Rue Belliard 40
1040 Brussels – Belgium

www.ceemet.org
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EU Transparency Register
61370904700-45

97th Board of Directors
Videoconference, 21st March 2024

The Chairman, **Hubert Mongon** (UIMM, FR), welcomed the delegates (*enclosure* 1) and the agenda was approved (*enclosure* 2).

Before entering into the meeting **Delphine Rudelli** informed the participants that Maria Motuzova had resigned a few weeks ago and that measures to replace her had already been taken. She would also like to add one item under AOB, namely the Ceemet social media strategy on the "European Works Council" file.

ITEM 1 - ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE 96TH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The minutes of the 96th Board of Directors were agreed in a written procedure and sent to Ceemet members on 10th November 2023 with circular 330/23. They were **approved for the record.**

ITEM 2 – BUDGETARY ISSUES

a. Adoption of Ceemet accounts for 2023

Caroline Driezen from ACTA presented the Ceemet accounts for 2023 to the participants. As no questions were raised by the members, Hubert Mongon thanked Caroline and asked the Board to recommend the adoption of the Ceemet accounts for 2023 at the forthcoming General Assembly which will take place next June.

Decisions:

The Board **agreed to recommend to the 43rd Ceemet General Assembly** the following:

1. **The 2023 Ceemet accounts are approved *(enclosure 3)*.**
2. **Discharge is granted to the Directors of Ceemet, in particular the Board of Directors, and the Ceemet Director General for the financial treatment of Ceemet during the financial year 2023.**

b. First discussion on the review of the protection clause & contribution key

Hubert Mongon recalled the participants that, at the 33rd General Assembly in Paris on 24th October 2019, Ceemet members endorsed the adjustment of the Ceemet contribution key. This revision included a provision aimed at safeguarding Ceemet members from excessive strain if their membership contribution exceeds 3.5% of their national association's budget. Since then, Italy, Portugal and Spain benefited from this so-called "protection clause". At that meeting, it was also decided to uphold the special contribution category, which was initially granted in 2004 to Ceemet members from new EU Member States. This category exemption was the reason why they were not included under the current protection clause. Additionally, it was agreed among members during that period that these regulations would undergo review after a span of five years, specifically in 2024.

It was therefore now time, Hubert Mongon added, to reconsider how members want to move forward with these exceptions. **Delphine Rudelli** then explained that what she sent to the participants as working paper was a non-exhaustive list of possible directions. The first proposal is status quo, meaning that the protection clause and the category for new Ceemet members would be retained. The second proposal would be to return to normal and each member would pay their normal contribution. And finally the third proposal was to adapt the protection clause according to new criteria and rules. Answering a question by **Stephen Phipson (UK),** Delphine completed her presentation highlighting that Italy and Spain benefit from the protection clause and the four members from the East - Croatia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovenia - are applied the special category at 0.25 point.

The discussion which followed highlighted the following positions:

Spain: the protection clause has been very helpful to help Confemetal pay their debts but now that the situation is back to normal, it is important to ensure that the level of the Ceemet fee doesn't overload the national budget of the organisation. Therefore, Confemetal would like to call for a status quo and would need to continue applying the protection clause.

Italy: Federmeccanica is a small organisation representing a large sector. The contributions at national level are not aligned with the Ceemet fees as Federmeccanica didn't increase their fees for the last 25 years which makes their financial situation complicated. Therefore, they wish to see the protection clause become permanent. Indeed, even if the measure was conceived as temporary, the situation is structural in Italy.

Denmark: this discussion is a very important one so welcomes the fact that it has been put on the agenda well in advance to allow thorough exchanges. For Denmark, it is crucial to have as many members as possible at Ceemet to be viable and representative. Clearly, the diversity of the financial situation will remain and this has to be acknowledged in the discussion. We will have to find alternative solutions if more members ask for the protection clause.

Germany: the protection clause is a fair system and, as we can't ignore the different financial situations, we should keep the protection clause.

Belgium: it is important to keep as many members as possible while at the same time, it seems awkward to keep permanent a system which was conceived as a temporary solution to support some members facing difficulties. It is also necessary to take into account that even the members who can pay their normal fee are under pressure (often at break-even) and will not be able to compensate of too many members are under the protection clause.

France: it is important to think about the long-term. We have to ensure that if we transform this temporary solution in a permanent system, the Ceemet budget will remain sustainable.

Austria: as it is key to keep as many members as possible, Austria would prefer the status quo.

Tukey: a new regime could be discussed, maintaining the protection clause while limiting the number of members using it at the same time.

United-kingdom: if the temporary systems becomes permanent, it will raise difficulties so we will have to adapt and maybe change the system.

Having listened to all the members, Delphine Rudelli highlighted that maybe the solution was in-between the "status quo" and "returning to normal" as it had to be taken into account that today the number of members asking for the protection clause is limited (2) but what is tomorrow more members ask for it. Who will compensate the difference ?

<u>Decisions:</u>

1. **No majority nor consensus emerges from the discussion.**
2. **The Chairman of the Board, Hubert Mongon, and Delphine Rudelli will discuss to prepare some proposals for the next Board meeting.**

ITEM 3 - STATUTORY ISSUES

a. Ceemet President 2024 – 2026

The second mandate of Ceemet's President, Rainer Ludwig, will come to an end in October 2024. Delphine Rudelli informed the participants that the Secretariat was looking for a successor to Rainer Ludwig according to usual criteria: geographical rotation, balance withing the organisation, capacity to travel to Brussels if needed etc. Discussions are well engaged with one country and should be finalized before the next Board meeting.

b. New Observer from Serbia

Delphine Rudelli explained that, as a result of the Balkan Mission organized in November 2023 by the Secretariat, the Serbian Association of Employers has become, on 1st January 2024, Observer at Ceemet. This opens the door to hopefully future full membership. The participants welcomed this development.

ITEM 4 - FOLLOW-UP OF 42ND GA IN BRUSSELS

a. European Employers' Institute

Delphine Rudelli updated the participants on the European Employers' Institute (EEI). Among the main features, she mentioned that:

- The statutes of the EEI were signed at the notary on 11 March with nine founding members: six European sectoral employers' association: Ceemet, ECEG (chemical), WEC (temporary agency), Eurocommerce, Geopa (agriculture) and FIEC (construction) as well as six national sectoral employers' organisations from the MET sector: UIMM, Gesamtmetall and Teknikforetagen.
- The EEI is waiting for other organisations to take their decision to join and will continue to look for news members and in the meantime, it will deal with administrative issues such as designing a logo, having a postal address etc.
- In terms of financing, the preparation of the call for application for the 1st research project is also being discussed. It will be on "artificial intelligence at the workplace".
- Once the states are published in the Belgian Official journal (Moniteur Belge), the Boar will be officially approved, a bank account will be open and a launch event will be organised.
- The next phase will be to prepare the project to ask the European Commission for a Grant.

Commenting on the update, **Christoffer Skov (DK)** highlights that DI is very satisfied with the setting up of the EEI and the work accomplished. DI also envisages to join the Institute and is still pushing internally BusinessEurope to convince the cross-industry organization to join as well.

b. Discussion on state aid – Signature of the Antwerp Declaration ?

Delphine Rudelli explained that the initial issue of "state aid" was now put on the agenda in the broader context of the discussion around the Antwerp Declaration. This initiative calls for an Industrial Action, is mainly supported by industry associations and companies from energy intensive sectors but has now enlarged to other industries such as the automotive industries and has embarked the trade unions. These are the reasons why the Ceemet Secretariat was inclined to sign the Declaration, mainly because of its highly political nature. However, the Nordic Ceemet members having showed strong opposition, the topic is now for discussion and decision.

The roundtable which followed showed that most participants were in favour of Ceemet signing the Antwerp declaration, namely **Germany, Austria, France, Italy**, even if Ceemet doesn't agree with every single sentence but because of the strong political signal it would send to the European institutions. The **Nordics** (represented by **Denmark**), however, oppose the Declaration as they do not wish to support the extension of the relaxation of state end beyond 2025. As the situations is delicate and Ceemet usually takes its decision based on consensus, the participants decide to follow the recommendation made by **Belgium** which is to follow Orgalim's position.

<u>Decisions:</u>

1. **As for the time being Orgalim doesn't sign the Antwerp declaration, the Members agreed not to sign it.**
2. **However, when the discussion on the Industrial Action plan touches upon the social dimension, Ceemet should take the necessary steps to be involved.**

c. Implementation of the Ceemet "Manifesto" for the European elections

Due to a lack of time, this point was not discussed.

Item 5 - AOB

a. Ceemet social media strategy on the "European Works Council" file

Delphine Rudelli explained that the discussions in the European Parliament on the European Works Council (EWC) file were moving in the wrong direction and that the advocacy activities of the employers were useless due to the attitude of the German EPP rapporteur who builds alliance only with the left political parties. The question is now to know if Ceemet could develop a more active social media strategy, with individual tweets, calling on EPP MEPs to support the employers' position.

The discussions which followed highlighted **that Stefano Franchi (ITA)** feared that the public opinion would not understand our messages as the topic was too technical and that f we were not followed we would lose credibility. **Christoffer Skov (DK)** was happy to leave the decision to the Secretariat when Pierre Berlioz (FR) insisted that we should tweet on the political and not technical aspects of the file.

On that basis, the Board agreed on the following:

<u>**Decisions:**</u>
Ceemet can develop a social media strategy, tweeting and tagging MEPs on the EWC fil under two conditions:

1. **MEPs are called for support but there is no finger pointing.**
2. **Ceemet cooperates with other employers' organisations to develop its strategy in order not to be isolated.**

b. Date and place of next Board meeting

The 98th Board meeting will take place in person, in **Brussels**, on **25th June 2024, from 9h00 to 10h45**, just before the 43rd General Assembly. An informal **diner** will be organised on **Monday, 24th June** for the participants arriving already on the evening before.

As no other item was raised, **Hubert Mongon** closed the 97th Board of Directors.

Enclosures:
1. List of participants
2. Final agenda
3. Ceemet accounts 2023

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97th Board of Directors
Videoconference, 21st March 2024

Final list of participants

PRACTICAL INFO

- **97th BoD**
21/03/2023
14:30 – 16:30 CET
- **Venue**

Teams videoconference

AUSTRIA (Central)	Mr. Alexander **PROKSCH**
BELGIUM (BeNe)	Mr. Stephan **VANHAVERBEKE**
DENMARK (Nordic)	Mr. Christoffer **SKOV**
FRANCE	Mr. Hubert **MONGON** Mr. Pierre **BERLIOZ**
GERMANY	Ms. Indra **HADELER**
HUNGARY (Eastern)	Mr. Laszlo **DEAK**
ITALY	Mr. Stefano **FRANCHI** Ms. Francesca **POLLI**
SPAIN (Southern)	Ms. Yolanda **SANZ**
TURKEY	Ms. Seyda **AKTEKIN**
UK	Mr. Stephen **PHIPSON** Mr. Ben **FLETCHER**
Ceemet	Mrs. Delphine **RUDELLI**

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97th Board of Directors

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FINAL AGENDA

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- **97th BoD**
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Item 1 - Adoption of minutes of 96th Board of Directors

Item 2 – Budgetary issues

c. **Adoption of Ceemet accounts for 2023**

d. **First discussion on the review of the protection clause & contribution key**

Item 3 - Statutory issues

c. **Ceemet President 2024 – 2026**

d. **New Observer from Serbia**

Item 4 - Follow-up of 42nd GA in Brussels

d. **European Employers' Institute**

e. **Discussion on state aid – Signature of the Antwerp declaration?**

Item 5 - AOB

a. **Ceemet social media strategy on the "European Works Council" file**

b. **Date and place of next Board meeting**