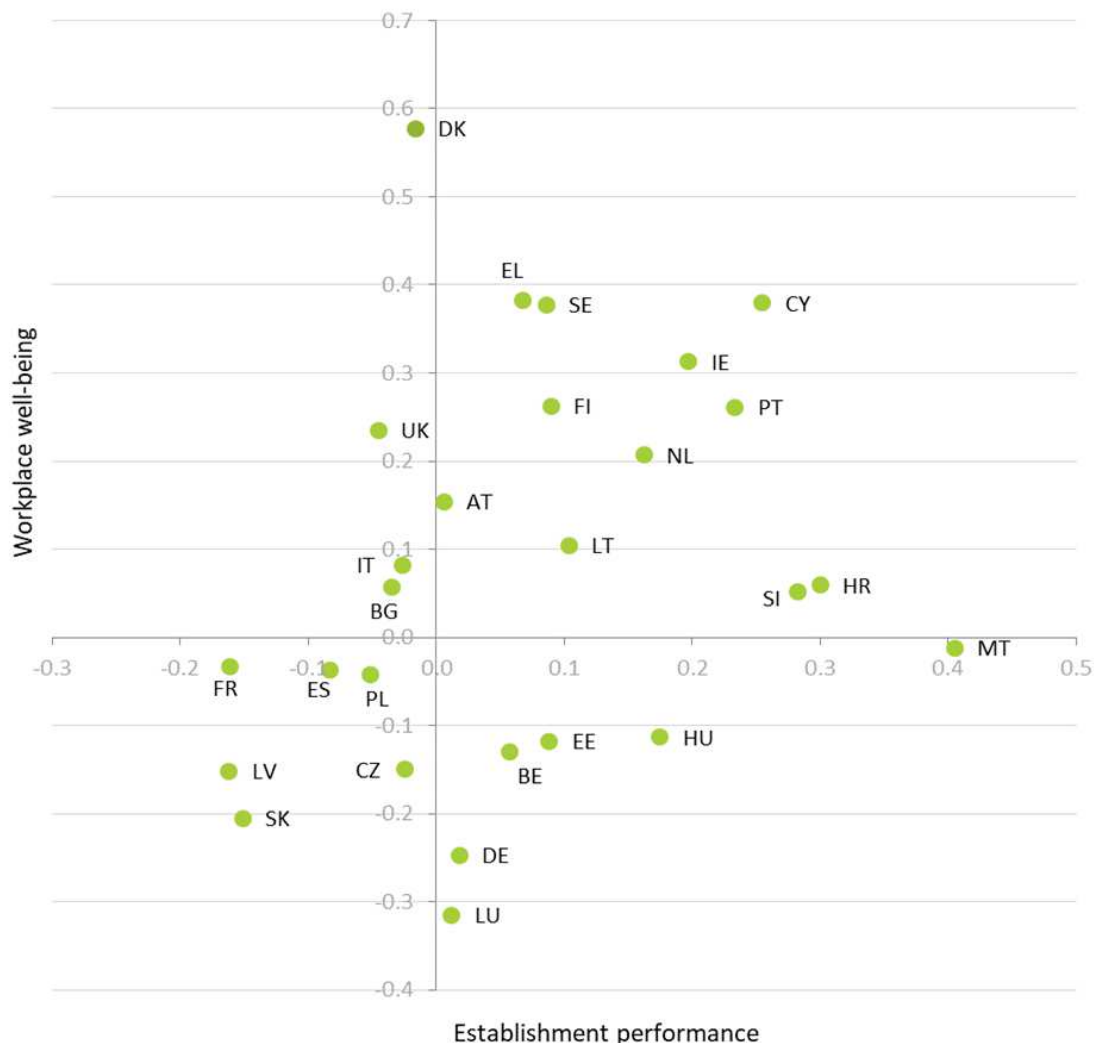
The fourth European Company Survey (ECS), carried out jointly by Eurofound and Cedefop in 2019, confirms the relatively unfavourable positioning of management in France. The study conducted with HRDs and staff representatives in the EU 27 and the UK describes the management practices associated with two beneficial outcomes for employees and employers: well-being at work and the performance of the establishment. The analysis shows that the institutions most likely to generate this win-win result are those that combine a high degree of employee autonomy, a balanced motivational strategy, a global training and learning strategy and high levels of direct employee involvement in decision-making, while offering managerial support for these practices, with this support being underpinned by a dedicated corporate policy. Eurofound established two synthetic indicators:

- A **well-being at the workplace indicator**, built using indirect measurement tools: the work climate, established using the answers provided by managers and employee representatives (taking into account the concurring responses), and human resources management indicators derived from the perceptions of managers (on excessive sickness-related absenteeism, employee motivation and difficulty in retaining employees in the company);
- An **establishment performance indicator**: it is built based on managers' perception of current profitability, profit expectations, 3-year production volume expectations and 3-year employment volume expectations in their establishment.

⁴² In this survey, Eurofound calculated a synthetic performance index enabling company management to be classified into 5 main categories: 1. "Interactive and involving": joint approach to decision-making on daily tasks, extensive practices for direct participation, moderately structured internal organisation, limited investment in HRM.; 2. "Systematic and involving": top-down approach to decision-making on daily tasks but extensive practices for direct and indirect participation, highly structured internal organisation, high investment in HRM; 3. "Externally oriented": high levels of collaboration and outsourcing (or involvement of the company in external production systems), a top-down approach to decision-making on daily tasks, a moderately structured internal organisation, moderate investment in HRM; 4. "Top-down and internally oriented": top-down approach to decision-making on daily tasks, moderately supported direct and indirect participation, little collaboration and outsourcing, a highly structured internal organisation, moderate investment in HRM; 5. "Passive management": top-down approach to decision-making on daily tasks, little direct and indirect participation, a moderately structured internal organisation, hardly any HRM.



Graph 2. Well-being at work and performance of organisations



Source : Eurofound, ECS 2019 (company survey - HRD and employee representatives)

2.1.3 This link is also suggested by the studies carried out by the mission with the help of the IGAS data centre

With the idea of objectively quantifying the relationship between management practices and company performance, the mission matched the 2019 DARES working⁴³ conditions survey with INSEE's FARE⁴⁴ database. The working conditions survey provides some information on certain management practices, whereas the FARE database, which includes all tax statements and returns, provides information on the company's financial situation and performance.

As mentioned previously, **while the definition and boundaries of management practices fluctuate**, there is nevertheless a convergence noted by the mission as to the elements that characterise best practices. We have attempted to retain the questions in the working conditions survey that are most germane when it comes to characterising good management and to test this criterion against the performance of the companies measured here by changes to the gross operating surplus (GOS) between 2019 and 2020.

⁴³ DARES, *Conditions de travail, prévention et performance économique et financière des entreprises*, August 2020.

⁴⁴ Annual structural statistics of companies in the ESANE system - CASD - Secure Data Access Centre

The approach **makes it possible to relate subjective management perception variables to objective company economic performance values**. However, the results of these regressions are indications about influential management factors but should be reinforced and further detailed with ad hoc surveys, such as those produced by the World Management Survey project⁴⁵.

In addition, several variables could be tested (productivity, net income, etc.) in order to better characterise economic performance. Similarly, management practices could be taken in groups allowing a more comprehensive analysis, with a method similar to that used by DARES⁴⁶. Finally, regressions take no factors other than that of management to explain the GOS, which is obviously incomplete. It would be interesting to add other GOS explanatory factors to the models to better isolate the influence of management.

Once these methodological limits have been set, **this study nonetheless shows a statistically significant link between progress in performance (growth in GOS between 2019 and 2020) and these two factors, which can be referred to as quality management practices factors**. This link can also be established in the automotive sector, one of the sectors studied by the mission, and is more pronounced in larger companies.

This link would benefit from additional more targeted studies in order to obtain more detailed results, in particular with specific questionnaires intended for this purpose⁴⁷.

2.2 Management practices influence the results of certain social policies

Beyond the effects on the economic performance of companies, the quality of management practices has effects on individuals' situations in such areas as occupational health and safety, job quality or work quality and employee commitment.

2.2.1 The impact of management on employee health

In a study on psychosocial risks (PSR) in the 27 countries of the European Union updated by a telephone survey in 2021, Eurofound found that many of the determining factors of PSR or, conversely, well-being at work, were elements that concerned management practices⁴⁸. Thus, the following table from this survey shows that participation, organisational autonomy, meaningful work, trust and recognition from managers have a positive impact on well-being at work.

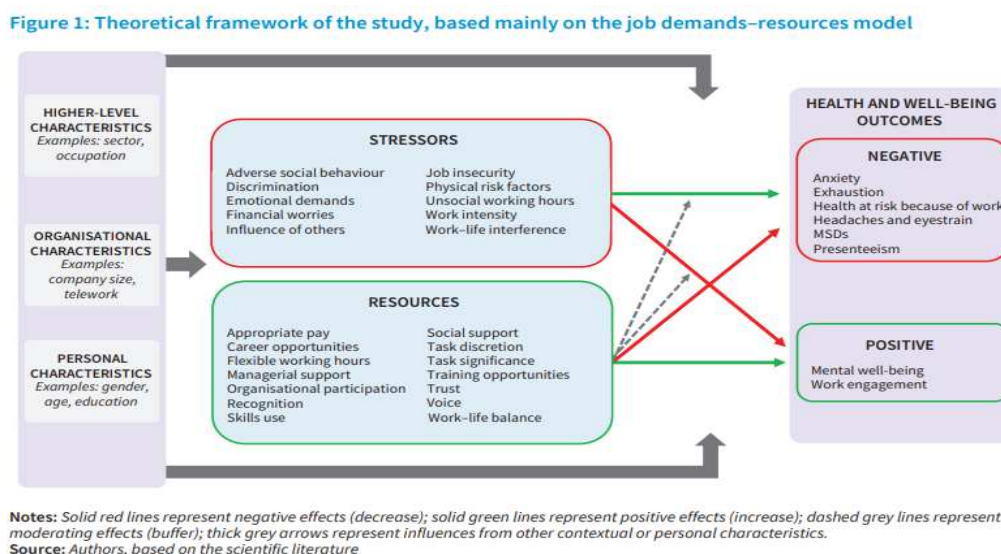
⁴⁵ See Appendix 8 and <http://World Management Survey> – Our mission is to build a high-quality, systematic dataset to be used by researchers worldwide in digging deeper into the black box of productivity across industries and countries.

⁴⁶ Employment survey | DARES (travail-emploi.gouv.fr)

⁴⁷ In France, "Project 4121", which brings together occupational health experts, aims to demonstrate the added value of an approach focused on listening to workers, transparency and social dialogue on the overall performance of the companies.

⁴⁸ This is consistent with Robert Karasek's analyses in 1979 in his famous "job strain model" questionnaire, designed to assess psychosocial risks (PSR). The SUMER survey by DARES measuring exposure to psychosocial factors at work in France is based on this "Karasek model".

Schéma 1 : Determinants of psychosocial risks with a positive or negative impact on health and well-being at work according to Eurofound



Source : Eurofound, PSR survey, 2023

The Swedish agency’s study on the working environment in 2020 (see above) highlights the fact that certain management⁴⁹ methods have a positive impact on health. These categories, derived from managerial theories, are open to debate, as is the way these categories are effectively applied and the good health criteria used. Nor does the study avoid questions about how relevant they effectively are.

The impact of management on job quality is reflected in how management supports employees at different points in their careers. Beyond policies to prevent occupational exclusion, inclusive practices, when reintegrating absent or sick employees into the company, are conducive to better productivity and greater sustainability in the job regained. A successful reintegration policy for employees thus relies on the support of colleagues and managers, vocational training, honest communication about the individual needs of the person going back to work and flexible work organisation policies.

In the French case, the DARES⁵⁰ survey reveals that **employee participation** in decisions relating to their work is correlated with lower psychosocial risks, particularly in the case of organisations undergoing transformations. Conversely, low participation leads to loss of meaningfulness that is detrimental to the health and investment of workers.

For its part, the INRS (National Institute for Research and Safety for the Prevention of Occupational Accidents and Illnesses) has carried out several actions that also identify management as an essential factor in the health of employees. Thus, in a study published in 2023 October on lean management, the INRS indicates that this management⁵¹ method, derived from the famous Toyota Production System (TPS), in itself has potentially positive or negative aspects on occupational health.

Indeed, **lean management**, based on a combination of five major principles, **can be very positive in the way it detects risks in terms of health and safety at work** due to the priority it gives to feedback from employees about their work and by what is known as visual management in which local managers and teams work in a climate in which there is a constant search for work improvement. **With a goal of achieving stability of material and human**

⁴⁹ In particular, "transformational leadership" and "supportive leadership".

⁵⁰ DARES, *Changements organisationnels : la participation des salariés protège-t-elle du risque dépressif ?* Dares 2017 analysis.

⁵¹ INRS, *Lean manufacturing, quelle place pour la santé et la sécurité au travail*, October 2023 <https://www.inrs.fr/media.html?refINRS=ED%206144>



resources, workers are at the heart of the work organisation, because it is their experience that determines the quality of production and how efficient prevention of waste is. Similarly, lean management must be as close to the ground as possible, attentive and not vindictive against those who bring production or organisational problems to the attention of the manager.

A version of lean management more oriented towards cost-cutting and the search to eliminate idle, unworked times can be a source of exhaustion, stress and work accidents due to the high working rates and intensity implied by this management method. Eliminating unneeded movements, non-working periods and actions that do not provide any added value certainly achieves higher productivity or even an improvement in the quality of the employee’s work, but it also leads to more intense working by eliminating break times and the loss of the physical health benefit gained from moving around and carrying out a more diverse series of tasks. The INRS also points out that transposing lean management principles from the industrial production sector to the service sectors, including personal services, may have led to a deterioration in the coherence and rather positive principles of the initial model.

This example shows that **management models may not in themselves be a source of positive or negative management practices. Much depends on how they are implemented** and the human management principles that are followed. **This raises questions as to how transparent are the goals being pursued through the management methods applied and the capacity of a work group to open up and organise a space for discussion and exchanges around management practices** that both inspire and are derived from the management model chosen.

2.2.2 Links between management practices and job quality

To measure the consequences of management practices on social policies, it makes sense to go through an intermediate milestone, which is the notion of job quality. It is a notion that has received numerous acceptances but the core definition of which is actually quite consensual and has been recently supplemented.

⁵²Since 1999, the International Labour Office (ILO) has been calculating “decent work” indicators. At European level, a conceptual framework for “job quality” was adopted at the Laeken Summit in December 2001. It consists of ten dimensions measured by key indicators and context indicators. The aim was to measure differences in the level of job quality between European Union countries as part of the Lisbon Strategy. Eurostat has also calculated job quality indicators since 2007. Finally, there is a report published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) which measures job quality indicators in countries.

For its part, the OECD worked on a synthetic indicator of job quality based on three dimensions - i.e. earnings quality, labour market security and the working environment - from 2013 and then 2016.

These different measures of job quality were summarised in a study⁵³ that shows a relative convergence of the dimensions - taken into account to varying degrees - of job quality as shown in the table below.

In all studies, **management is present as a component of job quality**, regardless of how it is measured.

Table 2. The job quality dimensions taken into account according to several international approaches

Correlations between job quality dimensions adopted in the various international approaches

Dimensions	BIT (2008)	CE-Laeken (2001)	CE-Brussels (2011)	Dublin Foundation (2002)	UNECE (2010)
Occupational health and safety, working conditions	5. Forms of work that should be abolished 7. Equal opportunities and treatment in employment 8. Safety in the workplace	3. Equality between men and women 4. Occupational health and safety 9. Diversity and non-discrimination	3.1. Occupational health and safety 3.2. Work intensity 4.2. Equality between men and women	Health and well-being	1. Occupational safety and ethics

⁵² The decent work agenda adopted by the BIT in 1999 consists of employment, social protection, workers’ rights and social dialogue. The calculation of 11 decent work dimensions was then translated into a battery of indicators at the eighteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2008.

⁵³ Mathilde Guergoat-Larivière et Olivier Marchand, *Définition et mesure de la qualité de l’emploi : une illustration au prisme des comparaisons européennes*, Economie et Statistique, Year 2012



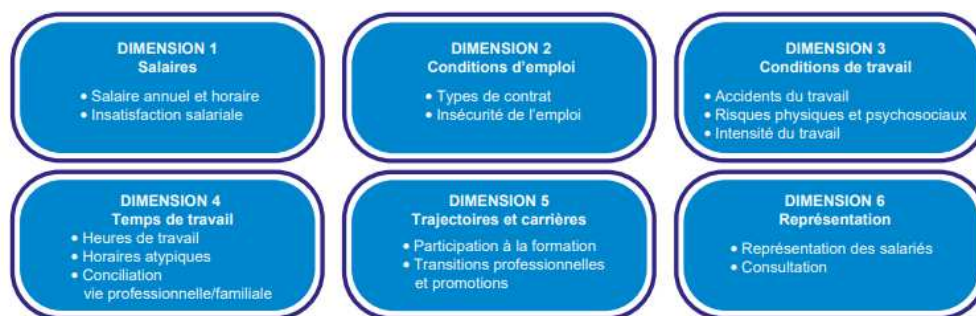
Remuneration	2. Adequate earnings and productive employment	1. Intrinsic job quality	1.1 Appropriate wages	Income*	2. Income and employment-related benefits
Working time and work/life balance	3. Decent hours 4. Ability to reconcile work, family and private life	7. Work organisation and work-life balance	4.1. Work/life balance	Work-life/non-work life balance	3. Working hours and work-life/non-work life balance
Job security and social protection	6. Occupational stability and safety 9. Social Security	5. Flexibility and safety	1.2. Re-employment security and career progression	- Employment status* - Social protection*	4. Job security and social protection
Social dialogue and collective representation	10. Social dialogue and worker and employer representation	8. Social dialogue and employee participation	3.4. Collective representation	Workers' rights*	5. Social dialogue
Life-long learning		2. Lifelong learning and career progression	2 Skills development and employability	Learning and development	6. Access to training and skills development
Other dimensions	1. Employment possibilities 11. Economic and social context of decent work	6. Inclusion and access to the labour market 10. Overall work performance (productivity)	3.3. Autonomy in work and professional practices		7. Workplace Relations and work motivation

* Grouped in one large dimension "Job security and career paths".

Source : Guergoat-Larivière & Marchand, 2012

The latest developments on the subject were produced by France Stratégie in the 2021 report on second-line workers⁵⁴ and included in a recent publication⁵⁵. In this work, France Stratégie defines job quality as a result of 24 indicators grouped into 6 major dimensions. Management practices in the sense that the mission has given to this term contribute to several components of job quality, particularly with regard to dimension 3 working conditions, dimension 5 on working hours and, of course, dimension 6 on social dialogue.

Graph 3. The 6 dimensions of job quality



Lecture : la dimension « Conditions de travail » inclut quatre sous-dimensions : la fréquence des accidents du travail, l'exposition à des risques physiques, l'exposition à des risques psychosociaux et l'intensité du travail.

DIMENSION 1 Salaires • Salaire annuel et horaire • Insatisfaction salariale	DIMENSION 1 Earnings • Annual and hourly wages • Salary dissatisfaction
DIMENSION 2 Conditions d'emploi • Types de contrat • Insécurité de l'emploi	DIMENSION 2 Employment conditions • Types of contracts • Job insecurity
DIMENSION 3 Conditions de travail • Accidents du travail • Risques physiques et psychosociaux • Intensité du travail	DIMENSION 3 Working conditions • Work-related accidents • Physical and psychosocial risks • Work intensity

⁵⁴ Christine Erhel and Sophie Moreau-Follenfant (2021), *Rapport de la mission d'accompagnement des partenaires sociaux dans la démarche de la reconnaissance des travailleurs de la deuxième ligne*, 19 December 2021.

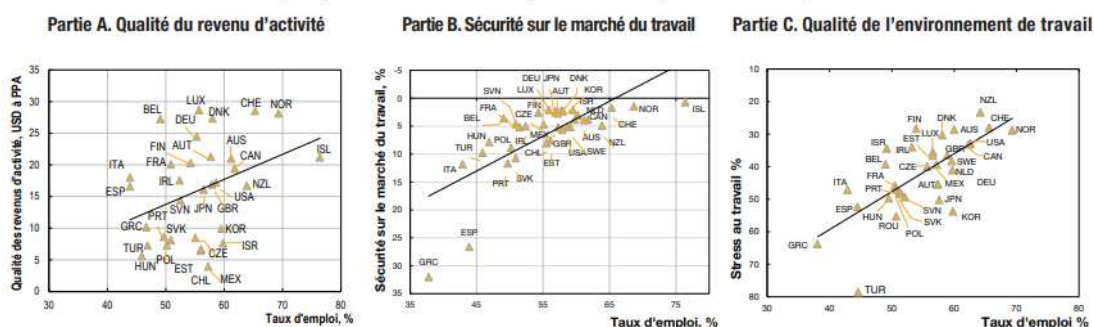
⁵⁵ France Stratégie, *Qualité de l'emploi : une question de métiers ?* Analysis note No. 130, December 2023.

<p>DIMENSION 4 Temps de travail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heures de travail • Horaires atypiques • Conciliation vie professionnelle/familiale 	<p>DIMENSION 4 Working hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours worked • Atypical hours • Work/life balance
<p>DIMENSION 5 Trajectoires et carrières</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation à la formation • Transitions professionnelles et promotions 	<p>DIMENSION 5 Career paths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the training • Career transitions and promotions
<p>DIMENSION 6 Représentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Représentation des salariés • Consultation 	<p>DIMENSION 6 Social dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of employees • Consultation
<p>Lecture : la dimension « Conditions de travail » inclut quatre sous-dimensions : la fréquence des accidents du travail, l'exposition à des risques physiques, l'exposition à des risques psychosociaux et l'intensité du travail.</p>	<p>Read: the "Working conditions" dimension includes four sub-dimensions: frequency of work-related accidents, exposure to physical risks, exposure to psychosocial risks and work intensity.</p>

Source : France Stratégie, 2023

Furthermore, promoting job quality is not to the detriment of job quantity, as OECD⁵⁶ studies show, particularly in the current context of labour shortages and recruitment tensions that higher job quality could help to mitigate since it makes these jobs more attractive. The graph below shows that in the 3 determinants of job quality according to the OECD, **there is a positive correlation in the countries reviewed between job quality and the employment rate.**

Graph 4. Links between job quantity and quality (as defined by the OECD)



Source : Base de données de l'OCDE sur la qualité de l'emploi (2016). Les années retenues sont les mêmes que celles utilisées pour les graphiques 1, 2 et 3.

<p>Partie A. Qualité du revenu d'activité Qualité des revenus d'activité, USD a PPA Taux d'emploi, %</p>	<p>Part A. Quality of earnings Quality of earnings, \$USD (PPP-adjusted) Employment rate %</p>
<p>Partie B. Sécurité sur le marché du travail Sécurité sur le marché du travail, % Taux d'emploi, %</p>	<p>Part B. Labour market security Labour market security, % Employment rate %</p>
<p>Partie C. Qualité de l'environnement de travail Stress au travail % Taux d'emploi %</p>	<p>Part C. Quality of the working environment Job strain % Employment rate %</p>
<p>Source : Base de données de l'OCDE sur la qualité de l'emploi (2016). Les années retenues sont les mêmes que celles utilisées pour les graphiques 1, 2 et 3.</p>	<p>Source: OECD database on job quality (2016). The years used are the same as those used for charts 1, 2 and 3.</p>

⁵⁶ OECD, *Defining, Measuring and Assessing Job Quality and its Links to Labour Market Performance and Well-Being*, February 2016.



Source : OECD

2.2.3 The quality of management is a highly significant determinant of work quality and employee engagement

As a major determinant of employee health, the company's economic performance and job quality, **management is also a major factor in work quality.**

Laurent Cappelletti, holder of the chair of accounting and management control at the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM) has conducted numerous research (continuing the work of Henry Savall, PhD in economics and emeritus professor at the Institute of Business Administration (IAE) at the University of Lyon 3), in which he shows that poor management practices lead to costs for the company, but also for the social system.

A study⁵⁷ co-written by these two authors estimates the overall cost of absenteeism for businesses, economic growth and social finances to be some €100 billion. This is based on a study of 1,600 companies: the absenteeism rate in France is estimated to be around 5% in private companies and 8% in the public sector. However, these two authors strive to demonstrate that **while there will always be "unavoidable" absenteeism**, linked to influenza epidemics for example, just as there is frictional unemployment, the remaining **"avoidable" absenteeism is 99% down to poor management practices**, particularly in the 6 main areas that constitute work quality, namely: working conditions, work organisation, coordination and consultation, time management, integrated training and strategic implementation (including remuneration policies). The authors observed numerous companies as they improved their management quality and demonstrated that absenteeism has a direct cost. They take the example of a public transport company in which record high absenteeism rate induces the costs shown in the table below:

Calculation of the costs of absenteeism in the technical department of a public transport company⁵⁸

	Sursalaires	Surtemps	Surconsommation	Non production	total
absentéisme (17%)	183 k€	15 K€	15K€	747K€	960K€

Source : Cappelletti and Savall, 2018

In all, the annual costs of absenteeism in this department of around 100 people were therefore around €9,600 per person per year (€960,000/100 people). Of course, 17% absenteeism is a record, but on this basis and by bringing it back to the absenteeism rates recorded and distinguishing between the public and private sectors, the authors arrive at this extraordinary cost of €100 billion per year.

This impact of management on work quality was also documented by Eurofound, when analysing the company surveys and the surveys on working conditions already mentioned. This perspective was the subject of a specific publication published in 2020⁵⁹ entitled "*How does employee involvement in decision-making benefit organisations?*". Eurofound notes that there is a strong correlation, that differs depending on the EU country reviewed, between the quality of management - in particular in terms of working conditions and participation - and quality of life at work,. This study takes the results of the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS, 2019) in which employee engagement (motivation) is measured and shows that 34% of employees could be classified as highly motivated, 40% as moderately motivated and 26% as having low motivation.

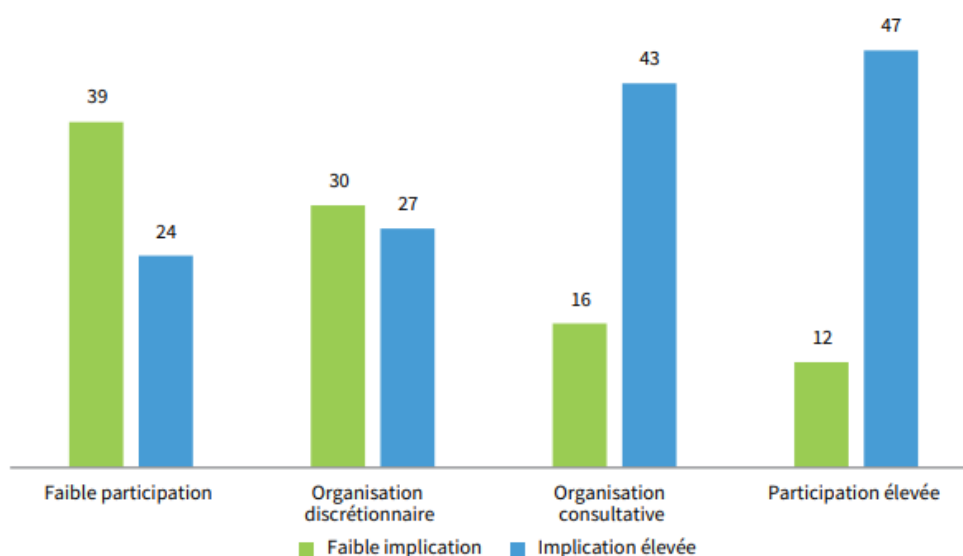
⁵⁷ <https://www.institutsapiens.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Cout-absenteisme.pdf>

⁵⁸ The excess payroll costs are wages paid by the company to absent employees in compliance with social security regulations in force. Overtime corresponds to additional work carried out by employees present in the company to compensate for absences. Excess consumption corresponds to additional purchases of external services to compensate for absent employees (e.g. temporary working).

⁵⁹ <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/2020/how-does-employee-involvement-decision-making-benefit-organisations>

Yet, a high degree of employee involvement is beneficial to both employers and employees. Committed employees are much less absent, put in more effort⁶⁰, retire later, enjoy a better quality of work and are less likely to leave the company where they work even if they could earn a slightly higher salary elsewhere. The following chart from Eurofound shows the results of the correlation between participatory management practices and employee engagement, where 47% of employees in companies with high participation levels are highly engaged, while only 24% of employees in a company with low participation are highly engaged.

Graph 5. Level of employee engagement in four types of work organisation as a % of employees



Source : Eurofound, 2020

This impact of management practices on employee engagement a major point in the current context of a tense labour market and labour shortages, where both job attractiveness and employee retention are major issues in terms of increasing the employment rate and productivity. Indeed, questions on meaningful work - set out in particular in the conclusions of the report from the Assises du Travail⁶¹ forum guarantors involve taking into account the fundamental question of working conditions and work quality (QLWC) in which management quality plays a decisive role⁶².

This is shown by a **survey published in February 2023 by the Montaigne Institute** conducted among approximately 5,000 employees and self-employed persons⁶³. The survey confirms the results of other surveys, in particular the Eurofound survey,⁶⁴ on the fact that employee satisfaction with their job remains on the whole high and that their jobs are a major concern to them: ⁶⁵ on a scale of 0 to 10, 77% of respondents stated that their satisfaction level is higher than 6 with the average score for all respondents being 6.7.

⁶⁰ See also the analyses by Christophe Dejours which show that autonomy and recognition are the two drivers of well-being at work, and that in their absence, we are witnessing the phenomenon of "quiet quitting", the fact of doing just the minimum, in *Ce qu'il y a de meilleur en nous*, Payot editions, 2021

⁶¹ Sophie Thiéry and Jean-Dominique Senard, *Re-considérer le travail*, April 2023

⁶² This finding is also noted in the report from the Haut-commissariat au Plan on the great work transformation, crisis of recognition and meaning of work (*La Grande Transformation du Travail, Crise de la Reconnaissance et du Sens du Travail* - October 2023).

⁶³ Institut Montaigne, *Les Français au travail : dépasser les idées reçues*, February 2023.

⁶⁴ European survey on values in which France is one of the countries in Europe where work is considered to be "very important" by 70% of respondents.

⁶⁵ Also pointed out by Dominique Méda in *Prendre la mesure de la crise du travail en France*, 2023.

In investigating this item, the Institut Montaigne notes that there are 4 prevalent reasons for dissatisfaction: work recognition, earnings, the fact that they cannot work from home (feeling of unfairness) and career prospects. **It should be noted from the outset that 3 out of the 4 reasons (apart from earnings) are fully or partially related to the quality of management practices.** This is particularly the case of recognition, directly linked to management as a major reason for dissatisfaction, which is confirmed by other studies⁶⁶ establishing that 40 to 50% of all employees surveyed feel that they are dissatisfied with their work due to a lack of recognition, compared to only 28% of dissatisfied employees in the United Kingdom or 25% in Germany⁶⁷.

This study by the Institut Montaigne also shows that the level of job satisfaction (and therefore, to a large extent, the perceived quality of life at work) is not directly correlated with classic variables such as the socio-professional category (SPC), education level attained, sector of activity, size of the company, contractual status (fixed-term or indefinite-term contract), work quota, but rather that the reasons for dissatisfaction across these categories are more linked to the questions of autonomy, recognition and career prospects. It concludes **that management, a determining factor in employee satisfaction at work and therefore in employee loyalty, is one of the major challenges⁶⁸ in the transformation of the world of work.**

3 Unlike some European countries, France is characterised by vertical management structures

3.1 European surveys place French management practices in a less than flattering position overall

Several European data sources help position France in terms of professional practices, in particular the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS)⁶⁹ by the Dublin-based European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), the Eurofound European Company Survey (ECS)⁷⁰ and the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER)⁷¹ by the Bilbao-based European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA).

⁶⁶ IFOP 2018, "Would you say that your work is recognised at its fair value by your company/organisation?" Dissatisfied 45%; Dares survey in the Summer of 2017, type of exposure to psychosocial risks: % of employees who report a lack of recognition in their work: 49%

⁶⁷ IFOP 2021 cited in *Le nouveau rôle central des managers et l'enjeu de la reconnaissance au travail*, note from the Fondation Jean Jaurès 2022.

⁶⁸ "The study highlights the essential role of discontent with management in dissatisfaction at work. In the same vein, issues related to occupational health, especially mental health and the treatment, where possible preventive treatment, of excessive psychological burdens, must become central concerns. This applies to both the general social climate and economic performance (problem of the increase in absenteeism in certain economic sectors). The study also highlights the tremendous division that remote working brings with it. It is both a factor of fulfilment and autonomy for the immense majority of those who can do it and a reason for great frustration for a large proportion of the 60% of workers who do not have access to it. It is imperative that management and social negotiations adapt to this new situation. All these issues require urgent action"

⁶⁹ *European working conditions survey*: this is a telephone survey conducted in 2021 among a sample of 70,000 workers (employees and non-employees) in 36 countries: European Union member countries, Norway, Switzerland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The previous surveys (every 5 years between 1990 and 2020) and the 2024 survey were carried out through face-to-face interviews. The latest available data, from 2021, was collected individually by telephone due to the epidemic context.

⁷⁰ *European Company Survey (2019): the survey is based on responses from 22,000 HR decision-makers and 3,000 employee representatives across the EU 27 and the UK.*

⁷¹ *European survey of enterprises on new and emerging risks (ESENER)*: the survey was conducted four times in 2009, 2014, 2019 and 2024. The latest available results are from the 2019 telephone and internet survey of 45,000 public and private organisations with 5 or more employees in the 27 countries of the European Union, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Serbia, North Macedonia and the UK. The results of the 2024 survey will start to be available in 2025. Respondents are those in the organisation who are deemed to have the best knowledge of occupational health issues.



These three surveys mainly help us to see France's position in the field of occupational health, and **a number of the questions posed enable us to gain insight into the specific situation of management practices** as a whole. These surveys place France in a relatively unfavourable position.

Although there are obviously contrasts between different types of companies, depending on their size and sector of activity⁷², the French situation globally is quite particular in several respects.

3.1.1 The level of worker autonomy is significantly lower in France

The proportion of organisations characterised by low employee autonomy is 6.5 points higher than the European average. Organisations that combine low autonomy and low employee participation are perceived to be more widespread than the European average and in the comparison countries, albeit to varying degrees (the largest differences are observed with Germany, i.e. more than 10 points). Conversely, the proportion of organisations that combine high autonomy and high employee participation is perceived as being less common (the largest differences are again with Germany - 9.3 points).

Work organisation methods - France and Europe

	France	EU 27	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Sweden
Work organisation methods combining low autonomy and low employee participation	34.40%	29.50%	24.20%	34.20%	30.80%	33.10%
Work organisation methods with low employee autonomy	57.80%	51.30%	41.00%	61.30%	50.50%	56.60%
Organisation methods with low employee participation	44.30%	45.70%	44.70%	44.60%	48.70%	45.70%
Organisation methods combining high autonomy and high employee participation	29.20%	32.70%	38.50%	28.30%	31.60%	30.80%

Source : Eurofound, EWCS 2021 (telephone survey among employees)

These Eurofound findings on autonomy are corroborated by the national data from the DARES Working Conditions Survey⁷³. In the surveys conducted in 2013, 2016 and 2019, several items relating to autonomy have stagnated (possibility of interrupting work at one's own initiative, knowing what is expected at work, ability to organise one's work). Between 1998 and 2019, the requirements expressed by the line manager relate more to how to do the work and are less and less limited to just setting the goal to be achieved (from 14.2% and 22.2%). The proportion of workers who say they must strictly apply the instructions decreased between 1998 and 2005 (from 37.2 to 35.2%), but has changed little since then (34.4% in 2019).

3.1.2 Trust in management is lower than the European average

French workers feel that their manager's support is less systematic than in other EU countries and in the comparison countries. The biggest difference among the countries studied here is with Ireland. The management trust index is significantly worse in France, with the proportion of employees responding that they have low trust in

⁷² As is its positioning in the sub-contracting chain, which can impact management practices.

⁷³ The Working Conditions surveys, organised and run by DARES since 1978, are repeated every 3 years and concern all active working persons. They aim to describe work as perceived by employees as precisely as possible. The questions asked do not refer to objective measures (job ratings or ergonomic analyses), nor to questions of opinion about work, but to a concrete description of the work, the way it is organised and the prevailing working conditions and this from several perspectives: room for manoeuvre, cooperation, work pace, physical effort and risks incurred.



management being twice that of Germany, Ireland and Sweden and 9 to 10 points higher than the levels observed in Italy and in the EU 27.

Management perception - France and Europe

	France	EU 27	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Sweden
Manager support and help - never or rarely	16.70%	14.80%	19.80%	7.60%	15.00%	15.90%
Manager support and help - sometimes and often	50.10%	44.20%	43.00%	40.90%	48.70%	52.20%
Manager support and help - always	33.20%	41.10%	37.20%	51.50%	36.30%	31.90%
Trust index and management quality - low	25.60%	16.00%	12.80%	12.70%	15.90%	12.80%
Trust index and management quality - average	58.30%	59.40%	56.80%	56.60%	74.00%	66.10%
Trust index and management quality - strong	16.10%	24.60%	30.40%	30.70%	10.00%	21.00%

Source : Eurofound, EWCS 2021 (telephone survey among employees)

It should be noted that while France is poorly ranked from this point of view in the European comparisons carried out by Eurofound, national studies, having different methodologies, conclude that there are good quality relations between employees and their direct line managers. This is the case of a study by IFOP in 2022⁷⁴ and the Institut Montaigne in 2023⁷⁵.

On the other hand, **all studies converge to say that the quality of the relationship deteriorates the greater the power distance.** Eurofound's EWCS study reveals employee and management trust indicators that are significantly lower in France than in the comparison countries: 81% of employees feel their management trusts them, compared to 86% in the EU 27. Germany, Ireland, Italy and Sweden are between 88% and 91%. Employees' trust in their management is marked by an even more significant gap: 63% of French employees trust management, compared to 73% in the EU 27. The results of the 4 comparison countries show trust consistently higher than the level recorded in France - between 5 and 18 points higher, with Ireland and Germany at +15 points and +18 points respectively. The IFOP analyses concur with these findings⁷⁶.

The ECS study, carried out jointly by Eurofound and Cedefop in 2019⁷⁷ among HRDs and staff representatives, confirms that **the level of trust and cooperation between management and staff representatives is relatively low in France.** Three categories of organisations can be distinguished here: organisations in which the level of trust and cooperation is high (*involving, trusting and influential*), organisations in which trust and cooperation are medium (*moderate trust, moderate influence*) and organisations in which trust and cooperation are poor (*bad relationship, little influence*). France is at a level of trust and cooperation significantly below the EU 27 average. However, most of the comparison countries do not differ from France in this respect: Italy has even worse indicators, while Germany and Ireland are at a slightly higher level than France, yet below the Community average. In the comparison sample,

⁷⁴ IFOP-Fondation Jean-Jaurès, *Le nouveau rôle central des managers et l'enjeu de la reconnaissance au travail*, by Romain Bendavid, September 2022: the relationship with the local manager is perceived positively: 70% of employees surveyed say they are satisfied with the relationship with their N+1, 86% with their colleagues and 67% with department managers or management. The proportion of employees satisfied with their direct line manager is relatively stable over time, oscillating between 65% and 77% between 2004 and 2021.

⁷⁵ Institut Montaigne, *Les Français au travail : dépasser les idées reçues*, February 2023.

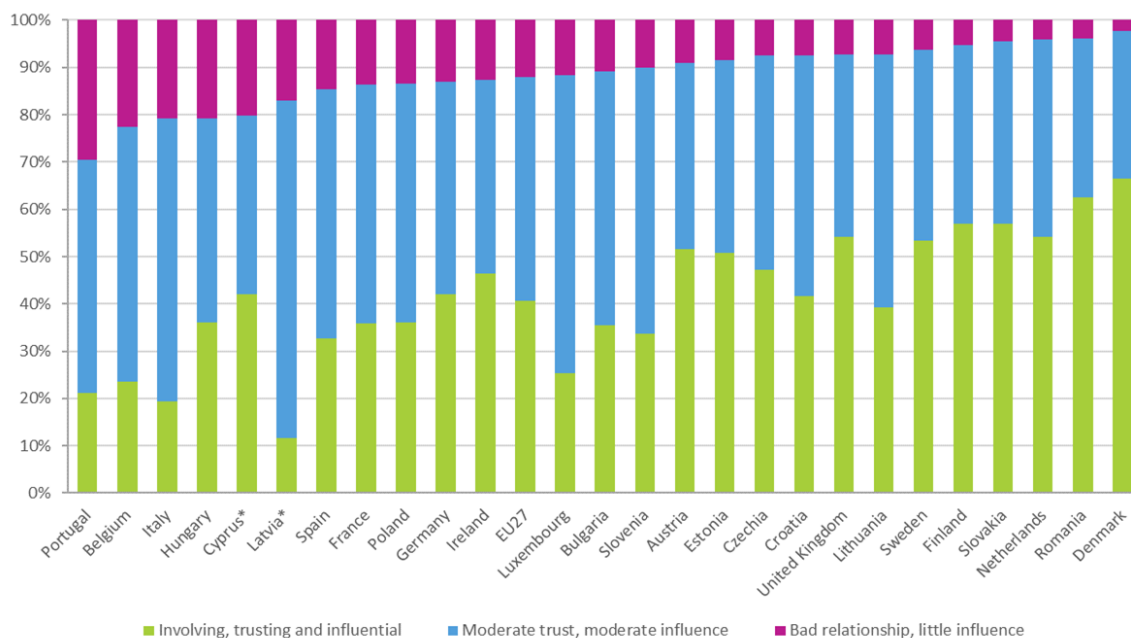
⁷⁶ Satisfaction with general management, which is more distant, is down to 51%, with the greater distance generating a lower degree of trust.

⁷⁷ Eurofound and Cedefop, *European Company Survey 2019, Workplace practices unlocking employee potential*, 2020.



only Sweden ranks among the countries in Europe where trust and cooperation between management and employee representatives are among the highest.

Graph 6. Trust and cooperation between management and employee representatives



Source : Eurofound, ECS 2019 (company survey - HRD and employee representatives)

Finally, the analyses in the *ESENER* survey, carried out by the Bilbao Agency on working conditions, show **management practices as regards occupational health issues that involve very little participation and are strongly influenced by regulations:**

- Worker involvement in psychosocial risk management measures fell in France from 56% to 54% between 2014 and 2019. Over the same period, the European average rose from 61% to 63%. While Italy scored close to France (58% in 2019), Ireland, Germany and Sweden were well ahead (63%, 66% and 81% respectively).
- Administrative obligations are perceived as both the main barrier and the main reason for risk assessment approaches within French companies. The motivations related to the performance of the organisation appear secondary and are less well identified than in the other European countries.

3.2 National and European analyses highlight the qualitative weaknesses of the national "model"

European comparisons, as well as other national sources, enable a relatively convergent assessment of management practices in France to be drawn up. These practices are characterised by several weaknesses.

3.2.1 French management practices appear vertical and power distances high

This "verticality" is mentioned by almost all the people interviewed by the mission and is examined in the analyses found. It broadly converges with the work carried out by sociologist Philippe d'Iribarne, around the "logic of



honour"⁷⁸, based on the comparison of professional cultures within factories manufacturing the same products in France, the Netherlands and the United States.

It is also consistent the older work by Dutch psychologist Geert Hofstede and his team (see above), who drew up the following table with regard to the six "management styles":

The ranking of 10 countries according to Geert Hofstede's six management components

Country	Power distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty avoidance	Long-term orientation	Indulgence
West Africa	77	20	46	54	18	78
Germany	35	67	66	65	31	40
Sweden	31	71	5	29	20	78
United States	40	91	62	46	29	68
France	68	71	43	86	39	48
Brazil	69	38	49	76	65	59
Japan	54	46	95	92	80	42
The Netherlands	38	80	14	53	44	68
Russia	95	47	40	75	81	20

Source : According to Hofstede's scheme, the closer the number is to 100, the more relevant the criterion is. <http://geert-hofstede.com/>

Among European countries, France was in this relatively old situation as the one in which the power distance was the greatest. The same was true for the dimension of uncertainty avoidance, which can be a factor in reducing team autonomy.

The authoritative nature of the French management model is reflected in the low level of autonomy enjoyed by French employees, as shown in Eurofound's EWCS surveys and DARES' Working Conditions surveys (see above).⁷⁹ All of this data prompts the Haut-Commissariat au Plan (French planning agency) to question whether Taylorism is returning in France.

The research-intervention programme carried out since 1974 by the Cnam and Iseor (Institut de Socio-Économie des Entreprises et des Organisations)⁸⁰ concludes that French management practices can be greatly improved and recommends that the rigid subordination principles in the workplace must be replaced by more horizontal organisational structures.

3.2.2 Recognition at work is insufficient

IFOP comparative data between France, Germany and Great Britain⁸¹ have found **a specific French issue with respect to work recognition**. 56% of French employees feel that their work is recognised for its fair value, compared to 72% in the UK and 75% in Germany. The authors link these differences not to remuneration grids that are no less advantageous in France, but to differences in the use of recognition levers such as the right to trial and error, encouraging individual initiatives or providing feedback to commend and advance employees.

⁷⁸ Philippe d'Iribarne, *La logique de l'honneur, gestion des entreprises et traditions nationales*, Editions du Seuil, 1989.

⁷⁹ Haut-commissariat au plan, *La grande transformation du travail: crise de la reconnaissance et du sens du travail*, October 2023.

⁸⁰ This is a management sciences research-intervention programme that has been in place for the last 50 years and that concerns over 2,000 companies, 1,600 of which are in France.

⁸¹ "Le nouveau rôle central des managers et l'enjeu de la reconnaissance au travail", IFOP Focus No. 233, September 2022. This is the "IFOP Standard", a survey conducted each year among a representative sample of 1,000 French employees, enriched since 2019 by surveys of representative samples of German and British employees. The last wave was completed in October 2021.

According to the DARES Working Conditions Survey, 30% of employees feel that they do not receive the respect and esteem that their work deserves (virtually unchanged from 2013, after a decrease in 2016.)⁸². The findings of the Institut Montaigne are no different on this point: work recognition is indeed a weak point in French management⁸³.

3.2.3 Manager training is too academic and with very little focus on cooperation, despite the progress made in this area

Many of the participants in the mission underlined the **importance of the training system to explain the power distances**. The “logic of honour” (see above) is often a qualifications issue⁸⁴.⁸⁵ These analyses are in line with the well-known findings in 1970 by sociologists from very different backgrounds such as Michel Crozier or Pierre Bourdieu on the French elite training model. The French education system shows poor comparative results in terms of acquiring socio-behavioural skills. It does not promote a collective sense and is characterised by a very strong climate of distrust. More than a third of French pupils consider that relationships with most of their teachers are not good, one of the highest levels of conflict in the world⁸⁶.

As part of its 2014-2017 objectives and performance contract (COP contract), ANACT developed a project called “Faire École” based in particular on interviews out between November 2015 and May 2016 with over 250 companies, researchers and training organisations and which revealed that a very small part of teaching time is given over to understanding the human aspects of organisations, and this is both engineering schools and business schools. Teaching in these schools focuses mainly on finance, marketing or logistics, even though some initiatives and experiments are now leading to some small shifts in course content.⁸⁷ On the basis of these findings, ANACT published a white paper aimed at convincing business and training stakeholders to adopt innovative approaches to learning that are centred more on cooperative management and that address the issue of quality of life at work.

In France, a minority of employees say they have career development perspectives in the company (49%), compared to 65% in Germany and 68% in the UK. In general, **internal promotion is seen as less developed than external recruitment efforts; it is also seen as less important by managers**. In addition, the French system leads to a lower share of women managers. They account for just 37% of managers, compared to a figure of 50% of all employees⁸⁸.

Nevertheless, while operational performance remains a priority, the expectations expressed towards managers are increasingly focused on supporting teams. The survey conducted by APEC in 2009 showed that 15 years ago, management expectations, as perceived by managers, were very largely focused on operational performance, clearly prioritising the ability to achieve the objectives and acquire the technical knowledge required for the job⁸⁹. The study carried out by APEC in 2019, across a purely French scope⁹⁰, based on interviews, qualitative focus groups and a quantitative survey of 1,450 executives in the private sector, showed that management’s expectations of managers are transforming and increasingly shifting towards working relationships (empowerment, quality of life at work, collaborative dynamics), under the effect of the new management theories and societal expectations, as well

⁸² All of these statistics come from the DARES Working Conditions survey: DARES, *35 ans d'évolutions des conditions de travail*, DARES website (travail-emploi.gouv.fr).

⁸³ Institut Montaigne, *Les Français au travail : dépasser les idées reçues*, February 2023.

⁸⁴ This logic is also well shared, sometimes even in the trade unions: thus, the new collective agreement in the metallurgical sector, signed in 2022, is disputed by the CGT in that it brings into question the link between the qualification level and the remuneration level: Edith Biechle and Alain Dervieux, *Dans la métallurgie, une machine à déclasser... jusqu'où ?* Contributions, Salaires, qualifications : si loin... si proches !

⁸⁵ Michel Crozier, *La société bloquée*, Editions du Seuil, 1970; Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *La Reproduction*, Le sens commun, 1970.

⁸⁶ Yann Algan, Elise Huillery and Corinne Prost, *Confiance, coopération et autonomie : pour une école du XXIème siècle*, Notes du Conseil d'Analyse Économique, No. 48, 2018/3.

⁸⁷ ANACT, *Apprendre à manager le travail – Livre blanc des initiatives en formation initiale et continue*, 2017.

⁸⁸ IFOP-Fondation Jean-Jaurès, *Le nouveau rôle central des managers et l'enjeu de la reconnaissance au travail*, by Romain Bendavid, September 2022.

⁸⁹ APEC, *Représentations et pratiques managériales en Europe et en Amérique du Nord : vers un modèle managérial unique ?* June 2009

⁹⁰ APEC, *Les nouveaux enjeux du management*, Note, December 2019



as the development of remote working, even though operational expectations remain the priority⁹¹. Expectations as regards team support have grown even more since the pandemic. Interviewed in 2022 and 2023 by APEC, executives perceived a clear growth in management practices oriented towards greater trust, autonomy, flexibility, horizontality, availability and attentiveness.

As such, managers feel they have to bear a higher workload due to the combination of production goal expectations and relational expectations, and identify several conflicting injunctions between the search for empowerment for their teams and control over their activities, between the desire for flexible and authoritative behaviours and between an aspiration for performance and a concern for well-being.

3.3 Is France's relative position the result of a perception bias?

One of the questions asked by several of the mission's interviewees concerns the possibility of analyses being distorted by a possible perception bias specific to France. Most studies are based on statements made and they may be affected by a less optimistic view of life and a more critical approach. In fact, the European survey on values places France 22nd out of 34 European countries ranked according to the level of satisfaction of their population, which is a mediocre position given the country's wealth level expressed in GDP per capita. Italy is in a similar position, while Germany and Sweden are much better positioned (10th and 12th respectively, Ireland is not ranked)⁹².

The mission considers that this risk exists, but that it is limited for three reasons.

Firstly, management indicators are most often based on surveys by Eurofound and the European Agency in Bilbao, which offer real methodological guarantees.

- The main findings result from the combined results of the two surveys conducted by Eurofound, one among employees (EWCS) and the other among HR service managers and employee representatives (ECS); the Bilbao Agency's ESENER study is based on questioning those who know best about health and safety in the establishment regardless of their role (human resources management or employee representatives);
- results are rectified and analysed by highly qualified statisticians using tried and tested methods;
- they use specific questions that are an objectivity factor⁹³.

Secondly, while Eurofound and EU-Osha surveys constitute the primary sources that can be used to analyse French management practices, they are not the only ones and they can be set against other sources (DARES, APEC, IFOP,

⁹¹ Only one in ten managers believes that skills development and the search for autonomy are prioritised in the performance review, well after the financial, production or product quality targets.

⁹² European values survey, *Atlas of European Values*, May 2022

⁹³ Here are some examples: "Would you say that for you arranging to take an hour or two off during your usual working hours to take care of personal or family matters is [very easy, fairly easy, fairly difficult, very difficult, don't know, refused]
Can you tell me if your job involves [never, rarely, sometimes, often, always, don't know, refused]: working at very high speed?
Working to tight deadlines? Monotonous tasks? Learning new things?

Are you able to choose [never, rarely, sometimes, often, always, don't know, refused]: your order of tasks? your methods of work?
your speed or rate of work?

To what extent does (your supervisor or manager/your customers or suppliers/a computerised system) influence what you do in your work? [To a large extent, to some extent, not much, not at all, this doesn't apply to my work situation, don't know, refused]

Do you work in a group or team that has common tasks and can plan their work? [Yes, no, don't know, refused]

Please tell me how often the following applies to your work situation? [never, rarely, sometimes, often, always, don't know, refused, not applicable]: Your colleagues or peers help and support you; your manager helps and supports you; you are consulted before objectives are set for your work; you are involved in improving the work organisation or work processes of your department or organisation; your job gives you a feeling of work well done; you can influence decisions that are important for your work"



Institut Montaigne, Cnam-Iseor). Yet the findings of almost all the methods used to compare European countries tend to concur apart from certain nuances that may be observed⁹⁴. The analyses are also corroborated by the interviews conducted by the mission.

Finally, the dissatisfaction of French employees is probably one of the manifestations of the difficulties experienced by managers themselves. Indeed, among the explanations given for the poor results obtained for France, the question of verticality, i.e. the low level of cooperation in the relationship, comes up frequently. This verticality reflects a more authoritative approach to hierarchical relations than in other European countries, which include employment relations, among other social situations. The comparative elements provided by the European Values Survey show that the French are among the Europeans who attach the most importance to work⁹⁵. When asked about their feeling of controlling the parameters of their lives, the French ranked 27th out of 34 European countries in the European Values Survey. The Swedes came in 4th, the Germans 11th and the Italians 18th. As Yann Algan, Elise Huillery and Corinne Prost of the CAE (Conseil d'Analyse Economique) wrote, "*the social-behavioural skills gap among young French people continues through to adulthood. According to the World Values survey on changing values around the world, French adults are characterised by greater distrust, less optimism, the feeling that what happens to them depends little on their actions (...) and, finally, by values that are more focused on security than innovation.*"⁹⁶

⁹⁴ These nuances are detailed in the appendix.

⁹⁵ European values survey, *Atlas of European Values*, May 2022

⁹⁶ Yann Algan, Elise Huillery and Corinne Prost, *Confiance, coopération et autonomie : pour une école du XXIème siècle*, Notes du Conseil d'Analyse Économique, No. 48, 2018/3. See also Yann Algan and Pierre Cahuc, *La société de défiance: comment le modèle social français se détruit*, Cepremap, 2007.



4 France is paradoxically the country with the most comprehensive arsenal of public measures in place

Although France's management results appear poor, it is not through lack of public measures supposed to influence these practices. Regulation is more than ever the preferred lever by which the French public authorities intervene. A comparison with Germany, Ireland, Italy and Sweden shows a better prioritisation of topics and a better-established use of social dialogue instruments.

4.1 Public policies influence management more than they shape it

4.1.1 Management faces the same challenges in all the countries studied

Labour shortages were cited by most of the participants as being a challenge for management. While the phenomenon of the "great resignation" is not perceptible everywhere, companies across all sectors stress how concerned they are about retaining employees and making the company attractive and the essential role played by the leadership method in this.⁹⁷ These questions lead to reflections on reforming the traditionally authoritative management methods as applied for example in the hospitality-catering sector. This competition for talent is widespread, and does not differentiate between the private and public sectors. In Sweden and Ireland, there is competition between large public and private organisations to recruit qualified staff⁹⁸.

In the five countries studied, most of the persons interviewed by the mission cited the Covid-19 epidemic as a major milestone in managerial relations. Some viewed it as a decisive turning point, others as a factor accelerating pre-existing trends. The development of hybrid working, in particular, has given rise to new legislative provisions in Italy for example (development of "agile" working) or Ireland (law on the individual right to request remote working). Companies have adapted, facing a persistent demand for more remote working after the pandemic. Almost none of the French human resources managers interviewed by the mission said they were reflecting on such issues as putting in place a working week "compressed" into 4 days or reducing working time.

A significant proportion of the participants in the mission mentioned the challenge of integrating the younger generations (described as "Generation Z") into their work teams. This generation has been described as being more individualistic, more attentive to respecting diversity, aspiring to a better work-life balance and a job that is more meaningful. More and more companies are developing employee volunteering programmes, which involve making the paid working time of their qualified employees available to association structures.

On the other hand, **the major transitions do not weigh in an equivalent manner on managerial policies.** The climate transition and artificial intelligence are ubiquitous in the HR strategies of governments, social partners and businesses in Germany and Sweden. This is much less the case in Italy and Ireland.

In Sweden, support for the ecological and demographic "twin transitions" is very much on the agenda of social partners. Two national agreements on career transitions were adopted in 2022 July to facilitate vocational retraining and upskilling induced by the macroeconomic challenges arising out of an ageing population and the climate crisis. For their part, the public authorities have adopted legislative provisions that provide public funding to finance these training periods on a large scale. SACO describes⁹⁹ management conditions as absolutely key to a successful green transition, involving the reindustrialisation of the north of the country. In order to attract executives, Northvolt

⁹⁷ See examples from the Accor Group or the Hantverket restaurant in Stockholm in the appendix.

⁹⁸ Thus, *the Arbetsförmedlingen* (Swedish labour market intermediation agency, equivalent to France Travail in France) is firmly positioned in this perspective when it makes great efforts in terms of gender equality.

⁹⁹ SACO is Sweden's leading white-collar trade union confederation and the country's third largest employee organisation. It has one million members and 21 member trade unions. It is aimed at higher education graduates, whether they have a salaried job or are self-employed.



considers remote working and childcare conditions as being essential for the company's development. Northvolt itself has been to the forefront in the national collective bargaining agreement negotiations¹⁰⁰.

Interviewees said Swedish and German trade unions were willing to support these major transitions and this is confirmed by the unions themselves. They believe it is legitimate that businesses transform to adjust to the changing landscape, and even call for such transformations when they believe that corporate leadership teams are not driving these changes fast enough.

¹⁰⁰ Northvolt was launched in 2016 with the ambition of building green batteries to support Europe's energy transition. After raising the capital, the company set up several factories in Sweden, Norway, Poland, Germany and Canada. It has close partnerships with the leading Swedish vehicle manufacturers (Volvo, Scania) and currently has 5,500 employees. The largest gigafactory is located in Skellefteå in northern Sweden.



Box: Comparative experiences of the leaders of 5 Dublin-based companies

The information below is gleaned from informal discussions with the executives of five Dublin-based companies: Veolia, BNP Paribas, Axa and the recruitment firms Cpl and Approach People Recruitment.

All the companies encountered consider hiring and retaining employees to be a major strategic issue. They deploy numerous and diverse programmes for this purpose: training, mentoring, coaching, skills sponsorship programmes (volunteering days), partnerships with sports clubs, etc. Employees on maternity or parental leave may often be offered the possibility of keeping connected by attending their team meetings remotely. Some HR managers say they adopt a “life cycle” approach and according to a career map, in order to retain their employees of all ages and manage their long-term development by being transparent with regards to promotion criteria. The filling of the gender pay gap is clearly linked to this issue of attractiveness, and is the subject of resolute policies.

For all business leaders met, Covid-19 marked a decisive turning point in working relations, both through the spread of remote working (the need for which is growing with the shortage of housing in the Dublin area) and by the confirmation of aspirations that were underlying or implicit until then, of a better work-life balance and an affirmed search for meaning. In this context, HR strategies are broadly decentralised to the national units and departments and are reviewed regularly. Leadership training has developed, in particular for leaders of teams working in hybrid formats. In one company, a fast track leader programme, open to all, made it possible to apply for a position at a higher level after just 3 years compared to the usual 5-year period. It aimed to retain managers who aspired to move rapidly up within the company.

At team level, feedback on managerial relationships is frequent (in the form of 360° reviews). The approach is resolutely individual between the manager and their employees, and must be based on trust and transparency. “Inspiring” leadership is sought. Staff representative bodies and trade union delegates play a secondary role if any.

The informal nature of management is seen as non-negotiable in Ireland, with French companies operating in Dublin sometimes having to tone down their more hierarchical habits: a personal connection with employees is essential. Similarly, the disposable employee model (the “hire and fire” model), which is sometimes practised by certain companies, in particular American ones, is apparently less and less in vogue say recruiters as the employer brand takes on increasing importance and labour shortages demand that great attention be paid to this aspect.

On the other hand, the introduction of a working week of (or in) four days is not a hot topic and the Dublin organisations consulted by the mission were not envisaging it at this stage. However, companies deal in different ways with the demands from employees who are not eligible for teleworking due to the nature of their jobs: some HRDs believe that education is essential, explaining that not all jobs are suitable for remote working, while others have implemented workaround strategies, such as the informal principle of avoiding scheduling any meeting on Friday afternoons, in order to give many employees the opportunity to go home early. One company offers lunch to all employees present and this both encourages its employees eligible for teleworking to go back to the office and partially compensates those not having access to remote working opportunities.

4.1.2 There is no public policy on management per se, but rather policies that indirectly influence management

In the five countries studied, management practices are first and foremost the organisational choices of the companies in question and are not the subject of a specific public policy. While the representatives of the public authorities encountered by the mission consider that the subject is of real and growing importance, and consider that management practices have a direct impact on the results of the social policies they conduct, they consider that at this stage, management is not the subject of dedicated measures, and generally do not express the desire to make it a public policy as such.

Although they are strongly marked by history and culture, management practices, and more generally social relations, are not intangible. Of course, cultural determinants matter, and the work by Geert Hofstede or Philippe d'Iribarne shows that management practices are rooted in terrain marked by history and collective representations. However, the Swedish model, which is often a source of inspiration for other European countries, was not a foregone conclusion. After a period of violent social unrest Sweden succeeded in transforming extremely degraded social relations into a reference in terms of consensus and co-constructing solutions to address economic and social



challenges through the Adalen compromise in 1931 and this is now the foundation on which this model is built¹⁰¹. Similarly, German co-determination (*Mitbestimmung*) arose out of reforms driven by social stakeholders after the Second World War.

These policies use a range of instruments which provide guidance for companies. The position of the State and, more broadly, of the public authorities varies from one European country to another.

Standards, regardless of their origin, can play a role in influencing management practices:

- These may be legislative or regulatory standards;
- there may also be collective agreements binding on the company's stakeholders;
- finally, there may be *soft law*¹⁰² instruments which companies may choose to apply or not.

Public or social policies may also take the form of financial incentives, in the form of selective aid paid to companies that adopt management practices that the public authorities are promoting, or technical support in implementing managerial innovations.

But many of the policies aimed at influencing management practices seek in fact to create an environment favourable to more participatory or innovative leadership: a statutory environment conducive to social dialogue, training and career paths for managers, dissemination of best practices, exemplarity of the public sphere.

4.2 In France, regulations are one of the principal instruments used to act on management in the guise of social policies

The French paradox is that of the coexistence of a vast public arsenal established to influence management practices, albeit indirectly, and the reality of very ineffective working relationships.

4.2.1 Two cross-functional tools specifically target management practices: the right of employees to express themselves directly and the obligations of companies in terms of quality of life and working conditions (QLWC)

Under French law, the work organisation comes under the hierarchical authority of the employer. This is key aspect of labour law¹⁰³. Consequently, it is up to company management to determine management practices. However, the law imposes a number of rules, intended to define or orient leadership.

Most of these rules concern aspects of the managerial relationship, taken in a specific way (employment of disabled workers, gender equality, prevention of occupational risks, etc.). However, **two elements in the legislation are concerned with management practices from a cross-company perspective and are intended to influence management practices as such:**

- Since 1982, the Auroux laws have incorporated **the right of expression of employees** into the Labour Code (Articles L.2281-1 et seq.). The text states that "*employees benefit from a right to direct and collective expression on the content, conditions of performance and organisation of their work*", that this right "*is intended to define the actions to be implemented to improve their working conditions, the organisation of the*

¹⁰¹ This compromise is based on a generous wide-ranging social protection system, strong unions and organised employers, an active family assistance policy and flexible labour law essentially based on collective agreements with the law having a subsidiary function in this regard.

¹⁰² These types of standards can also be adapted: for example, in France, the agreement on occupational health and safety in the metallurgical sector in 2022 comes within the framework permitted by the orders that reformed labour law in 2017, and the agreement essentially takes the content of the ISO 45001 standards and adapts it to a negotiated framework.

¹⁰³ And a major difference with German and Swedish law, which organise a sharing of responsibilities with employee representative bodies regarding the work organisation.



activity and the quality of production in the work unit to which they belong and in the company" and that it is carried out "on the work premises and during working time". The Code states that this right implies access to the company's IT resources, and that it cannot give rise to any sanctions by the employer. The ordinances of 22 September 2017 ranked the right of expression among the subjects covered by the mandatory periodic negotiation in companies, relating to professional equality and quality of life at work.

- Secondly, the national interprofessional agreement (ANI) of 19 June 2013 on a policy to improve quality of work life (QWL) and professional equality sought to create a second transversal tool, largely focused on management practices. The agreement opens with the following words: "Quality of life at work is first and foremost about the work, working conditions and whether or not they offer workers the possibility of "doing a good job" in a healthy atmosphere, within the framework of the organisation." This requires promoting collective bargaining in branches and companies to foster better QWL in collective working situations. The 2013 ANI agreement specifically addresses management in Article 16, and states that it is necessary to specify its role and means¹⁰⁴. In addition, 20 years after creating the right of expression, the ANI is striving to set out how it could be implemented¹⁰⁵. QWL becomes QLWC (quality of life and working conditions) with the ANI agreement of 9 December 2020 on reinforced prevention and a renewed offer in terms of occupational health and working conditions. The QLWC renews the approach by refocusing the expectations of the branch or company collective agreements on the actual content of the work (performance conditions, workload, meaning, involvement of employees, etc.), and not on peripheral elements sometimes put forward in collective agreements (gyms, social events, office decoration, etc.). The ANI agreement reaffirms the decisive role of management practices in the prevention of occupational risks and well-being at work¹⁰⁶. The concept of QLWC was integrated into positive law by the Act of 2 August 2021 to strengthen occupational health risk prevention. In accordance with Article L.2242-1 of the Labour Code, the QLWC is included among the mandatory topics that must be the subject of periodic negotiation at the company level¹⁰⁷.

No figures are available to certify its effective implementation, but all those interviewed by the mission on this point (administration, social partners, researchers) agreed that **the right of expression is very rarely exercised**. Several causes are cited:

- Firstly, the relative aversion of social partners to this practice perceived as optional, and introduced into positive law more than 40 years ago was mentioned. This aversion itself stems from several possible factors: reluctance due to the lack of intermediation by elected staff representatives and trade union representatives; limited interest in a work-focused approach when job creation was the main concern at a time of high unemployment, etc.
- A more technical cause is the fact that while the system indeed established a right to speak up, there was not a real ability to intervene in the work:¹⁰⁸ the right of expression is not sufficient; it would only be the first

¹⁰⁴ Article 16 - Supporting senior management teams and managers: "The role of managers, like that of senior management, is paramount in any approach aimed at improving the quality of life at work. Managers organise the activities carried out on a daily basis, they deal with the difficulties encountered by employees and play an essential role in implementing the company's policy. To this end, the employer must specify the role of managers and the means required and made available to enable them to exercise this role. Greater awareness and adequate training of managers in terms of team management and managerial behaviour are likely to improve the quality of life at work. The aim is to help these managers better understand the difficulties by taking into account the real conditions in which the work is performed, to promote discussions at work, i.e. to better identify the conditions for greater cooperation within their teams."

¹⁰⁵ The ANI states that this right is exercised within "working groups of employees in a homogeneous production or service performance entity", and specifies that these groups can be organised with a professional lead or facilitator, who leads and presents the group's work. The results must be brought to the attention of line management and staff representative bodies.

¹⁰⁶ Article 2-1: "In this context, the role of managers is central and management practices are key to achieving the improvements expected in terms of risk prevention and quality of work life."

¹⁰⁷ At least once every four years, companies with one or more trade unions must enter into "negotiations on professional gender equality, including measures aimed at eliminating pay gaps, and quality of life and working conditions". At the level of the branch, there is no mandatory negotiation specifically relating to QLWC, but a mandatory periodic negotiation relating, among other aspects, to working conditions.

¹⁰⁸ Michel Saily, Aslaug Johansen, Per Tengblad and Maarten Klaveren, *Dialogues social et professionnel : comment les articuler ?* Les docs de La Fabrique de l'Industrie, Paris, Presses des Mines, 2022



step, without any real added value, in a dialogue that must be built to have a real impact on the content of the work.

With regard to the QWL, then QLWC, branch and company agreements implement the requirements of the concept introduced by the 2013 ANI agreement, but there are still very few of them: Five sectoral agreements were signed in 2022 (including four in the insurance sector and one in the metallurgical sector), while 941 company agreements (out of a total of 114,000 in 2022) were dedicated to the wider issue of working conditions¹⁰⁹. No qualitative elements are available at this stage, and **it is still too early to judge the reality of the application of the principles from the 2020-2021 reform transforming QWL into QLWC.**

4.2.2 Beyond these cross-functional instruments, regulations are the essential instrument and social policy lever used to influence management practices in France

While labour law standards, with rare exceptions (see above), do not cover transversal management practices, many of them may have an impact on these practices in one way or another. The following developments are intended to illustrate this, without however being exhaustive.

The role of legislation is predominant in French labour law, both in terms of principles and at a technical level, and therefore has an influence on the entire spectrum of the work relationship: hiring, performance and modification of the employment contract, termination of the employment relationship.

The State uses, through laws and regulations, the full range of tools at its disposal to ensure that companies' human resources (HR) policies address the social, societal and environmental issues that the State deems to be priorities. These actions have an impact on management practices:

- Binding tools, in terms of obligations or prohibitions, may be addressed directly to the employer or only set down procedures. Thus, the obligations to negotiate in companies, and even more so the obligations, for companies, to sign collective agreements or, failing that, to establish an action plan (practice generally referred to by the term “administered negotiation”) are a French particularity that has developed since the end of the 2000's to force companies to address new issues through social dialogue deemed to be priorities by the legislator: employment of seniors, gender equality in the workplace, the arduous nature of work.
- These obligations frequently come with sanctions in case of failure to comply. Thus, criminal sanctions tend to become more and more commonplace (with respect to discrimination, occupational health, concealed labour, etc.) and supplement the civil sanctions handed down by the courts. Administrative financial penalties are also frequently used. Payment into the common funds for the employment of disabled persons is required if the threshold of 6% of disabled workers in the company is not reached. Administered negotiating obligations are generally accompanied by the threat of financial penalties of up to 1% of the payroll.
- Other more incentive tools are used by the State, such as subsidies (hiring bonuses for disabled workers, young people, seniors or work-study trainees - apprentices and holders of professional training contracts), communicating or creating conditions that facilitate appeals to the courts (class actions, reversal or easing of the burden of proof, etc.).
- While soft law, or “flexible law”, is developing in the field of management practices, the French public authorities remain cautious. The French public authorities and social partners invested heavily in preparing the ISO 45001 standard on occupational health and safety management systems in 2017-2018 due to the misgivings they had about the introduction of this standard. In France, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the subject of work monitored by the CESE (Economic, Social and Environmental Council), as well as France Stratégie. The Ordinance of 19 July 2017 transposes a Community Directive of 2014 on CSR and creates information obligations on social and environmental risks and human rights (risk prevention by means of reasonable procedures). The Act of 22 May 2019 extended the scope of corporate social responsibility by

¹⁰⁹ Direction Générale du Travail, *La négociation Collective en 2022*, Bilan et Rapports, 2023 Edition



defining a management obligation “*in the social interest, taking into account social and environmental issues*” on the one hand, and creating the possibility for companies to determine their “*reason for being*”, controlled by a dedicated internal body, on the other. In addition to these voluntary implementation actions are the obligations under Community law which provide for social and environmental reporting formalities for the largest companies. These elements are taken into account, in particular, by the rating agencies when these companies call on the public to invest in their stock.

These obligations were renewed by the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) of 14 December 2022.

The ISO¹¹⁰ 26000 standard providing Guidance on Social Responsibility (2010), and which contains many references to the HR aspect and to management in particular, accords human resources management a prominent role in the social responsibility of an organisation. It was developed using a participatory approach that was unprecedented for an ISO standard¹¹¹. In order to consolidate their approach in an area that was both poorly known and socially sensitive, ISO bodies in principle relied on existing international labour standards as well as those on human rights. For these topics, which had never been included in its work programme, ISO signed memoranda of understanding with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the UN Global Compact Office (UNGCO) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Through this approach, ISO indirectly creates a “bridge” between companies and standards frameworks that are new for these enterprises: the “baseline” standards produced by international organisations.

Public policies most often use a range of tools in their pursuit of a social goal that are more or less restrictive. However, **adding new mechanisms is not in itself a guarantee of effective action**. Article 13 of the 2013 ANI agreement on QLW already noted the following: “*The ever-increasing number of regulations, the compartmentalisation of themes, the obligation to negotiate in conditions and at times that are not consistent with the dynamics of social dialogue (time and content) in branches and companies, did not help negotiators take full ownership of these issues*. The systemic approach to quality of life at work and professional equality attempts to solve this difficulty by setting aside the segmented approaches that have not yet produced the desired results, in order to at once improve quality of life at work, advance professional equality and reconcile times.”

Yet the large volume of French regulations is paradoxical according to the human resources departments of international groups. On several occasions the mission was told that while it was certainly a restrictive factor for management, it was also a lever enabling French HRDs of international companies to free themselves from procedures imposed by head office, procedures they believed generated even more severe constraints. Requirements related to the professional equality index, or social dialogue (mandatory periodic negotiations, administered negotiation) may constitute levers of empowerment described as useful by the managers of these companies in each country. They can also spread, with several managers reporting a levelling up of the Group's other sites based on French standards, particularly when the Group's image had to be homogeneous.

4.2.3 There are fewer legal and regulatory instruments in the other countries studied and these target priority issues that affect management

The few general principles governing managerial relations with a high number of sectoral laws is a French particularity that is not found in countries with a strong tradition of social dialogue (Sweden, Germany and to a lesser extent Italy) or in a liberal country such as Ireland. These other countries focus any regulatory interventions on a few clearly-established priorities, some examples of which are given below.

- **In Sweden, the 2015:4 provision has provided a lever for managing psychosocial risks in companies in the context of an increasing amount of sick leave being taken**

¹¹⁰ International Organization for Standardization.

¹¹¹ Trade unions have been involved in the technical committee for the development of the standard, which is in itself an innovation among ISO processes.



The Swedish social model is primarily based on collective bargaining, and there is a broad consensus on this. There are few laws regarding occupational health and safety, and they outline general principles in a relatively succinct manner¹¹².

However, psychosocial issues have long posed difficulties for social stakeholders. Employers, in particular, felt their preventive actions were having no effect. The law did not specify the actions to be implemented, creating legal uncertainty as to the scope of their responsibility. However, starting in the early 2010s, it became increasingly urgent to address these issues given the sharp increase in the amount of sick leave. This prompted the Swedish Working Environment Authority (*Arbetsmiljöverket*) to use its own regulatory powers to impose the 2015:4 provision¹¹³ relating to the organisational and social working environment.

The AFS 2015:4 provision is based on the need to take into account the importance of organisational and social factors in occupational risks (ability to express difficulties and ask for help, internal climate, knowledge of risks, etc.). Employers, both public and private, are required to adopt a systemic work environment management system: this is first and foremost a procedural obligation to establish a document setting out the company's policy on the work environment, stating the objectives to be achieved, but also an obligation to ensure the employer has the necessary skills in this area, and an obligation to set up a reporting and correction monitoring system that is regularly reviewed.

The provision also involves fundamental obligations: employers must prevent excessive workloads, ensure that managers and employees have the knowledge required to prevent and correct any such workloads that could be prejudicial to staff health (by matching resources with work requirements). They must also provide training for employee representatives concerned with occupational health and safety. As ambiguities are a stress factor at work, employers must ensure that employees know the content of their tasks and the results expected, the priorities assigned to them among those tasks, and know who to turn to if they experience difficulties. They must also explain the room for autonomy left to employees in performing their duties.

In addition, the AFS 2015:4 provision sets down principles for preventing and sanctioning aggressive or harassing behaviour ("victimisation"): employers are required to clearly indicate that these behaviours will not be tolerated and put in place procedures to handle these cases (information, treatment and responses provided to persons who are victims of aggressive or harassing behaviour).

- **In Italy and Ireland, the law has promoted individual remote working formulas to facilitate work-life balance**
 - **In Italy, "smart working"**

The search for a work-life balance is a long-standing concern in Italy and which became even more pressing during the Covid-19 crisis. Italy has developed a broader legal framework to achieve this balance while also leaving considerable room for manoeuvre for companies to achieve this goal. The essential legislation in recent years came in the form of the Act No. 196 of 24 June 1997 "Standards for the promotion of employment", known as the "*Treu Act*", which has brought significant improvements to the work-life balance.

The law also offers the possibility of entering into a "smart working" agreement between an employee and their employer, for a fixed or indefinite period. This is an **individual agreement, covering a work organisation without time or space constraints, structured by cycles and goals**, aimed at achieving a balance between work and private time while promoting worker productivity.

¹¹² Swedish Work Environment Act (1977:1160), Swedish Working Hours Act (1982:673).

¹¹³ The *Arbetsmiljöverket* is an independent public authority, placed between the Swedish government and the Parliament. Its principle of action is: "No work should lead to sickness, injury or death". It employs 680 agents spread across all 5 regions. Its remit takes in national employee and employer representatives. The Authority has the function of inspecting work in public and private companies including military and teaching organizations. It also has the task of adopting regulations intended to be applied by all organisations, by virtue of the general law on the working environment. Provision AFS 2015:4, adopted in this context, therefore has regulatory scope.



Italian law and practice make a clear distinction between this "agile work" which allows an employee to work wherever and whenever they want (e.g. a Sunday in the park while watching over the children) and **"remote working" which is strictly governed in terms not only of the time spent**, i.e. the same number of hours as in the office, but also the fact that the place of work is the home and, finally, the fact that this home is equipped with a workstation provided and configured by the employer (PC, printer, etc.).

While employee unions promote remote working, they are more reticent about smart working, which is likely to lead to a deregulation of effective working hours. Indeed, the biggest trade union confederation in Italy, the CGIL¹¹⁴, told the mission that it was concerned about this method of organisation based on individual agreements and recommends that collective agreements systematically accompany these so as to avoid abuse.

This form of remote working has grown with numerous company agreements being signed in recent years. Thus, in October 2021 two "agile working agreements" were adopted for the Renault Italia group, allowing two days per week for all employees according to this organisational method. The agreements include common mandatory connection times and a right to disconnect between 8pm and 8am the next day. Group management wanted to send its employees a message of empowerment, autonomy and trust, in a sector of activity marked by a very directive industrial tradition. A survey was conducted among the group's employees several months after the agreements came into force, and more than 70% of respondents said they were satisfied. These changes were successfully carried out since they were driven by Renault headquarters, in the new context resulting from the health crisis.

- **In Ireland, the transposition of the 2019 directive established the individual's "right to request remote working".**

Social law in Ireland has advanced over the past three years under the influence of EU law and the pandemic. The directive of 12 July 2019 on work-life¹¹⁵ balance came into force on 2 August 2022. It set the legal basis for parents and carers (paternity leave, paid parental leave, carer's leave and flexible working arrangements), which has been adapted in Ireland in particular by the Act No. 8 of 2023 entitled the *Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act*.

The Act No. 8 of 2023 sets out new rights for workers to improve work/life balance: statutory but unpaid leave for carers, paid leave of up to 5 days in the event of domestic violence as well as the right to request a work organisation adjustment for family reasons that the employer must process within 4 weeks, stating in writing the reasons for any refusal.

In addition, the law grants employees who have been with the company for more than six months the right to request remote working. The request must be made in writing, specifying the organisational arrangements proposed by the employee, as well as their reasons¹¹⁶, and must be sent at least 8 weeks before the desired start date. **The employer is obliged to examine the request with regard to the needs of the employee and the company and provide a written response within 4 weeks** (the period may be extended in the event of difficulties in processing the request). In the event of an agreement, the employer's decision must be accompanied by an individual agreement setting out the rules applicable to the employee. In the event of disagreement, the employer must state the reasons in writing for this refusal. The employee who made a request for remote working must not be penalised. Disputes can be referred to the labour courts.

- **In Germany, the digital revolution is gradually being incorporated into the rules of social dialogue in companies in order to provide markers for management.**

¹¹⁴ Italian General Labour Confederation (*Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro*).

¹¹⁵ Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU.

¹¹⁶ These could be the desire to reduce their commute times and carbon footprint, optimise quality of life or family or medical circumstances.



The Act of 18 June 2021 on the modernisation of works¹¹⁷ councils aimed to reinforce the powers and increase the number of works councils (*Betriebsräte*), but also to **integrate some of the consequences of the development of digital and artificial intelligence (AI) into the workings of these councils**. It thus made the possibility of holding works council meetings remotely a permanent fixture while prohibiting the recording of these meetings. It has also created a co-determination right for works councils with respect to the organisation of remote working and strengthened the Councils' rights to be informed and consulted regarding the use of AI in the work organisation, for which the works council can now demand a specific external expert appraisal.

A **bill is also being discussed to take into account the effects of AI on personal data management**. The Federal Ministry of Social Affairs has observed that teleworking, on the one hand, and the incorporation of artificial intelligence tools into work processes on the other, enable large volumes of data on employees to be collected (number of clicks and keystrokes, time spent in front of the screen, emotions expressed and collected by means of facial recognition tools). This is a potential source of a wide-ranging algorithm-based management, or, simply stated, control of employees that is incompatible with their rights and freedoms and that could generate psychosocial risks. The law in preparation aims to limit the use of these data for employee management purposes by totally prohibiting the measuring of employee activity using digital sensors (cameras, keyboard, mice, etc.).

4.3 The role of social dialogue differs greatly from one country to another

4.3.1 Social dialogue fuels management practices in Germany, Sweden and to a lesser extent Italy

- **Co-determination influences management in Sweden and Germany.**

All those interviewed by the mission in **Sweden** expressed their desire to maintain **a management model based on a strong trade union presence**. This system is perceived as delivering orderly social relations and virtuous management methods, making it possible to limit labour regulations to that which is strictly necessary. It implies a particularly high trade union membership rate and a prominent place for collective agreements, which are only of benefit to employees who are trade union members. Trade union membership and collective agreement coverage levels are very high: around 70% of employees belong to a trade union, while 90% are covered by a collective agreement.

In Germany, employee and employer organizations have powers and responsibilities at national level ("decision-making triad") and at branch level ("tariff autonomy and working conditions"). They are therefore not theoretically present within companies, even if there are cases of company-based collective agreements (RWE, Lufthansa, etc.). At the company level, above a 5-employee threshold, it is **the works council ("*Betriebsrat*") elected by the employees that is competent to defend their interests¹¹⁸**.

The works councils have extensive powers. They are responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable statutory and conventional provisions as well as **co-defining, with the employer, the rules on work organisation**: discipline, rest periods, working times and schedules, but also processes and procedures. The scope of this co-definition system, in which issues are agreed between employers and employee representatives, also extends to the occupational health and safety policy. The *Betriebsräte* is also consulted on staff hiring (except for top management) and has the right to veto certain individual decisions. The table below summarises the powers of works councils in each area: joint co-definition, consultation, information.

¹¹⁷ *Betriebsrätemodernisierungsgesetz*.

¹¹⁸ Of course, many representatives on the works councils are also trade union members, but they are not elected as trade union representatives.



Powers of the *Betriebsräte*

Co-definition	Consultation	Information
Working hours, overtime, schedules	Individual measures	Business planning on new buildings
Job Categories, performance bonuses	Hiring	New work processes or workplaces
Staff training and development	Dismissals	
Occupational health and safety	Activity transfers	
Data protection	Restructuring	
Procedures, processes, workplace organisation	Workplace innovations	
	Projected workforce management	

Source : German Ministry of Social Affairs

Co-determination (*Mitbestimmung*) is also embodied in the Supervisory Boards (*Aufsichtsräte*). Supervisory Boards are mandatory in companies with more than 500 employees and employee representatives have a strong presence:

- For companies with a workforce of between 500 and 2,000 employees, the supervisory board must comprise one third of staff representatives (the so-called one-third participation Act of 1952). This concerns 1,500 companies in Germany;
- for companies with more than 2,000 employees, or 1,000 employees in the coal and steel sector, the supervisory board comprises an equal number of employee and shareholder representatives, in addition to the seats reserved for company management or “neutral” members (Coal and Steel Act 1951; Co-determination Act 1976). This system concerns around 700 companies.

The remit of the supervisory boards includes overseeing the company's business strategy, reviewing the annual accounts, senior management appointments, major strategic decisions such as borrowings, large-scale investments, restructuring operations, procurement and site transfers.

● **In Italy, social dialogue takes place mainly at the branch level.**

Created after the Second World War, the three main Italian workers’ unions, the CGIL (Italian General Labour Confederation), the CISL (Italian Confederation of Free Unions) and the UIL (Italian Labour Union), now have a total membership of 11.7 million. Thus, the rate of trade union membership in Italy is around 33% (compared to 9% in France), but is on the decline. Collective bargaining reflects the constitutional principle of trade union freedom. An agreement in July 1993 established the two-tier system:

- The first tier consists of sector and/or branch agreements (*Contratti Collettivi Nazionali del Lavoro - CCNL*) that are entered into between the most representative trade unions and employer organizations;
- the second tier consists of decentralised company- or territory-specific agreements, where negotiations take place directly between employers and trade union shop stewards at the company level.

In 2022, only 4% of companies said they had entered into a works agreement. Conversely, **87% of companies are covered by sector or branch collective agreements.**

4.3.2 In Ireland, the proximity between managers and employees seems to compensate for the lack of employee representation

Ireland operates a strictly voluntary collective bargaining system, there is no obligation to be covered by a collective agreement and there are no administrative procedures for extending agreements. Thus, the percentage of employees covered by collective agreements is low (35%). The level of membership of trade unions is much better than in France (25%), but is declining. **There is no right to collective representation, and social partners¹¹⁹ are reluctant to go in this direction** in the context of the current debates around the transposition of the 2022 EU Directive on minimum wages. It is therefore within companies that collective representation and bargaining is put in place or not.

In Ireland, working relations between individuals far outweigh collective relations. Individual recognition of worker rights is paramount, whether it be rights linked to the work organisation ("right to request remote working", see above) or methods to combat discrimination (see the example below in the digital sector). **In this context, it is possible that management plays a role in being attentive to and relaying the concerns of employees, roles that are played by employee representatives in other countries whether they be elected or appointed by the trade unions.** The very close proximity between managers and their employees revealed by international studies (see above), could be an indicator of this. In the context of rapid development of remote working, the manager is playing an increasingly central role.¹²⁰ He is becoming the main link between the company and the employee.

In the digital sector, a direct and non-intermediated relationship between employers and employees

The mission was able to meet representatives of several companies in the digital sector, based in Ireland and Sweden, who had in common that they greatly favoured the direct relationship between employer and employees.

This concern translates into an omnipresent "feedback culture" in one American digital multinational based in Dublin. Forums, both physical and virtual, are highly developed, and enable any employee to directly engage with managers, even at the highest level, and without any prior filtering. Twice a year, managers are assessed by their teams. Many techniques are implemented to put in place people-centric leadership, without this being mandatory or systematic: meetings where managers simply listen to their employees and do not speak, 15-minute sessions of informal exchanges without a specific agenda, etc. Managerial innovation is essential, and highly valued by the company, which ensures that self-censorship is avoided by strictly prohibiting sanctions that resulting from exercising this freedom of speech. The Human Resources Department can be contacted, even anonymously, if an employee has a complaint to make about the behaviour of a manager, and more broadly any distressing situation.

Individual rights are central in particular in the fight against discrimination. The systems for listening to employees and managing any difficulties are individualised.

An SME in the digital sector based in Stockholm organises employee participation without any intermediation through direct employee consultation mechanisms (quarterly 40-question surveys, including feedback on the organisation, processes, etc.; weekly feedback on employee perception based on an open question) and not through staff representative bodies. The company does not adhere to the collective bargaining agreement, but states that it respects 95% of the content of the agreement. Employees can therefore choose to opt out of the pension scheme and instead get the equivalent in direct wages.

¹¹⁹ The mission met with representatives of the main employers' organisation (Irish business and employers confederation -IBEC) and the main employee organisation (Irish congress of trade unions -ITUC). It also met with the chairman of the organisation representing small and medium-sized enterprises (Irish small and medium-sized enterprises -ISME-).

¹²⁰ IBEC, The changing role and demands of the manager in today's workplace, 5 May 2023: "Gartner's Nine Future of Work Trends 2022 reports that 60% of hybrid workers say their line manager is their most immediate connection to the company culture".



4.3.3 In France, social dialogue has a more limited impact on management

Interprofessional or sectoral collective agreements may include structuring dimensions for management practices. **Certain conventional texts contain binding provisions**, which therefore have a direct impact on management in the same way as legislative provisions or regulations. This is the case for example with the collective agreement in the metallurgy industry of 7 February 2022, as well as the branch agreement signed the same day and specifically relating to health, safety, quality of life at work and working conditions. In this case the branch sets down the principles for the prevention of occupational risks based on the reality of the jobs in the industry.

Social dialogue is increasingly occurring outside any legally binding framework with guidelines being established to help guide actions by companies in terms of management and foster social dialogue within these companies. ¹²¹The development of non-legislative national interprofessional agreements (ANIs) has emerged in recent years. They covered various fields of interest to management, including teleworking¹²² or social dialogue within companies regarding environmental protection¹²³.

The draft ANI adopted in April 2024 establishing the “pact for life at work” includes a number of stipulations specifically dedicated to the issue of management practices. This text, ultimately not ratified by representative organisations, explicitly links managerial issues to the major demographic transitions, first and foremost, but also the ecological and digital transitions. Article 2 "*Change management practices*" calls on companies that have not done so to adapt their human resources policies to keep people in employment through age management, the prevention of burn-outs and psychosocial risks, change management and in particular "*changes in work organisations*". Article 5.1 "*Improving social dialogue on quality of life and working conditions (QLWC)*" provides an indicative list of the issues that mandatory periodic negotiations on the QLWC may address: work transformations, meaning and quality of work, measures to prevent occupational marginalisation, listening to employees concerns regarding technical aspects, work organisation, working conditions and social relations¹²⁴. "*In this regard, it is specified that the Labour Code defines the right of direct and collective expression of employees concerning the improvement of their working conditions, the organisation of activities and the quality of production in the work unit to which they belong and in the company as a whole.*" It is recalled that employers and employee representatives can rely on the National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions (ANACT) in this regard.

Within companies, social dialogue about managerial practices is relatively limited. Although around a thousand agreements concerned working conditions in 2022, management practices clearly come within the strict scope of the employer's powers. For the trade union representatives and several researchers interviewed by the mission, the staff representative bodies closely involved in managerial issues were terminated by the orders of 22 September 2017 (occupational health and safety and working conditions committees (CHSCT) on the one hand, and staff delegates (DP) on the other). ¹²⁵Since then, the frequency of employee representation in the company has decreased.

¹²¹ The ANI of 14 April 2022 put forward ambitious parity provisions adapted to the challenges of a changing working world and was signed by all representative organisations with the exception of the CGT. This agreement classifies national interprofessional productions into 3 categories: normative productions, productions whose purpose is to explain the position of social partners when it is not necessary to generate legal effects, and so-called "impulse" productions that encourage social partners to tackle subjects on a prospective or experimental basis.

¹²² The ANI of 26 November 2020 relating to successful implementation of teleworking, signed by all representative organisations with the exception of the CGT, and extended by order of 2 April 2021.

¹²³ The ANI of 11 April 2023 on the ecological transition and social dialogue, signed by the CPME, MEDEF, U2P, CFDT and CFTC intends to provide legal and practical guidelines to foster social dialogue (responsible procurement, human resources management, work organisation). This ANI is not normative and is based on existing regulations. Its purpose is to "facilitate and encourage their appropriation by social stakeholders in companies (...) but also in each branch".

¹²⁴ This theme is also part of the indicative elements in the draft ANI agreement for the compulsory branch- and company-level periodic negotiations that the agreement proposed to create as regards employment of seniors (Article 7).

¹²⁵ In 2017, 59.1% of companies with 50 employees and over had a CHSCT committee, while only 35.0% had a health, safety and working conditions commission (HSCTC) in 2022. In 2022, 36.2% of private non-agricultural companies with 10 or more employees had a staff representative body, a figure down 8 points since 2018. See DARES, *Les instances de représentation des salariés dans les entreprises en 2022, une érosion qui se poursuit*, March 2024.



4.4 Measures targeting the management environment taken by our neighbours are sometimes more ambitious than ours

4.4.1 Action by the work administration sometimes takes the form of a concerted approach around good management practices

- **In France, action by decentralised government services is only marginally concerned with management practices.**

The priorities of the labour inspectorate, as set down in the national action plan 2023-2025, do not explicitly integrate this dimension, and are logically focused on the most significant issues in terms of occupational health¹²⁶.¹²⁷The third occupational health plan (2016-2020) integrated management issues in an ancillary manner. The 4th plan (2021-2025) refers to it more directly, when it mentions the organisational dimension of psychosocial risks (action 2-3) and the necessary support for the deployment of QLWC approaches (actions 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3).

However, in decentralised state services, the implementation of regional occupational health plans often results in coordinated actions by prevention services, but not systematically in the parallel mobilisation of the labour inspection services.¹²⁸Managerial issues continue to be handled essentially by ANACT (National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions), among other tasks.

- **In Sweden, the labour inspectorate's work focuses on the goal of achieving "sustainable work".**

The Government's work environment strategy 2021-2025¹²⁹ focuses on several priorities forming a continuum around the goal of "sustainable working". The strategy is based on the vision of a job that should provide safety, development opportunities and good health for workers, both women and men. It is very clearly in line with the perspective of ongoing demographic, ecological and digital changes.

The chapter of the strategy concerning occupational health therefore integrates, beyond the prevention of risks of occupational accidents and illnesses (with a specific targeting, as in France, on serious and fatal accidents) and the reduction of exposures to hazardous substances, management dimensions such as the balance between the demands and the resources available to workers; the power and the influence of workers on the content of their work; the support of the work community and management; the prevention of abusive or harassing behaviour; taking the cognitive work environment into account (resulting from ambient noise, the ability to take ownership of technologies, etc.). The gender equality logic is very present, and involves looking at all measurements through this prism. In addition, a chapter is dedicated to the prevention of threatening and violent behaviour at work, whether from the employer, employees or any other origin (users and customers, business partners, etc.). Having a favourable working environment is presented as the corollary of good working conditions, and as a factor of profitability for companies as well as well-being for employees. The organisational and social factors of the work environment are considered a major cause of absenteeism due to sickness. The strategy provides guidelines for analysing and understanding the challenges faced by managers and employees in the face of the hybrid work challenge.

The strategy is supported, from an operational point of view, by **the labour inspectorate monitoring implementation of the legislation five years after it was adopted and the provision 2015:4** (see above). The control mainly relates to the procedural aspect of these obligations (employers must prove that they have a prevention policy and that they carry out regular assessments). Thus, the content of management practices is not checked as

¹²⁶ ANACT focuses on control themes (prevention of occupational accidents and illnesses, combating fraud, reducing inequality, protecting the most vulnerable workers) and adds a cross-cutting theme of guaranteeing the right to participation, through employee representatives, to the collective determination of working conditions and the management of companies.

¹²⁷ It nevertheless referred to the importance of professional dialogue.

¹²⁸ Created in 1976, ANACT has 265 agents and 16 territorial agencies.

¹²⁹ Government communication 2020/21:92, *A good work environment for the future – the Government's work environment strategy 2021–2025*, 11 February 2021.



such, but the labour inspectors check that leadership is an integral part of the company's strategic objectives. These elements make it possible to engage with the work administration and discuss the **content in question** with the aim of progressing with the support of the high level of consensus that prevails in the Swedish social dialogue model. The mission's interviewees described the AFS 2015:4 provision as the keystone in the Swedish system since it made it possible to **shift from individualised treatment of psychosocial issues to a collective approach, that impacts the work organization.**

It is interesting to note that the Swedish Work Environment Authority monitors **implementation of these obligations in both the private and public sectors where these obligations are identical.** This does not mean inspectors do not have their own sectoral specialisation and knowledge of the professions inspected, as well as websites featuring risk prevention tools. **In parallel to the controls carried out, the Authority places its expertise at the disposal of employers and employees forming a continuum between ensuring compliance with the law and promoting best practices.** In the field of management, the *Arbetsmiljöverket* published a study, based on a review of the literature, on the principles of management favourable to the health and well-being of employees¹³⁰.

The Swedish Work Environment Authority pays special attention to the situation of middle managers, given that they are particularly exposed to conflicting requests from senior management and the employees placed under their authority. **A specific inspection control programme was conducted in 2021** following the adoption of the government strategy, to examine the working conditions of managers in the social and hospital field. The inspectors had to ensure that the psychosocial risks incurred by these manager-employees were well integrated into the occupational risk assessments, and check that the corrective measures had indeed been implemented by carrying out a new inspection, six months after the first.

- **In Ireland, the codes of practice** applicable to remote working and the right to disconnect are legally enforceable under the common law system.

If the law and collective bargaining occupy residual positions, **the labour administration, with the assistance of the social partners, develops codes of practice for the enforcement of the laws,** the consequences of which go beyond what could be produced by simple voluntary enforcement of standards (soft law).

Indeed, while these codes do not directly create rights for the benefit of private individuals, and the fact of not following them is not an offence, **the principles of these codes can be evoked in labour disputes** referred to the Courts, the Labour Court and the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), which is also the body which draws up and adopts these codes with the support of the main representative bodies (IBEC and ICTU).

During the pandemic, in 2021, the WRC adopted a code of practice on the right to disconnect¹³¹. The document is an interpretative creation based on the principles of several laws¹³², none of which explicitly defines the right to disconnect. The Code states the right of employees to not be obliged to regularly perform work outside normal working hours, the right to not be penalised for refusing to attend to work matters outside of normal working hours and the duty to respect another person's right to disconnect.

In order to implement Act No. 8 of 2023, the Workplace Relations Commission has adopted a code of practice for remote working and flexible working¹³³. This is binding on both employees and employers in the implementation of legislative principles. It gives many examples of situations and elements that can be taken into consideration when formulating and processing remote working requests, and in particular a list of questions that can justify a possible refusal, without however setting out an exhaustive list of legitimate reasons. The Code also includes an example of a work-life balance strategy in the appendix. This is the only part of the document that refers to the (very open)

¹³⁰ Arbetsmiljöverket, Leadership for health and well-being - a systematic review, report 2020:5.

¹³¹ WRC, *Code of practice for employers and employees on the right to disconnect*, March 2021.

¹³² Organisation of working time act of 1997, Safety, health and welfare at work act of 2005, Employment Act of 2018 and Terms of employment (information) acts 1994-2004.

¹³³ WRC, *Code of practice for employers and employees - Right to request flexible working and right to request remote working*, 2024.



possibility of having recourse to the opinion of the employee collective representatives, either through a staff representative body or through a trade union delegation.

In general, **matters relating to work organisation and working time are addressed in Ireland from a near-exclusively individual perspective**, associating request and appeal procedures to the rights of individuals under the Common Law system. The procedural logic of these rights seems to satisfy the stakeholders interviewed by the mission (public authorities, social partners, companies), who value good faith and the fair treatment of individual situations, which are by their very nature heterogeneous.

4.4.2 In several countries, social partners offer interesting support and advice schemes for managers and their employers

- **Advice to managers is a weapon at the service of good management practices, implemented as part of a services trade unionism in Sweden and Italy.**
 - **In Sweden, the SACO and Lenarda trade unions**, specifically dedicated to defending and supporting white-collar staff, support them both in their capacity as employees and managers.

SACO, the biggest “white collar” trade union confederation in Sweden, offers training opportunities to its members, to complement their skills as managers. **The professional association Lenarda offers access to a range of services. These are firstly the normal trade union services which focus** on the manager’s situation as an employee, but also professional advice services relating to the manager’s role as a team leader. The association’s vision is to impose a new image of the manager, less stereotyped, in order to promote careers for women, young people and immigrants. The association is particularly attentive to middle managers in the public sector, whose work is described as particularly difficult, in particular due to budgetary constraints.

In Italy, the appeal of trade unions comes from the services they offer to employees: legal assistance, social security and tax assistance, retirement pension calculations, transition support. This ability to offer services and benefits comes from the way they are financed with contributions being either deducted directly by the employer (contribution of 1% of the gross amount of the monthly salary) or paid directly to the union by the member when they join); this financing system and the large number of members gives the unions significant financial clout¹³⁴. Thus, in its branch dedicated to executives (APIQA), the CGIL provides managers (“*Quadri*”) with support services in a coaching type format particularly when difficulties arise in their company.

The federation of managers, which is a branch of the employers’ organisation *Confindustria*¹³⁵, participates in the joint management of a number of **mutual funds**, one of which is fully dedicated to **supporting managers in their management practices**. It is financed by allocating membership contributions amounting to 2/3rds of company contributions and 1/3rd of manager contributions. This fund, which has been in existence since 2002, is in great demand by managers of small companies. Based on the territorial deployment of Confindustria - for example, there are 300 employees in the centre of Milan - it enables, in particular, support and coaching actions for managers to be financed, including service coaching in order to improve management practices in his/her department organisation function.

In Germany, since 2002, the Initiative for a new quality of work (*Initiative Für Eine Neue Qualität der Arbeit - INQA*) has been supporting medium-sized companies in matters of management and quality at work. Originally founded by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, INQA is an independent body financed by public and private funds and bringing together in particular the Ministry, the Federal Employment Agency (the equivalent of France Travail), the major employee (DGB and branch trade unions) and employer (BDA and BDI) union confederations, the Agency for health and safety at work and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The aim of this organisation is to support companies in matters of well-being at work at a time when major transformations affecting professional activities

¹³⁴ Salvo Leonardi and Roberto Pedersini, *Trade Unions in Italy, Pluralism and Resilience*, in Trade Unions in the European Union, Peter Lang editor, 2023.

¹³⁵ *Confindustria* is Italy’s leading employers’ organisation. It manages the collective bargaining agreement for *dirigenti*, i.e. executive managers of companies.



are taking place. **The main and stated purpose of INQA is to advise companies in order to make working conditions more attractive and safer.**

To this end, exchange and consultancy services are available and information is provided on practices for SMEs (employees, managers and HR staff) and company networks in an atmosphere of dynamic of mutual learning and sharing of best practices. INQA publishes calls for proposals by subject, branch and region to which small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular industrial enterprises, respond through consular networks. Consulting and support services are always provided in groups of 10 or 20 applicant companies in formats ranging from action training to coaching programmes, support for pilot projects, and innovation rooms to set up an HR or management transformation project.

Each service¹³⁶ is co-financed based on a model in which 80% of the costs are covered by FSE+ credits and only 20% is ultimately paid for by the companies. Thus, each support project is actually an FSE+ project the project engineering of which is organised by INQA in order to facilitate access for companies. This facilitating and ultimately inexpensive method is very popular among SMEs since 10,000 companies have been supported by INQA since its creation.

- **Technical support tools intended to create an environment favourable to good management practices within companies also exist in France**

Tools to support and improve management practices are produced by both ANACT (National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions), a public institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and **INRS (National Institute for Research and Safety),** an institution linked to the occupational accidents and diseases branch of the general social security system. ANACT in particular plays a central QLWC role: the method developed by the agency is explicitly referred to in the 2020 ANI agreement on occupational health, which established the QLWC concept based on the previous QWL concept, as in the April 2024 draft ANI agreement on the “pact for life at work”. The goal of ANACT and INRS is to disseminate these tools and methods.

The DGEFP (General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training) and BPI France, support managerial innovation by financing human resources consultancy services for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In the private sector, corporate networks and consultancy firms are greatly involved in issues concerning management practices.

Training actions developed by INTEFP (the National Institute for Labour, Employment and Vocational Training)¹³⁷, which are intended for both HR representatives and employee representatives, can also help usher in new management practices. Some examples of voluntary standardisation are quite promising

- **Some companies have voluntary standards to improve their management practices.**

For most companies encountered by the mission, standards which are optional are of little interest when they relate strictly to human resources management as **promoted by ISO or AFNOR¹³⁸ in France.** They believe that these standards add to existing labour regulations without bringing any real additional advantages. Moreover, these companies are currently more focused on implementing the CSRD (see above).

However, some companies are devising their own frameworks in order to address new challenges. This is the case, for example, of the Swedish car manufacturer Scania, which has adopted internal occupational health and safety system management standards that are broadly inspired by ISO 45001 without however seeking certification. This approach meets the needs of the group’s international operations, by adopting standards that apply all over the world. While the Occupational Health Service is highly developed and extensive in the company’s Swedish operations, this is not always the case in the other countries in which the group operates. Labour legislation varies

¹³⁶ For example, an initiative room for two years for 10 companies costs €600K and the price is set by INQA.

¹³⁷ Created in 1975, INTEFP is the organisation for the initial training of labour inspectors and the continuous training of all employees at the Ministry of Labour. Article 33 of the Act of 8 August 2016 entrusted it with the task of defining the content and deploying joint training courses in the field of social dialogue. This particular assignment is monitored in a joint framework.

¹³⁸ Association Française de NORmalisation.



greatly from country to country. A multidisciplinary occupational health team, with a group-wide remit, is being set up to act to provide advisory services to all entities, regardless of the country in which they are located.

In Germany, a manifesto negotiated by the Deutsche Telekom works council enabled management of artificial intelligence to be regulated. This text includes a range of tools related to digital ethics: a specific charter of principles, definition of risks linked to artificial intelligence in working relations and the establishment of a permanent working group responsible for monitoring and adapting the tools.

- **In Italy, certification systems encourage the development of professional equality between women and men.**

Profound gender inequalities in the workplace have prompted the Italian public authorities to take strong initiatives in this area. Firstly, a system was established by the Act No. 162 of 5 November 2021 **and which came into force in 2022 concerning certification for gender equality** in the workplace entitled "Certification of gender equality". This instrument, included in the National Code of Equal Opportunities (Article 46-a), is intended to "*certify the adequacy of company measures adopted to reduce the gender gap within the company, in relation to the opportunity for growth in the company, wage equality, gender differences management policies as well as the protection of maternity*".

To obtain this certification, the company must obtain a sufficient score on a scale that includes key indicators measuring the reality of gender equality in the workplace in a number of sectors. Certification is only granted when a minimum overall score of 60% is achieved. Obtaining this certification not only enables the company to highlight its priorities in terms of gender equality, but above all entitles it **to social security contribution deductions** of up to €50 thousand per year. This scheme is growing in popularity with 250 certification applications submitted in 2023 with an ensuing 13 million euros in social security contribution deductions and more than 2,000 in 2024 for an amount of 60 million euros. It is still a very recent scheme and volumes remain modest in view of the challenges, but it is growing strongly and compared to the French equality index, is accompanied by financial incentives that increase its effectiveness. In addition, the Decree of 30 April 2022 takes this logic one step further by offering **advantages in terms of public procurement to companies having gender equality certification.**

4.4.3 Manager training can be an essential component in companies' business strategies

- **Training managers is a major economic challenge.**

Manager training is crucial in light of the workforce shortage and the profound work transformations underway. Access to hybrid and remote working continues to increase since the end of the Covid-19 crisis.

The largest employers' organisation in Ireland (IBEC) underlined the crucial importance, for the vast majority of companies it surveyed, of paying particular attention to and specifically training them to manage teams in a hybrid working context, as this was causing great difficulties for these companies. **While half of Irish managers have been trained to manage hybrid working¹³⁹, 40% of public and private employers have engaged in such training initiatives.** IBEC calls for such training to be generalised¹⁴⁰ and more generally wants to see a greater effort in developing managerial skills as it believes these are key to maintaining economic competitiveness¹⁴¹. The percentage of organisations having less than 10% of work being carried out remotely fell from 35% in 2023 to 19% in 2024.

¹³⁹ CIPD, *HR practices in Ireland 2024*, Survey report, May 2024.

¹⁴⁰ IBEC, *The changing role and demands of the manager in today's workplace*, 5 May 2023

¹⁴¹ "The demands of today's working environment have left many managers completely out of their depth. They feel pressure from above and below. They are expected to implement corporate strategy with regard to hybrid work, while also providing a sense of purpose, flexibility, and career opportunities. (...) In conclusion, the importance of skills such as clarifying expectations, communications and being present, leadership, emotional Intelligence, digital literacy, adaptability and openness to learning are critical for people managers of the future."

Management training remains underdeveloped in France. In 2008, Prof. William Dab published a report on manager and engineer training as regards occupational health and made 12 proposals to develop training in this area.¹⁴² Although management training cannot be assimilated to occupational health and safety (OHS) training, some topics are common to both and the 2008 report noted shortcomings in this area in engineering¹⁴³ and business schools. These elements are corroborated by the survey carried out by ANACT in 2015-2016, which led this agency to prepare a white paper¹⁴⁴ (see above).

An APEC study in 2019 estimates that the number of management training courses is limited to 2 on average per manager. They are also focused on general knowledge in the field, while managers express multiple needs (leadership,¹⁴⁵ innovation, conflict management, communication).

The challenge of promoting managers is essential in increasing job appeal. In the hospitality-catering sector, hit by huge labour shortages all over the world, facilitating access to management positions is one solution to address the risks of arduous jobs being shunned (see the box below on the Accor group).

An indicator of social promotion among Accor Group managers and leaders

Accor is the largest hotel group in Europe and the sixth largest worldwide. It employs close to 300,000 persons through franchises, management contracts and hotels managed directly.

The issue of hiring and retaining these employees is of strategic importance, as the labour market and employee expectations have changed all over the world, especially in the hospitality sector.

Since 2022, the Group HRD has been measuring the proportion of managers and leaders who do not have third level qualifications, in order to encourage hotel management to adopt a dynamic policy when it comes to promoting their employees.

There are two reasons for choosing to track this indicator:

- It is important to demonstrate to future employees the actual existence of what one of the founders of the chain called the “social ladder”, by providing concrete proof that those who so wish can rise up through the ranks within the group;
- The indicator makes it possible to approximate, by a relatively simple measure, the degree of diversity of the teams working in the hotels. There is a correlation between this diversity and the likelihood of having a third level degree. Social and cultural origin is more difficult to measure and involves much more complex and intrusive employee surveys. Information on the level of qualifications is collected once and for all when they join the group; it can be set against the position currently held by the employee at any time.

Today, more than 60% of Accor employees have an initial level of education equivalent to the baccalaureate and below. 33% of managers and leaders have this level. The Group HRD aims to increase this percentage, and monitors it by country and by hotel.

In the digital sector, representatives of an American multinational company based in Dublin described a system of very regular personal promotions based on half-yearly performance reviews. Employees selected to become managers undergo a three-day training course on the corporate vision, career management, team performance, work-life balance, inclusivity, etc. They can also call on a network of peers, established at a global level, which operates based on a co-development logic. Indeed, the role of management is considered essential and interpersonal relations within teams are given particular attention. Manager training is also a major concern for Orange (see below).

A common core of management practices within the Orange Group

¹⁴² William Dab, Report on manager and engineer training in occupational health - Twelve proposals to develop this training, submitted to the Minister for Labour, Social Relations and Solidarity and to the Minister for Higher Education and Research, with the support of the Directorate-General for Labour and the INRS (National Institute for Research and Safety), May 2008

¹⁴³ A study by the INRS is cited in the report, which shows that on average, an engineering school dispenses 16 hours of training on compulsory occupational health and safety.

¹⁴⁴ ANACT, *Apprendre à manager le travail – Livre blanc des initiatives en formation initiale et continue*, 2017.

¹⁴⁵ APEC, *Les nouveaux enjeux du management*, Note, December 2019.



The Orange Group is one of the world's leading operators of telecommunications and digital services. It is present in several countries in Europe (France, Romania, Poland, Spain, Belgium, etc.) and Africa (Morocco, Egypt, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, etc.), where its positioning is at times that of a historical operator on the market.

The Group's HRD intends to provide all these entities with a common core of management practices, in line with a goal referred to as "*many in one*". It involves establishing shared principles, embedded in the company's culture and closely connected to the group's business strategy. The leadership expected of managers is attentive to team development, focused on listening to employees and respectful of the principle of openness, empowerment and customer orientation.

Orange has set up management campus courses to disseminate this common culture through activities in which the group's employees take on the role of managers or "managers of managers". Programmes are defined centrally and rolled out in each group entity by local trainers.

The HRD has not observed any major differences in management methods from one country to another, as the principles are broadly common to all, even though the way of communicating may be different in each country with this being largely determined by the history of these entities (direct creations or acquisitions, position on the local market, etc.).

An overall indicator on team engagement and pride in belonging to the company is monitored annually. Employee training is of strategic importance, assessed as appropriate by means of certifications or self-declarations of skills acquired.

- **The content of training courses must be diversified, as managerial functions are becoming increasingly complex.**

In terms of skills, **most executives surveyed by APEC believe that it is essential to build on basic technical business skills**, with certain sector-specific differences. Thus, in sectors with low supervisory levels (e.g. hospitality), the importance of this business knowledge is over-valued to enable replacements.

However, soft skills, including the ability to listen to employees, are being increasingly valued. Managers mostly believe that managerial qualities are linked to personality, and are largely focused on their ability to listen to and acknowledge their employees.¹⁴⁶ They believe that their employees are increasingly looking for individualised answers that take their personal constraints and desires into account, particularly in terms of work organisation.

¹⁴⁷They believe that their main area of progress is the ability to take a step back, which is consistent with the feeling of increased workloads and a diversified range of expectations. The main accusations made to managers by employees are that they have not been sufficiently trained to perform this function, that they are too far-removed from the reality of work and that they are too obsessed by reporting tools and meetings¹⁴⁸.

Many of the mission's interviewees insisted on the crucial importance of promoting initial and continuous training aimed at spreading good management practices. In terms of initial training, the action of the public authorities seems, in some respects, difficult to coordinate. The diversity and teaching independence of management training organisations (business schools, engineering and public service colleges), along with the internationalisation of content are obstacles to interventions by the public authorities in this area.

Very little diploma and certification course content, validated by regulatory texts, concerns managerial skills per se. While certain frameworks exist in this area¹⁴⁹, these specific skills are not explicitly integrated into the courses. Continuous training of managers is part of a company's own internal policies. This training is dispensed by training organisations specialised in HR and these organisations are very present in the area of management practices.

¹⁴⁶ APEC, *Pratiques managériales 2023 – L'animation collective et le suivi individuel se redessinent*, November 2023.

¹⁴⁷ APEC, *Les nouveaux enjeux du management*, Note, December 2019.

¹⁴⁸ Mathieu Detchessahar, *L'Entreprise Délibérée. Refonder le management par le dialogue*, Nouvelle Cité, 2019

¹⁴⁹ One example is the CléA Management framework, which aims to establish a core set of managerial skills: organise activities, lead and supervise a work group, support employees and enable them to hone their skills. The framework is registered with the specific directory of France Compétences.



5 Several action levers relating to the working environment could be used to improve the quality of management practices in France

Even if the limits to public action on management issues in companies are real, the current context is rather favourable to such public intervention which could take the form of measures intended to support and improve the working environment and these could be supplemented by statutory measures to encourage management in France to adopt more virtuous practices.

5.1 While caution is called for when it comes to transposing pre-fabricated formulas into a vast range of different realities, a context does exist that is conducive to improving management practices in France

5.1.1 The principle of prudence is required with regard to transposing “models” in France found in other countries during comparative surveys

- **The use of action levers to influence management practices must take the limits of administrative action in this area into account.**

Implementing a set of measures aimed at facilitating the improvement of management practices must take account of two limitations present from the outset: firstly, the wide diversity of working situations in different companies where imposing a theoretical model could be ineffective or even counter-productive and, secondly, the private nature of company management practices, in which public action can only intervene indirectly and probably partially.

- **It is imperative to adapt solutions to the reality in the field.**

One constant observation is that imposing ready-made theoretical management solutions often results in failure, and that management practices are the result of a corporate culture and economic determinants which cannot be reformed by decree.

There are many examples in the history of work organisation where applying a fashionable management technique has proven to be a source of difficulties.

This is particularly the case with lean management, which was originally designed and implemented by one company (Toyota), in one sector (automotive) and in one country (Japan). It was so enthusiastically received that it has been deployed in inapt, incomplete or even contrary forms, in numerous companies, sectors (if not all) and countries.

This has had counter-productive effects, especially when a system designed for an industrial sector is applied to companies (or even governments) in the service sector, and where the underlying philosophy, in which the opinion of employees is at the centre of the system, is set aside in order to focus on the best ways to control production.

Of course, precautions must be taken when transcribing in France examples of practices observed during comparison work abroad.

- **The public authorities’ role is of necessity indirect in a debate that primarily concerns companies: acting on the working environment.**

Management is at the core of the work organisation, a lever for company productivity and employee well-being at work, and remains a very difficult object to apprehend for public action. Because it primarily feeds on the relationship between two people or one person and a group, because it has a strong psychological and behavioural dimension, because it is only observed at a local level that is almost infra-observable, down to the level of individuals and because it holds its essence, a little like Michel Foucault said of power, in its diffuse presence within any human organisation related to work, management does not easily lend itself to public action by the State.



Public policy can therefore only attempt to act by setting a relevant framework that creates the conditions for the possibility of good management or through measures targeted on aspects of the working relationship or on certain more vulnerable populations.

5.1.2 However, the current period is favourable for action due to the rare consensus as to the diagnosis and examples of practices that work abroad

While the subject of orienting management practices has certain limitations that have been recalled above, **the current context in France appears in many respects to be favourable** to action by the public authorities:

- **There is indeed a consensus as to** the reality of the crisis in the meaning of work. This has been the subject of numerous administrative reports, academic papers and position-taking by the most important players in the world of work, including business leaders (see Part 1).
- The recent and massive development of apprenticeship training, including in higher education institutions, is a formidable means of profoundly changing the methods used to train managers and, ultimately, their approach to management practices.
- **There is a social demand** from the union organisations interviewed by the mission to change management practices, not only on the employee side but also, in different ways, on the employer side.
- This **social demand for changes to management practices is present in the companies themselves**,¹⁵⁰ and interviewees who intervene in work issues, regardless of their particular specialisation (ergonomist, economist, occupational psychologist or sociologist, etc.), tell of the numerous initiatives taken, particularly in the area of action learning. Some of these were interviewed by the mission¹⁵¹. These professionals say numerous companies wish to transform their management practices but need a national technical support framework.
- **European law**, through the “Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive” (CSRD) applicable since 1 January 2024, and its non-financial reporting obligation, also prompts questions about professional management practices.
- Finally, even though the April 2024 draft ANI agreement on a new “pact for life at work” did not come to a successful conclusion, its content, highly focused on the need to change management practices to improve quality of life at work, is proof that the social partners, on both sides of the table, now see the subject as a major issue and share the desire to implement concrete solutions.

Thus, according to the mission, improving management practices in France requires a set of measures that are at once respectful of company practices and offer a better situation to employees. These measures will combine provisions intended to support a working environment conducive to positive management practices on the one hand and more targeted measures to overhaul the French legal framework for management practices on the other.

5.1.3 These questions are now reflected in debates in France around professional dialogue and co-determination

Two debates in particular were repeatedly brought up by French interviewees, both linked to the nodal problem of employee participation, around the concept of professional dialogue on the one hand, and co-determination on the other.

¹⁵⁰See, for example, ESCP Business school, “Des entreprises pionnières, créatrices de valeur par l’emploi et les compétences”, report, September 2022; Projet Sens, “Du sens à l’ouvrage, comprendre les nouvelles aspirations dans le travail”, report by Jean-Baptiste Barfety, June 2023;

¹⁵¹ See the appended list of persons interviewed by the mission.

- **The question of professional dialogue**

The direct participation of employees, or professional dialogue, “covers the various forms of consultation or shared discussion that take place within groups as part of the daily performance of work activities.”¹⁵² Professional dialogue takes a more or less formal shape depending on the company: continuous improvement workshops, innovation platforms, dialogue bodies on quality of work, etc.

It requires **efforts both by management and managers as well as by the unions to support employees, without fear of losing their powers**. Ergonomics studies show that if a worker is an expert in his trade, he is often unaware of this fact and does not have the tools to analyse it.¹⁵³ Staff representatives and trade union stakeholders may be trained in ergonomics techniques in order to be able to provide support for the establishment of a dialogue about work. For these employee representatives, this implies a change of posture, and not being positioned as experts in the work analysed (as the employer or manager must be).

Encouraging professional dialogue, alongside and without prejudice to social dialogue, is recommended by national and international institutions. The European¹⁵⁴ Commission and the OECD¹⁵⁵ have expressed positions in support of this approach.

The OECD shows that professional dialogue is an important marker of quality of life at work and states that “*At the company level, both direct and “mixed” forms of voice (where workers’ representatives coexist with direct dialogue between workers and managers) are associated with a higher quality of the working environment (compared with the absence of voice). By contrast, the presence of workers’ representatives in firms where there are no parallel means of direct exchange between workers and managers is not associated with a better quality of the working environment. These correlations cannot be taken as evidence of causal link but might reflect the fact that employers and managers who create channels of direct dialogue with their employees are also more likely to engage in improving the quality of the work environment.*”

In France, professional dialogue has become a central element in management change requests. In April¹⁵⁶ 2023, the Assises du Travail report made its recommendation No. 3: “*renewing democracy in the workplace by generalising professional dialogue on work quality and organisation, in both the public and private sectors*”. In June 2023 the “*Manifesto to make work meaningful again*”, supported by several major French companies, incorporated the principle of listening to employees and taking their opinion into account¹⁵⁷. Article 7.4 of the draft ANI agreement on the “*pact for life at work*”, presented in April 2024 concerns professional dialogue¹⁵⁸, and insists on “*the interest of developing*” this practice in the company “*notwithstanding the prerogatives of the staff representative bodies*”, “*in order to promote job satisfaction, improve quality of life at work and working conditions and keep people in work*”.

Direct participation by employees is a means of adapting management principles to the reality of the company and an element conducive to effective change. The approaches for direct participation of employees are hotly debated regarding the application of lean management principles, the impacts of which appear to be very diverse, and depending on the cases, either favourable or harmful to occupational health. The establishment of a

¹⁵² Michel Sailly, Aslaug Johansen, Per Tengblad and Maarten Klaveren, *Dialogues social et professionnel : comment les articuler ?* Les docs de La Fabrique de l’Industrie, Paris, Presses des Mines, 2022

¹⁵³ Philippe Davezies, *Les défis de la formation des acteurs syndicaux. Quelle place du travail réel dans le processus du dialogue social ?* May 2022

¹⁵⁴ European Commission, *Partnership for a New Organisation of Work*, Green Paper, Document drawn up on the basis of COM(97) 128 final, 1997.

¹⁵⁵ OECD, *Negotiating our way up: Collective Bargaining in a Changing World of Work*, 2019

¹⁵⁶ Conseil National de la Refondation, “*Re-considérer le travail*”, report from the organizers of the Assises du Travail, April 2023.

¹⁵⁷ Projet Sens, “*Du sens à l’ouvrage, comprendre les nouvelles aspirations dans le travail*”, report by Jean-Baptiste Barfety, June 2023

¹⁵⁸ Professional dialogue is defined as “*any form of communication and direct sharing of information relating to the life of the company, its organisation and the performance of work. This dialogue encompasses all exchanges within the working community and, where appropriate, with the employer. It interacts with social dialogue without however impinging on its prerogatives or being an obstacle to it. Professional dialogue makes it possible to act on the quality of work, to give a meaning to the work and to get employees more directly involved, when possible, in the company’s operational issues and change management in particular*”.



professional dialogue raises several types of questions: how to get the social partners involved in the approach? Should the work dialogue groups involve local managers or not? What procedures (stakeholders, timing of meetings, associated documents, etc.) should be put in place to effectively establish a professional dialogue?¹⁵⁹.

Establishing professional dialogue can indeed cause some misgivings:

- Trade unions sometimes suspect that management wants to encourage this dialogue in order to diminish the statutory powers granted to regularly appointed representative bodies; management and managers may be hesitant to share their work organization prerogatives, arising from their hierarchical position and induced by the principle of subordination that is the basis of labour law;
- everyone (leaders, employee representatives, managers and other employees) may also fear that consultations will disrupt their activities and impair their immediate effectiveness. They may also perceive the risks of having their own work brought into question, which means these situations must be played down by encouraging them to be included in a routine.

Professional dialogue therefore involves a certain type of engineering and a duration in excess of the usual, and occasional, consultations in the organisation. The example of the implementation of professional dialogue in the French automotive sector illustrates the operational difficulties that can arise with these initiatives.

¹⁵⁹ For more information see: Michel Saily, Aslaug Johansen, Per Tengblad and Maarten Klaveren, *Dialogues social et professionnel : comment les articuler ?* Les docs de La Fabrique de l'industrie, Paris, Presses des Mines, 2022: 4 examples of establishing professional dialogue (Swedish Public Employment Service, Port of Rotterdam, French mutual health insurance company, French metallurgical company). Several academic laboratories are involved in the effective implementation of professional dialogue approaches: see the work of Yves Clot or Mathieu Detchessahar and their teams at the CNAM and the University of Nantes. ANACT is also involved in supporting these initiatives.



Professional dialogue in the automotive sector in France¹⁶⁰

The concept of professional dialogue has developed in particular in the automotive sector in France over the past fifteen years. At the Michelin tyre company, it was adopted in the 2010's as going hand-in-hand with the company's international development. The approach consists in identifying thirty-eight test production islands, and applying the principles of team autonomy to them.

In France, many social sciences players, including the ANACT and several laboratories in higher education institutions, support the development of discussion spaces on work within companies. The CFDT Metallurgy Federation fully supports the approach. Several experiences that can be linked to the idea of professional dialogue have developed in the French automotive sector: from the 2010s, the "dialogue on work quality" at Renault Flins, which gave rise to the ergonomics research work of Philippe Davezies, Yves Clot and Jean-Yves Bonnefond from CNAM (Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers); the "50 minutes of development" QWL approach was introduced at Toyota in Valenciennes. More recently, such initiatives have been started at Safran Helicopter Engines and Renault ElectricCity.

Articles 43 to 45 of the new collective agreement for metallurgy of 7 February 2022 are given over to the place of professional dialogue within company dialogue. According to these stipulations, professional dialogue makes it possible, "*without encroaching on or hindering social dialogue, to get employees more directly involved in the operational issues of the company's activities*". In addition, it makes it possible "*to act on work quality, to make work meaningful again, by specifying the links with the company's targets*". The decisive role of local managers is stressed in this approach. The collective agreement aims to "*establish a framework for organising and promoting professional dialogue which companies can use to adapt it to their own level. It goes on to say that "respect for the freedom of opinion and expression of employees is essential to ensure a high-quality professional dialogue."*

When initiated, one of the challenges of this approach is its ability to last. In the automotive plants in Flins and Valenciennes, the production of new vehicle models has led to the professional dialogue initiative being suspended. Similarly, changes in management frequently lead to these systems being questioned since they do not always succeed in taking root and being permanently integrated into the corporate culture. Many of the participants in the mission who were asked about this point emphasised that professional dialogue initiatives are fragile, and it is extremely difficult to extend them to take in the entire scope of the company, and even more so to sustain them through the pure will of the managers who initially started them.

There is currently a renewed enthusiasm for professional dialogue initiatives in the French automotive sector.¹⁶¹ Jean-Dominique Senard pleads for an "ardent obligation" of empowerment in companies. While it incorporates the idea of professional dialogue, the project advocated by the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Renault Group goes beyond this: the vision behind this project is to systematically apply the principle of trust, respect and autonomy. This is very demanding on local managers and implies delegating to employees, the responsibility for their tasks along with the corresponding resources.

Beyond the law, **the question really is the ability of organisations to effectively use such a tool** in order to avoid it becoming a dead letter, as in the case of the right of expression.¹⁶² According to Mathieu Detchessahar, professional dialogue or WDS (work dialogue space) is a way of changing management practices but, in order to overcome the initial fears (fear of expressions and claims going unheeded, need for time), it requires a specific organisation, a type of ritual similar to social dialogue, which in order to function assumes that the participants are part of a long-term, clearly organised and regular process that eliminates the risk of a single and therefore potentially more violent confrontation. This is the **whole issue of dissemination and the interplay between social dialogue and professional dialogue, which guarantees success when both are combined**, as shown in particular by the Swedish example and as recalled by the publication by La Fabrique de l'Industrie which showed the links between these two dynamics and the benefits in terms of work quality (see the chart below illustrating this interplay). Addressing this desire for

¹⁶⁰ This section is based in particular on the article by Bertrand Ballarin, "*A la recherche d'un nouveau modèle d'organisation et de management chez Michelin*", in the Journal de l'Ecole de Paris du Management, 2017/4 No. 126 and the book by Michel Saille, Aslaug Johansen, Per Tengblad and Maarten Klaveren, *Dialogues social et professionnel: comment les articuler?* Les Docs de La Fabrique de l'Industrie, Paris, Presses des Mines, 2022.

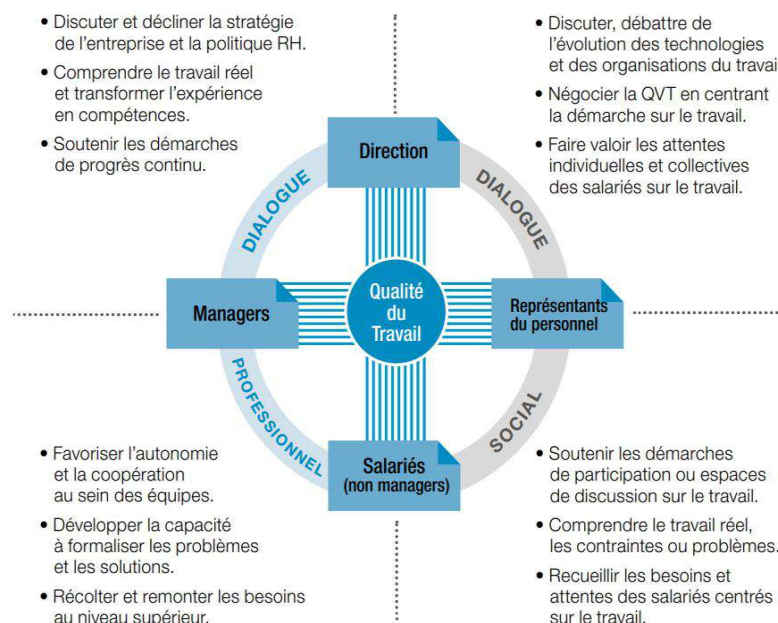
¹⁶¹ Jean-Dominique Senard, "*We live in a public limited company with unlimited irresponsibility*", 22 February 2024.

¹⁶² Which in fact was very different from professional dialogue, which, as its name suggests, is a dialogue in which the people involved in the work who raised the issues find themselves at the end of the process with solutions, but sometimes also with problems posed in different terms. It is a democratic type of dialogue space, whereas the more individual right of expression comes within the category of the petition or complaints file and has not really caught on in companies for this reason.



professional dialogue, but also the need for a framework and support, including technical support (dialogue engineering), is a goal that must be pursued.

Schéma 2 : Complementarity and articulation between social dialogue and professional dialogue



Qualité du Travail	Quality of work
Direction	Management
Dialogue	Dialogue
Représentants du personnel	Employee representatives
Social	Social
Salariés (non managers)	Employees (non-managers)
Professionnel	Professional
Managers	Managers
Dialogue	Dialogue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuter et décliner la stratégie de l'entreprise et la politique RH. • Comprendre le travail réel et transformer l'expérience en compétences. • Soutenir les démarches de progrès continu. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and adjust the company strategy and HR policy. • Understand what the work really is and turn experience into skills. • Support on-going progress initiatives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuter, débattre de révolution des technologies et des organisations du travail. • Négocier la QVT en centrant la démarche sur le travail. • Faire valoir les attentes individuelles et collectives des salariés sur le travail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and debate the technological revolutions and work organisation. • Negotiate the QWL by focusing the approach on the work. • Assert employees' individual and collective work needs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soutenir les démarches de participation ou espaces de discussion sur le travail. • Comprendre le travail réel, les contraintes ou problèmes. • Recueillir les besoins et attentes des salariés centrés sur le travail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support work participation approaches or discussion spaces. • Understand what the work really is and the related constraints or problems. • Collect the needs and expectations of employees in terms of their jobs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favoriser l'autonomie et la coopération au sein des équipes. • Développer la capacité à formaliser les problèmes et les solutions. • Récueillir et remonter les besoins au niveau supérieur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster autonomy and cooperation within teams. • Develop the ability to formalise problems and solutions. • Collect and escalate needs up to the next level.

Source : *Dialogues social et professionnel : comment les articuler ? La fabrique de l'Industrie, 2022*

● The question of co-determination

Co-determination involves the participation of representatives appointed by employees on the Board of Directors or Supervisory Board. It gives power directly to the company's employees, through their representatives, without holding any capital¹⁶³. This form of participation is a European model, born in France and Germany. The model was born and developed after the Second World War. It is in Germany that its form is most comprehensive, based on two separate levels of participation that concern company management through employee representatives: the Supervisory Board (*Aufsichtsrat*) and the Works Council (*Betriebsrat*).

In 1982 the Auroux Acts in France ushered in the presence of the works council on the board of directors or the supervisory board, with a consultative role. Finally, it was the Act of 14 June 2013 on job security that made it mandatory to appoint a minimum number of employee directors in the largest companies¹⁶⁴. The thresholds for this representation on supervisory boards and boards of directors were modified with the PACTE Act of 22 May 2019¹⁶⁵, reflecting the recommendations of the report by Nicole Notat and Jean-Dominique Senard *L'entreprise, objet d'intérêt collectif*¹⁶⁶. The system now targets any company with more than 1,000 employees in France. The threshold for the mandatory appointment of two salaried directors has been lowered from 12 to 8 directors¹⁶⁷.

In Germany, the co-determination embodied by the supervisory boards goes further: it is mandatory from 500 employees up, it offers elected employee representatives a higher number of seats; depending on the case, between one third and a half (see above). Many European countries have adopted the principles of co-determination, to such an extent that by 2018, 18 of 28 European countries had a more or less extensive system that complied with these principles¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶³ The concept of co-determination (*Mitbestimmung*) also refers, in Germany, to the role of employee representative bodies in companies (*Betriebsrat*) - see above. In this development, we will limit our study to the issue of employee participation on corporate governance bodies.

¹⁶⁴ The obligation only applied to companies with at least 5,000 employees in France or 10,000 employees worldwide. The proportion of salaried directors was limited, depending on the case, to between 8% and 13%. The system was subsequently strengthened by the Act of 17 August 2015 on social dialogue and employment.

¹⁶⁵ Act establishing an action plan for business growth and transformation.

¹⁶⁶ Nicole Notat and Jean-Dominique Senard, "*L'entreprise, objet d'intérêt collectif*", report to the Ministers for the Ecological Transition, Justice, Economy and Labour, March 2018.

¹⁶⁷ If the number of directors is 8 or less, only one salaried director will be appointed.

¹⁶⁸ Christophe Clerc, *La codétermination: un modèle européen?* Revue d'Economie Financière, 2018/2, No. 130.



5.2 Measures to make the work environment more conducive to positive management practices

While there is now a relative consensus on the need to change management methods, including within many companies. For these companies need a national assistance and technical support framework to carry through a management transformation of benefit to employees, companies and national social policies.

Indeed, it is action on the working relations environment that will drive a change in management practices in companies, regardless of their size, and in all sectors of activity, including the public sector.

5.2.1 Promoting managerial policy in companies

One of the most important measures according to the mission is to promote positive and innovative management policies in companies. In this area, it is illusory to think that it would be effective to apply a universal potion to companies that are in very different situations due to their sector of activity, size, history and corporate culture.

The first lever to meet this necessity is probably based on the willingness of the company's stakeholders to start thinking about management practices. The draft ANI agreement of April 2024 on the "pact for life at work" had laid a first marker for this. As this is by its very nature a decentralised issue, it would be useful for the public authorities and social partners to seek to have these issues addressed by work communities themselves.

The first proposal in the report from the organizers of the Assises du Travail forum, in April 2023, was to establish an annual meeting of labour stakeholders, to "*win the battle of trust through a managerial revolution that associates workers*¹⁶⁹". The mission suggests that this meeting could be an opportunity to open a public debate around the question of management practices. Beyond the reforms that could result from this within the abundant legal arsenal we have at our disposal (see below), discussions on these issues are fundamental, both at central level and in the territories and work communities.

At the end of this consultation, if the social partners so wish, an ANI agreement relating specifically to management practices could be negotiated. In addition to the measures of a legal nature that could be included (see point 5.3 below), it could feature measures relating to the working environment that the mission recommends.

Recommendation n° 1. Organise a **meeting of work stakeholders** to extend the debates of the **Assises du Travail** forum on the issue of management practices. These debates could possibly determine the content on which negotiations for a possible national interprofessional (ANI) agreement could be based.

In addition, it would be useful to **set up a national programme to accompany and support managerial innovation, based on the model of ambitious programmes that have been launched in certain countries and federated into the European EU.WIN network.** This network,¹⁷⁰ founded in 2013 by the European Commission, aims to promote organisational and managerial innovations in Europe, in particular by supporting the spread of learning company and participatory management models. These are programmes that work somewhat on the model of the research support programmes of the National Research Agency (ANR) or Horizon Europe at European level: public authorities do not impose a method or constraints but finance a research or practice transformation framework opening the possibility of moving towards the goal of improving the situation.

Mention can be made of programmes¹⁷¹ that have been implemented in particular in Northern Europe, Germany and Scandinavia, for example the Finnish programmes TYKE (1999 -2003), TYKES (2004 - 2010), LIIDERI now transformed and monitored by the innovation financing agency TEKES. **In Finland, these programmes** - funded by the Finnish Work Environment Fund created in 1979 and run jointly by trade unions - have supported thousands of

¹⁶⁹ This is the first area for proposals in the report: Conseil National de la Refondation, *Re-considérer le Travail*, report from the organizers of the Assises du Travail, April 2023.

¹⁷⁰ <https://workplaceinnovation.eu/the-euwin-bulletin/>

¹⁷¹ See on this point the France Stratégie report, *Les organisations du travail apprenant: enjeux et défis pour la France*, by Salima Benhamou and Edward Lorenz, April 2020, in particular Appendix 1.



Finnish companies in implementing open management practices, employee participation in innovation processes, decentralisation of leadership, collective knowledge management and **have received positive¹⁷² reviews as regards the transformation of the working world in Finland**. This may not be unrelated to Finland's excellent scores in global rankings on quality of life in which quality of life at work is an important component.

Similarly, in Germany, there was a series of programmes to support transformation of the workplace, in particular the "Future of Work" programme launched in 2015. Partly implemented by INQA¹⁷³, it focuses on adapting the work organisation to technological change and to quality of life at work by supporting the principles of the learning organisation.

In France, these programmes seem relatively limited in their resources at this stage. ANACT implements the fund for the improvement of working conditions (FACT) and calls for expressions of interest from innovative work organisations (La Fabrique). The Ministry of Labour and Employment uses tools such as the PCRH, in conjunction with skills operators (see above). **The mission proposes to set up a national programme to support management innovation with more significant resources from the European Social Fund (ESF+)**, based on calls for support projects issued to companies wishing to be supported in transforming their management practices, with priority given to SMEs. It could also include a management research component.

Recommendation n° 2. Set up a **national programme to support managerial innovation and quality of life at work** based on the German "future of work" model. This programme, which would operate through national calls for projects, would propose collective support **actions**, funded **80% by ESF+** funds (as in Germany and other programmes of this type, particularly in Belgium) and 20% by companies.

5.2.2 Change the education and initial and continuous training systems so as to reduce power distances

The education and vocational training systems are one of the main reasons why management practices in France are excessively top-down compared to other countries (see part 1). Therefore, the mission considers it is essential that issues related to management practices be systematically addressed, both in the initial and continuous training provided to managers.

In 2008, William¹⁷⁴ Dab's first proposal focused on establishing a minimum set of core skills that could serve as a teaching basis for occupational health and safety, the very first focus of which is "*the skills enabling the professional roles of a manager to be performed rather than technical knowledge relating to occupational risks*". He recommends that these elements be integrated into a skills base that can be enforced and financed by the traditional vocational training management mechanisms. The importance of this training is also widely discussed in the report presented two years afterwards by Henri Lachmann, Christian Larose and Muriel Pénicaud¹⁷⁵. In 2017, the white paper published by ANACT sought to convince business and training stakeholders to adopt innovative approaches to learning that are centred more on cooperative management and that address the issue of quality of life at work.¹⁷⁶

The mission recommends that all players involved ensure that renewed knowledge, know-how and proper behaviour are incorporated into the teaching models of the schools that train future managers (in both the private and public sectors) and into the contents of continuous training modules, taking into account:

¹⁷² *The Finnish workplace development programme: A small giant?* Author(s): Robert Arnkil, Source: Concepts and Transformation, Volume 9, Issue 3, Jan 2004, p. 249 – 278; Alasoini, T., Heikkilä, A. and Ramstad, E., *High-Involvement Innovation Practices At Finnish Work Places* (2007).

¹⁷³ See part 4 and appendix Germany

¹⁷⁴ William Dab, *Report on the training of managers and engineers in occupational health - Twelve proposals to develop it*, submitted to the Minister of Labour, Social Relations and Solidarity and to the Minister of Higher Education and Research, with the support of the Directorate-General for Labour and the National Institute for Research and Safety, 2008 May.

¹⁷⁵ Henri Lachmann, Christian Larose, Muriel Pénicaud, *Bien-être et efficacité au travail – 10 Propositions pour Améliorer la Santé Psychologique au Travail*, report commissioned by the Prime Minister, with the assistance of Marguerite Moleux, February 2010

¹⁷⁶ ANACT, *Apprendre à manager le travail – Livre blanc des initiatives en formation initiale et continue*, 2017.



- A more **comprehensive management vision**: more horizontal, more decentralised, which promotes employee participation in decisions about their work that is required to maintain the momentum of the work community, the commitment of employees and hence their loyalty. This new management vision would also make it possible to improve the **ability to manage teams in hybrid work or whose working hours are increasingly individualised**;
- close **attention and the ability to manage the psychosocial risks of their team members**, including detecting weak signals based on a logic of risk prevention, whether these risks concern occupational health and safety or more generally well-being at work;
- **the importance of social dialogue and professional dialogue in an interplay between both, respecting** the place of trade unions but also appreciating the capacity of employees to have a dialogue about their work.

Finally, the training of managers in France, which stands apart from other European countries studied by the mission (especially Germany and Sweden) through the prominent place given to academic training and diplomas, will change as apprenticeship learning develops in France, including in higher education, making it possible to change the content of manager training. As several interviewees noted, the way managers are trained has a direct impact on power distances. Diversifying the career paths of managers could help reduce these distances. This warrants paying special attention to manager training and career paths. **In this area, it is therefore important not only to continue apprenticeship support, including for training courses that traditionally lead to managerial positions**, but also to incorporate the three educational content elements described above in the curricula of these training courses.

To this end, it may be useful to develop partnerships between ANACT and schools that train future managers (universities, business and engineering schools, public service schools and even the training school for labour inspectors). In addition, managerial skills should be better integrated into the certifications recorded by France Compétences.

Finally, within the framework of interprofessional collective bargaining and at the branch level, the social partners could usefully take up this subject by developing the principles for acquiring these skills prior to acceding to managerial positions during their careers.

Recommendation n° 3. Systematically incorporate training elements for managers into the educational models applied by schools, higher education institutions and the skills frameworks established in companies. These elements would promote an innovative vision of management, for example a mastering of the way social dialogue and professional dialogue are engineered. Reinforce apprenticeship training as a training method for managers as has been the case for a very long time in Germany.

5.2.3 Strengthening manager support

Supporting companies in organisational transformation projects is not enough, it is also important to provide greater **manager support. This professional category is now coming under increasing pressure in a context of the individualisation of working relationships** and the demand for employee participation (or “silent resignation”) on the one hand and pressure from management to achieve results on the other. All of this is set against a backdrop of an increase in very time-consuming reporting activities as digitalisation and AI generate huge volumes of data about work.

Many of the mission’s contacts, in France but also in the other countries studied, stressed the prominent role of executives and managers in any organisational transformation project. This could be summarised by saying that **in order to improve the quality of life at work for employees, the quality of life at work for managers** and especially local or middle managers must also be improved.

This category of professionals probably deserves more attention from the public authorities. In Sweden, the Labour Inspectorate has taken an interest in these professionals, particularly in the public and health sector, as part of its control programme. While it is not a matter of prioritising managers in public policies going forward (since



other categories of workers are exposed to occupational risks), it is important to not neglect the challenges, in an increasingly services-centric economy, in areas concerned by the DUERP (single occupational risk assessment documents) for example, the work carried out by the labour inspectorate and the support from the occupational risk prevention and health services.

In France, APEC advises executives with a view to improving employability. In Italy and Sweden, the mission was able to analyse several inspiring examples of support programmes for managers, provided by representative organisations under a services union. On this basis, **the mission proposes increasing support for executives in a move towards a more participatory, innovative and decentralised management system, by extending APEC's missions not only to providing advice to executives as employees, but also to advising them on the content of their professional management practices, placing executives and managers in particular at the centre of the transformation processes within organisations.**

Such an extension of skills would require a discussion and prior agreement between the State and the social partners within the framework of the APEC public service mandate. This support should include in particular the new challenges posed to managers by managing teams in hybrid work and more generally in the context of an increasingly individualised work organisation. Managerial functions do not only concern people with managerial status, and more general solutions should be provided to the need for support for the employees concerned. Training policies driven by the professional sectors, supported by skills operators (Opco) could meet this need.

Recommendation n° 4. Extend APEC's missions to advising executives on their management practices and developing support mechanisms for new managers as part of the vocational training policy in each branch.

5.2.4 Breaking down silos to integrate management practices into labour policies

The mission draws on foreign examples, in particular Sweden, to propose decompartmentalising the approaches by incorporating the need to take account of management quality into the tools that are currently designed to promote occupational health and safety.

Thus, it would be advisable to include management practices in the occupational health risk prevention tools. For example, **occupational health plans should include a "managerial policy" component** that would therefore take into account the potential impact of management practices on the health of employees, of which it has been shown (see part 2 of the report) that they represent a non-negligible, although difficult to measure, part of the risks that the work organisation incurs for the health and safety of workers.

To be effective, this **dimension could also be relayed by ANACT to companies.**

Beyond this, professional branches, relying on skills operators, such as companies, could integrate management into their sectoral policies, as an essential determinant of employee attractiveness and retention.

Recommendation n° 5. Include the quality of management practices among the topics discussed in branch and company collective bargaining, as well as in national and regional occupational health plans and have ANACT disseminate these practices to companies.

5.2.5 Improve management practices also in the public sector

Although the mission had chosen to focus on companies, its investigations showed that management issues were also very relevant in the public sector and that a series of measures to improve management practices in the private sector would be further strengthened by improved management in the public sector. Indeed, **transforming management practices in the administration and public sector in general would set an example and boost management practices across the entire work spectrum.** Moreover, many positions on the subject in the reports¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ For example, the Assises du Travail report: Conseil National de la Refondation, *Re-considérer le Travail*, report from the organizers of the Assises du Travail, April 2023.



or from the trade unions, do not separate the two and consider that there would be a form of efficiency, if not fairness, to treat both as one whole.

The mission therefore considers that many of its recommendations drawn up for the private sector would also be of benefit if applied to the public sector. Several points in particular could be improved:

- **Clarify and make transparent the management policy pursued in each administration**, be it central administrations, public institutions, decentralised services, public companies. This should concern all three public functions. The principles on which this managerial policy is based would be set out in a document, indicating how it is adapted in each department, the resources to support managers and have them advance in participatory practices with the goal of supporting employees in their career and professional development. This document would also include action monitoring indicators. It would be presented and discussed in the governance bodies of each administrative entity.
- Promote initiatives to establish forms of professional dialogue in public services through a circular from the Ministry of Public Transformation. This already exists, in various forms in some administrations (for example, some hospitals practice it at the level of the hospital clusters), but it would be a matter of developing its use and establishing formal implementation methods where the interministerial department for public transformation (DITP) could play a driving (training, online methodological guides) and support (training, service design, etc.) role.
- Finally, earmark resources for training budgets to **implement management training actions, in terms of the collective work organisation and team leadership, provide individual coaching for managers as well as department-wide coaching** to help transform management practices in these departments. The example of the management and collective intelligence support centre at the Ministry of Social Affairs, which carries out individual and department coaching actions, as well as the DITP's co-development programmes or the talented programme at the DIESE (interministerial department for the senior state managers) are good examples of what to do while at the same time developing and integrating these into a more general dynamic aimed at fostering virtuous management practices,

Recommendation n° 6. Implement measures to **improve management practices in administrations: 1/ publish a document presenting the management policy of each public service**, discussed and managed in the governance bodies. In particular, it could be incorporated into management guidelines for the "Human Resources Strategy". 2/support **initiatives to establish professional dialogue** in each department 3/**develop management training actions (work organisation, individual or collective support in the form of coaching for public managers).**

5.3 Possible statutory measures aimed at guiding management practices

In addition to improving a working environment that is more conducive to the implementation of different management practices, it may be necessary to take statutory measures to strengthen this general movement.

The mission points out that non-finalistic, procedure-based legal techniques exist in the comparison countries and could be sources of inspiration:

- In Germany, the *Betriebsrat's* prerogatives include the discussion on the work organisation. This is a co-decision area and when the body exists, there is an obligation to compromise as regards this aspect of the company's life;
- in Sweden, equivalent co-determination mechanisms have existed since the 1976 law. More recently, provision 2015:4 stated the obligation for companies to adopt a managerial strategy. Labour inspections concern compliance with this formal obligation, but above all are not limited to just these checks: they engage in a dialogue with the employer on the resources implemented, in particular to avoid excessive workloads; this dialogue process cannot lead to sanctions;



- in Ireland and Italy, the individual right to request remote working (for Ireland) or agile working (for Italy) implies that each employee has a say in the way their work is organised, and implies the obligation for the employer to respond in a reasoned manner to the request for a change in organisation from the employee.

As mentioned above, it is important to avoid artificially imposing solutions on the French situation.

The mission proposes that consideration be given to management practices in the annual meeting scheduled at the end of the Assises du Travail event (see above, recommendation 1). **France already has a very comprehensive legislative and regulatory arsenal, the effectiveness of which has not been proven. The mission does not propose adding new layers to these provisions.**

However, reforming one or more of these numerous levers could be examined, provided that this contributes to greater participation by workers in defining the content of their work. These levers could be mobilised by the public authorities, if necessary at the end of a consultation or even a negotiation between the social partners that may be initiated under Article L.1 of the Labour Code.

Several options are available in this regard.

- **The possibility of including management practices in the topics discussed in the framework of the mandatory social dialogue on QLWC.**

The importance of management quality for the life of the company, its performance, the health, quality of life and working conditions of employees justifies this issue being the subject of discussions within the company.

Today, compulsory company negotiations concern companies with at least 50 employees (threshold for the appointment of a trade union representative) in which at least one trade union representative has been appointed and these negotiations take place at least once every 4 years with the subjects being "*gender equality in the workplace (...) and the quality of life and working conditions*".

The management question could be introduced into these mandatory negotiations, in particular as a clarification in the general section given over to QLWC.

- **The possibility of including management practices among the strategic orientations that are the subject of the information-consultation procedure with the SEC.**

The **quality of management practices could be included in the themes that SECs are informed/consulted about under the company's strategic orientations.** The subject of management practices would therefore be introduced into Article L.2312-24¹⁷⁸ of the French Labour Code relating to the "annual consultation on the company's strategic orientations" after the words "work organisation". This change would be in line with what the Economic, Social and Environmental Council proposed in April 2024¹⁷⁹.

Similarly, and to ensure that this issue is dealt with across both private and public sectors, management practices would also be included in the subjects about which the CSAs (social administration committees) are consulted. Since the Decree No. 2019-1265 of 29 November 2019 on management guidelines and changes to the remit of joint administrative committees, the CSAs have been consulted on management guidelines relating to the multiannual

¹⁷⁸ This article is currently formulated as follows: "*The Social and Economic Committee is consulted on the strategic orientations of the company, defined by the body responsible for the administration or supervision of the company, and on their consequences on activity, employment, the development of professions and skills, the organisation of work, the use of subcontracting, temporary work, temporary contracts and internships. This consultation also covers forward-looking management of jobs and skills, vocational training guidelines and the skills development plan.*

The committee issues an opinion on the company's strategic orientations and may propose alternative orientations. This opinion is forwarded to the company's administrative or supervisory body, which gives a reasoned response. The Committee receives this advice and may respond to it."

¹⁷⁹ This is its recommendation No. 11: Economic, social and environmental committee *Articulation des temps de vie professionnel et personnel : de nouveaux défis*, opinions, April 2024 (rapporteurs Christelle Caillet and Elisabeth Tomé-Gertheinrichs).

strategy for managing human resources, general guidelines on mobility and general guidelines on aiding and promoting career paths, respectively. **It would be possible to introduce a chapter on managerial policy in the management guidelines “multiannual strategy for managing human resources”.**

- **The possibility of transforming the right to direct expression into a right to professional dialogue within companies.**

Professional dialogue is a major component in the range of solutions aimed at improving the quality of work and therefore the impact of work on social policies at national level, but also company performance. Professional dialogue has long been considered as being incompatible with social dialogue, an indirect employee representation tool, due to the direct participation by employees in company decisions. But there is now a context in which professional dialogue can be promoted and go hand in hand with social dialogue, as was also proposed in the Assises du Travail report (see above).

¹⁸⁰Consideration could be given to use employees' current right of direct expression, set down in Articles L.2281-1 et seq. of the Labour Code, by transforming the right of expression into a right to professional dialogue, the procedures for which would be agreed in collective bargaining negotiations in accordance with the current Article L.2281-5.

- **The possibility of extending the powers of the SEC.**

The hypothesis of extending the powers of the SEC could be studied in order to approximate the model of the *Betriebsräte* or establishment council in Germany, which has more extensive powers based on co-determination. This form of employee empowerment has paid off (see appendix on Germany). The main difference between the establishment councils in Germany and the SECs in France lies in the fact that the *Betriebsräte* are also consulted and informed on certain matters, but also have a co-decision power on certain subjects that is not a simple opinion as for the French SECs (see part 4 above, the remit of the *Betriebsräte*).

Going towards this model would constitute a major reform of social dialogue in France. Co-decision could **be introduced into French law, for example in terms of work organisation, for which responsibility could therefore be shared**. This would involve moving from a model in which the elected members of the SEC give an opinion on a policy decided by the employer to a model in which employee representatives would share this responsibility.

- **The possibility of reassessing employee representation on boards of directors and supervisory boards.**

The example of German or Swedish co-determination could be a source of inspiration for initiating a new step in employee representation on French boards of directors and supervisory boards of private companies. The PACTE Act of 5 May 2019 has already extended this representation to all companies with more than 1,000 employees. The number of employee representatives remains significantly lower than in German companies (see above). An increase could be considered.

- **The possibility of experimenting with formal statutory mechanisms to take into account the needs of employees in terms of work/life balance.**

Virtuous management practices that have a positive impact on employees' quality of life at work require that the deepest aspirations expressed by employees be taken into account.

Among these, a better work-life balance is a top priority¹⁸¹. From this perspective, experimenting with alternative ways of organising work could be an important lever for improving quality of life at work. The Italian example shows

¹⁸⁰ L2281-5 “The procedures for exercising the right of expression are defined as part of the negotiations on professional equality between men and women and the quality of life and working conditions provided for in Article 2242-1.”

¹⁸¹ See, for example, the 2022 *People at Work* survey, in which it is stated that 71% of the employees surveyed would like to have more flexible working hours, such as the four-day working week, and more than half (52%) would accept a pay cut in exchange for guaranteed flexible working hours.



that many agreements have been signed in companies to implement, in very different forms, four-day week type working schedules.

Similarly, a method of guaranteeing the rights of employees to benefit from remote working for a portion of their work could be experimented. In this respect, the Irish example of the "*right to request*" could inspire a French measure of this type.

As you can see, France already has many legal mechanisms designed to directly or indirectly influence management practices. One or more of these levers could be reformed, following a debate on management practices between the public authorities and social partners, with a view to the feasibility and sustainability of these measures. In line with the spirit of the Assises du Travail, these amended legal provisions should be monitored to verify that they are really implemented and to assess the impact of these provisions on management practices in France.

Recommendation n° 7. Amend one or more of the existing legislative and regulatory provisions, without adding new ones, based on the conclusions of a debate involving all stakeholders, with the aim of effectively and sustainably changing management practices in France. These could be: 1. **Include management practices in the topics discussed in the framework of the mandatory social dialogue** on QLWC; 2. **Include management practices among the strategic orientations that are the subject of the information-consultation procedure with the SEC**; 3. Transform the right to direct expression into a **right to professional dialogue** within companies; 4. **Extend the powers of the SEC in terms of work organisation**; 5. **reassess employee representation on boards of directors and supervisory boards**; 6. **Experiment with formal statutory mechanisms to take into account the needs of employees in terms of work/life balance**

Fabienne BARTOLI

Thierry DIEULEVEUX

Mikael HAUTCHAMP

Frédéric LALOUE



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LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

1 International organisations

Mr Cyril COSME, Director, ILO representative in Paris

Ms Frédérique DUPUY, ILO Paris task officer

Ms Agnès PARENT-THIRION, Senior Research Manager Eurofound (Dublin)

Mr Xabier IRASTORZA, Head of the ESENER Survey at EU-OSHA (Bilbao)

Ms Gillian DORNER, Deputy Director of the “Public Governance” Directorate (GOV), OECD

Ms Audrey RONCIGLI, Budget Adviser - Public Governance, Permanent Representation of France with the OECD

2 France

2.1 Ministerial Office

Ms Sophie BARON, deputy cabinet director for the Minister of Labour, Health and Solidarity

2.2 Administrations

Mr Pierre RAMAIN, general labour director

Ms Nathalie VAYSSE, deputy to the general labour director

Mr Hervé LANOUZIERE, Director of the National Institute for Labour, Employment and Vocational Training

Mr Dominique GIORGI, Inspector General for Social Affairs

Mr Benjamin MAURICE, Inspector General for Social Affairs

Mr Bruno LUCAS, Inspector General for Social Affairs

Mr Philippe KUNTER, Director of Sustainable Development and CSR, BPI France

Mr Philippe MUTRICY, Director of Evaluation and Studies, BPI France

2.3 Social partners

CFDT

Ms Isabelle MERCIER, National Secretary

Ms Maroussia KRAWEC, Federal Secretary for Management, Occupational Health and Remote working

CGT



Ms Agathe Le BERDER, CGT Executives branch (UGICT-CGT)

CFE-CGC

Mr Jean-François FOUCARD, National Secretary

Mr Maxime LEGRAND, National Secretary for Labour and Health, President of the European Confederation of Executives

Mr Bertrand MAHE, National Secretary

Mr Franck BOISSARD, Head of the Employment, Training and Labour Department

CFTC

Mr Thomas PANOUILLE, Director at APEC

MEDEF

Ms France Henry-LABORDERE, Deputy Managing Director, Head of the Social Division

Mr Pierre-Mathieu JOURDAN, Director of Social Relations and Employment Policies

Ms Odile MENNETEAU, Director - Strategic Watch and New Social Issues Unit

Ms Miroslava IVANOVA, Project Manager

UIMM

Mr Nicolas BONDONNEAU, Director of Social Protection

Mr Franck GAMBELLI, Director Environment, Safety, Working Conditions

2.4 Companies

Mr Pierre DEHEUNYNCK, Managing Director, Associate, Ricol-Lasteyrie; Chairman of the Board of Directors of France Competences

Mr Gervais PELLISSIER, former HR Director of Orange

Jean-Dominique SENARD, Chairman of the Renault Group

Ms Estelle ENGRAND, Assistant to the Chairman of the Renault Group

Mr Nicolas TCHENG, Renault Group Public Affairs Department

Mr Géraud DE VAUBLANC, office of the Chairman of the Renault Group

Mr. Iniacio DE ORUE, Orange Group Human Resources Department

Ms Maureen ROUSSEAU, former HR Director France and Belgium for Google

Mr Bertrand BALLARIN, former Human Resources Director of Michelin

Mr Olivier BETOU, Human Resources Director for the Saint-Jean Industries group

Ms Karima SILVENT, Axa Group HR Director

Mr Bruno CLEMENT-ZIZA, Deputy Managing Director of AFEP (French Association of Private Enterprises)

And for AFEP:



Ms Elodie PRADEL, HO Reward Coordination & Payroll France, Airbus

Ms Dora BOUMEDIENE, HR Director at Financière Pinault, Artemis

Ms Samantha BOWLES, Director - Talent & Culture, Clariane

Ms Mathilde TABARY, Director of Social Relations Europe and Engagement, Clariane

Ms Anne LEBARGY, lawyer, SEB Group

Ms Chris JACCON, Social & Societal Sustainable Development Manager, JCDecaux

Mr Julien SIMON, HR Director of the Neuilly site, JCDecaux

Ms Zinaida LESSITCHKOVA, Director of Social Affairs, L'Oréal

Mr Thierry HUBER, Social Relations Director, Plastic Omnium Group, OPMobility

Mr Antoine LAJOANIE, deputy head of benefits and wellbeing, SANOFI

Mr Paul MEDOC-AGUER, HRD Head Office, Sodexo

Ms Léa FAURE MALAN, Social Relations Manager, Verallia

As part of the Global Deal initiative

Mr Jean Christophe SCIBERRAS, CFA SACEF and coordinator for France

Mr Miguel VALCARCEL, Global deal

2.5 Academics and experts

Prof. Florence NOGUERA, Chairwoman of AGRH (French-language Human Resources Management Association), Paul-Valéry University Montpellier

Prof. Jean-Michel PLANE, Paul-Valéry University Montpellier

Prof. Laurent CAPPELLETTI, Cnam, Chair Professor for Accounting and Management Control

Ms Dominique MEDA, Director of IRISSO

Mr Jean-Yves BOULIN, IRISSO Associate Researcher

Prof. Nathalie GREENAN, CNAM and CEET

Mr Raphael HAEFLINGER, Director of Eurogip

Ms Christine KIEFFER, Eurogip Study Manager

Mr Jean-Baptiste BARFETY, Director of the Project-Sens Association

Mr Gilles GATEAU, APEC Managing Director

Mr Pierre LAMBLIN, Director of Studies at APEC

Ms Ségolène JOURNOUD, ANACT expert

Mr Thierry ROUSSEAU, ANACT expert
Ms Karine BABULE, ANACT expert
Ms Amandine BRUGIERE, ANACT expert
Mr Antoine NABOULET, Deputy Director of the Labour, Employment and Skills Department of France Stratégie
Ms Sabine BUIS, permanent secretary of the CSR platform attached to France Stratégie
Ms Manon EMPATAZ, France Stratégie intern
Ms Christine EHREL, researcher Lirsa/CEET
Thomas COUTROT, economist and statistician
Mr Laurent BERGER, former Secretary General of the CFDT
Prof Steven DHONT, researcher at TNO (Netherlands)
Ms Laurence BRETON-KUENY, Vice-President of the ANDRH, AFNOR HR Director
Mr Jean THEUREL, INRS studies and research department
Mr Christian TRONTIN INRS studies and research department
Mr Marc MALENFERT, INRS watch and prospective mission
Prof. Bruno PALIER, CNRS, Sciences Po, Paris
Prof. Mathieu DETCHESSAHAR, University of Nantes

3 Germany

3.1 French Embassy

Mr Francis BOUYER, Social Affairs Officer
Thomas GOUJAT-GOUTTEQUILLET, Social Affairs Task Officer

3.2 Administrations

Ministry of Labour:

Ms Ana DUJIC, head of the “Digital Factory” unit,
Ms Christina STEEMS, “the digital factory”
INQA, initiative for new quality at work, (<https://www.INQA.de/>)
Ms Clara MAYERBERN
Mr Axel BARDS

3.3 Social partners

Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände, BDA:

Mr. Jorg KELLY, Head of Human Resources, InterContinental Berlin hotel



Ms Kerstin PLACK, Directorate for Labour Law and Pricing Policy, on working time organization models

Ms Leonie PILZ, Directorate for Labour Law and Pricing Policy, on working time organization models

Ms. Garunya (KARUNAHARAMOORTHY) WIECZOREK, BDA International Affairs Manager

Ms Sarah-Marie KNIPPSCHILD, Senior Counsel, Labour Law, BDA

German Trade Union Federation, Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, DGB:

Ms Katrin VITOLS, Unit on Democracy at Work, on the legal framework for employee participation in corporate governance

Mr Michael BOLTE, Unit on Democracy at Work, on the legal framework for employee participation in corporate governance

Mr Markus HOFMAN, Director of Social Policies

Ms Annika WÖRSDÖRFER, expert in collective bargaining on occupational health and safety

3.4 Companies

Ms. Claudia STUMPF, Human Resources Department, Deutsche Telekom

Mr. Tobias LANDGRAF, Human Resources Department, Deutsche Telekom

Mr Giovanni SURIANO, Deutsche Telekom Works Council,

Ms. Adél HOLDAMPF-Wendel, Head of Future of Work and Labour Law at Bitkom e. V. (digital industry federation)

Alexander NAUJOKS, Head of Labour at Georgsmarienhütte GmbH, Osnabrück Steelworks

4 Sweden

4.1 French Embassy

Mr Xavier SCHMITT, Social Affairs Officer

Ms Valérie MAUNOURY, Deputy Officer for Social Affairs, Health and Employment

Ms. Ariane VERZURA, intern

4.2 Administrations

Working Environment Agency (Arbetsmiljöverket)

Ms Cecilia MOBACH, Senior Analyst, Department of Regulations, Market Surveillance and International Affairs

Ms Lina AQUADRO, Organisational Developer, Department of Regulations, Market Surveillance and International Affairs

Mr. Adam Jansson, inspector, department of the inspection

M. Ulrich STOEZER, psychologist, expert on psycho-social working conditions and mental health

Ms Anna-Carin Carlsson, Communicator, department of communication



Employment Agency (Arbetsförmedlingen)

Mr. Shawn MENDES, Director of International Affairs

Ms Lena SKIÖLD, International Affairs Officer

Ms Nora SALEM, Task Officer

4.3 Social partners

LO

Ms Cyrene WAERN, International Secretary

SACO

Ms Jenny GRENSMAN, European Affairs Officer

Lenarda

Mr Andreas MILLER, President

4.4 Companies

Mr Stefan EKENGREN, Hantverket restaurant

Mr. Kjell PETTERSSON, Head of Occupational Health Services Skania

Mr. Lars ALLENSTEN, Senior OHS Expert for Skania

Mr Markus VALROY, CEO Betao

Ms Audrey LAGERKVIST, COO (tech) Betao

5 Italy

5.1 French Embassy

Mr Pierre GOUDIN, social affairs officer

Ms Corinne CILIBERTO, Task Officer,

Mr Thibault DE LA PALME, intern

5.2 Administrations

Dr Albino GRIMALDI, technical advisor to the Minister of Labour

Ms Francesca PELAIA, Dirigente della DG Rapporti di lavoro (DGT)

Ms Margherita ARISTA, Directorate-General for Labour

Ms Andrea RICCI, Dirigente di ricerca, Responsabile Struttura "Imprese e Lavoro", INAPP, National Institute for Public Policy Evaluation



Ms Isabella BRUNETTI, INAPP, National Institute for Public Policy Evaluation

Dr. Gianfranco SANTORO, Research Department, Director INPS

Dr. Luca LOSCHIAVO, Corporate Welfare, Fringe Benefits and Performance Bonuses, INPS

Prof. Monica PAIELLA Elderly's employment Department, INPSE

Prof. Maria DE PAOLA, Gender equality in the workplace Research Department, Manager, INPS

5.3 Social partners

Ms. Federica COCHI, President, APIQA, CGIL (CGT equivalent)

Mr Salvatore Marra, CGIL

Ms Stefania ROSSI, International Director, COFININDUSTRIA (MEDEF equivalent)

5.4 Companies

Mr Giuseppe MANTEGNA, Human Resources Director of the Renault Italia Group and SODIGAM.

6 Ireland

6.1 French Embassy

Mr Vincent GUEREND, Ambassador of France to Ireland

Mr Gaultier BRAND-GAZEAU, Head of the Economic Department

Ms Eloïse STEINHAGEN de Bonnevie, Economic Department

Mr Amine MANSOURI, Social Affairs Officer, French Embassy in the United Kingdom

6.2 Administrations

Ms Áine MAHER - Principal Officer, Employment Rights Policy Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Ms Sarah HENRY, Administrative Officer, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Dr. Andrew BRONWLEE, CEO, SOLAS (Agency of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)

6.3 Social partners

Mr. Liam BERNEY, Member of Executive Committee, Industry, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)

Mr. Danny MCCOY, CEO, Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)

Mr. Neil MCDONNELL, CEO, Irish Small and Medium Enterprises (ISME)



6.4 Companies

Mr Laurent GIRARD-CLAUDON, Founder and CEO, Approach People

Ms Áine MURRAY, Veolia & President of France-Ireland Chamber of Commerce FICC

Ms. Niamh O'CONNOR, Head of People & Culture, Cpl

Mr Derek KEHOE, CEO, BNP Paribas

Ms Elizabeth ARNETT, Director of Communications and Brand AXA Ireland

Ms Derval MCDONGAH, Chief People Officer AXA Ireland

Mr. large digital enterprise

6.5 Academics and experts

Dr. Shana COHEN, Think-Thank for Action on Social Change -TASC

Dr. Maeve O'SULLIVAN, Irish Academy of Management/University of Galway

Mr Damian THOMAS, National Economic and Social Council

Mr David HALLINAN, National Economic and Social Council

Prof. Laurent MUZELLEC, Dean of Trinity Business School

Dr. Tom MCDONNELL, Director, Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI)



MISSION LETTER



Paris, 24 January 2024

The Head of the General Inspectorate of Social Affairs
to

Fabienne BARTOLI
Thierry DIEULEVEUX
Mikael HAUTCHAMP
Frédéric LALOUE

Re: Management practices and social policies: an international comparison

Management practices have an influence not only on the quality of life at work and the working conditions of employees, but also on the results of social policies: employment of seniors, employee empowerment, division between working and personal time, capacity for innovation, etc.

These effects on employee commitment and their working conditions are also reflected in impacts on social policies: employment rates, use of the health insurance system, absenteeism, sentiment of a loss of meaning at work and therefore ultimately the risk of withdrawal, etc.

In addition, poor management can also have an impact on the economy (company performance, on the ability of employees to adapt to sectoral developments and therefore to make the economy more adaptable to an ever-changing environment, on the ability to innovate...), and on the ecological transition through the ability or lack thereof of companies to integrate and drive the necessary transformations.

Finally, social policies may aim to change management conditions (manager training policy, incentives for internal social dialogue within the company, etc.).

In this context, the IGAS work programme provides that an international and mainly European comparative study on work organisation and management practices be carried out.

The aim of the mission is to analyse the link between management policies and practices and social policies, i.e. the impact of a company's management practices on social policies on the one hand, but also how social policies in turn must/can influence these practices.

The mission will consult scientific and administrative literature on this subject, including Eurofound studies, which are a major source of information on differences in labour organisation, human resources management, skills use, skills development strategies, digitalisation, direct employee participation and social dialogue.

The review of these studies, investigations with public authorities and social partners, as well as companies in France and Europe and interviews with researchers specialising in the subject will enable us to draw up a panorama of management practices in all their dimensions and their impacts on social policies.

The scope of the subject could justify examining interesting management practices in a cross-section of sectors, companies or even territories in France and abroad. Similarly, certain social policy objectives could be isolated to allow comparisons to be made among the very many fields likely to highlight the connections existing between management and social policies (gender equality in the workplace, inclusion of people with disabilities, participation of seniors in the labour market, spread of remote working, prevention of strenuous work, etc.). With regard to the comparison, one of the challenges will be to identify States (or public authorities) that have developed public policies that target management practices, whether this be in the private or public sectors.

The mission will submit its report to me by the end of April 2024.

The Head of the General Inspectorate
of Social Affairs
[signature]
Thomas AUDIGE

