MINUTES - 83/25 – 10/04/2025

100th Board of Directors Budapest, 14th March 2025

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The Chairman, **Hubert Mongon** (France) welcomed the delegates (*enclosure* 1) and the agenda was approved with one change as attached (*enclosure* 2).

ITEM 1 - ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE 99TH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The minutes of the 99th Board of Directors were agreed in a written procedure and sent to Ceemet members on 21 October 2024 with circular 281/24. They were **approved for the record.**

ITEM 2 – CEEMET ACCOUNTS 2024

Valérie Bruyninckx from ACTA presented the Ceemet accounts for 2024 to the participants. As no questions were raised by the members, Hubert Mongon thanked Valérie and asked the Board to recommend the adoption of the Ceemet accounts for 2024 at the forthcoming General Assembly which will take place on 6 May 2025.

The participants then discussed the situation of AI Group who didn't pay their membership fee between 2022 and 2024. There was a broad consensus as expressed by **Ben Fletcher** (United-Kingdom) that "it would send a wrong signal" not to do anything as, according to **Minna Helle** (Finland), this situation is also a moral hazard for Ceemet. For **Oliver Zander** (Germany), we need to decide that we take legal action without waiting any longer.

Decisions:

1. **The 2024 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 2024.**
3. **The Board members agree to take legal action against AI Group for non- payment of their membership fee between 2022 and 2024. Delphine Rudelli will confirm the costs of the proceeding before final decision is endorsed in written.**

ITEM 3 – REVIEW OF THE BUDGETARY RULES

Hubert Mongon introduced the item reminding the participants that Ceemet was launching this discussion on a potential review of our budgetary rules, after first talks on the protection clause, and the special rule for the Eastern members.

Indeed, last year, it had been decided to prolong both for another two years but also to open a broader conversation on Ceemet budgetary rules, as an indefinite prolongation of extraordinary and temporary rules didn't seem opportune for many Board members. To help the members in their reflexion, the Secretariat has prepared a note which sets the scene, recalls the main axes of the Ceemet strategy and gives some options based on the summary of all the contributions received from the Board members. Before giving the floor to Delphine Rudelli, the Chair insisted that there was no guarantee to conclude the decision at this Board meeting and it was important to take time on this crucial issue. However, he also insisted that the topic had to be settled before we discuss the next budget for 2026 in order to avoid long and complex discussions again.

Delphine Rudelli then presented the note sent to the members ahead of the meeting and more specifically the various options proposed by the members. She insisted that none came from the Secretariat nor from the Chair. These options are:

- **Make the protection clause permanent vs. the Board should be given the opportunity to review, not the principle of the Protection Fund Clause but the circumstances and application mechanism** for those seeking financial protections in the future. For members who seek support from the Fund, it must an important consideration for the Board/organisation that assurances are provided by applicants on measures to achieve financial re-stability and reducing the dependency time on the fund.

- Introduce a **new criteria to determine the budget category**: Delphine insisted that this solution had already been envisaged in 2019 and wasn't successful. She therefore wondered if the risk wouldn't be to see all (or most) membership fees reach a lower level than the current one and in the end put the financing of Ceemet at risk;

- Focus should be on **member acquisition to attract new stream of revenues :** for Delphine, this solution has to be understood as long-term strategy as it will not produce immediate effect but it is a good option alos for the credibility and visibility of Ceemet;

- Find alternative ways to close budget gaps e.g. via **event sponsorships:** Delphine added that some members are using this type of financing and could be a source of inspiration. What is key is that Ceemet can keep the control of the content of the event and publications;

- **Use secondments of personnel** from CEEMET-members to strengthen CEEMET's work on specific issues. For Delphine, this is a good solution which has proven efficient in the past . Members are the ones who are in control of this solution.

- **Prioritise the files (if too many) :** Delphine added that we have to be careful not to step back from all the efforts made by the team to grow Ceemet and to give the organisation more visibility and more credibility.

- Possibilities for **operating with a "base budget"** that can be amended with funds for specific CEEMET-projects. If the funds are not provided, CEEMET cannot work on the specific projects.

The discussion which followed highlighted the following positions

For **Hubert Mongon**, it is necessary to take into account the full picture: Ceemet is understaffed and it has not been working with the full team for months / years due to maternity, parental, sickness leaves and several resignations which took time to be replaced. On the financing, the largest members already contribute a lot an can't afford to pay more at the moment.

Oliver Zander (Gesamtmetall) highlighted that he was in favour of keeping the protection clause. For him, there are two ways to deal with it: either we keep temporary and we rediscuss it every five years or we make it permanent but the members to whom it is applied must give Ceemet confidence that it is not a permanent way to save contributions and prove that they need it (by providing relevant documents). As regards the change of the distribution key, it would certainly benefit Gesamtmetall but Oliver Zander believes it is not the right way ahead for Ceemet even if at the moment, Germany can't afford to pay one more value point (as it is already investing quite a lot in the European Employers' Institute). On the other solutions, Oliver Zander is not in favor of Ceemet asking for direct EU funding in order to keep independence from the European Commission but could support ad-hoc payments once in a while.

Ben Fletcher (United-Kingdom) reminded the Board that Make UK was in Ceemet despite the tragedy of Brexit which meant that it was important for them that Ceemet remains a strong voice. As the sector is having a very tough time, it is difficult to increase subscriptions at the moment but a lot of small things will lead to better gains. Make UK is in favour of keeping the protection clause but with a review every few years. However, if there is a long-term need from one or the other member, there should be a debate on the level of influence. Ben also expressed support for secondment from London or Brussels and would be happy to see increased Ceemet increase membership no's. Make UK would however be nervous about taking European Union money but would look at Ceemet seeking corporate sponsorship to help fund policy work, proviso that such funding does not influence the independence of policy output. To conclude, Ben insisted that they support a strong Ceemet.

Minna Helle (Finland) speaking for the Nordic Group insisted that they want a strong Ceemet and strong advocacy as a return on investment. None of them want to reduce Ceemet budget or what it can do. The Nordics would like prefer to have more people as resources are really scarce and in the long run, they would like to see an increased staff. As regards the protection clause, it is not possible to take it away in the near future but the Nordic Groups wouldn't support to keep it permanently as it is creating an imbalance between Members. Members of the Board should look at it and the Director General should discuss with the "protection clause" members. Concerning the idea to change the distribution key, the group doesn't oppose it but doesn't see the point as they don't think it would help. Further, looking for new members is a good idea and having a secondment could be looked at from the Nordics. They also don't oppose EU Commission funding if it is something that can be helpful. And sponsorship could be looked at as long as sponsors don't have a say on the content. On the prioritization, the Nordics propose to put focus on some files and decide which one to work on. They also propose to cooperate with other employers for some files to alleviate the work on Ceemet.

Yolanda Sanz (Spain) wants to bring origin of the debate back on the table. The distribution key chosen is detrimental to Spain and Italy. The normal fee represents 7% of the budget and this is why they are asking for a sustainable system of contribution. Of course, Confemetal is conscious that other members will pay for them.

For **Oliver Zander**, we need a permanent protection clause with a debate every five years to see how we sort this out.

Kareen Vaisbrot (Switzerland) explained that the Central group also has an interest in having a strong CEEMET. They are concerned about the lack of resources as, in the long term, it will be difficult to continue running the organization. A protection clause is necessary, but it must be temporary as the exception cannot become the rule. It needs to be discussed periodically to avoid creating tensions within CEEMET. On the other solutions, trying to gain new members would be a good idea, but we do not know the real potential, and it a solution for the long term.

For **Minna Helle**, if the protection clause would become permanent, we would need to reorganise the whole governance system.

Erik Tierolf (Netherlands) argued that the protection clause is dangerous for Ceemet so if we have one, we need a plan to get out of it.

Faith Ay (Turkey) stated that the protection clause was necessary but if permanent, the governance should be reviewed. We need a monitoring system so that only a limited number of members can ask for the protection clause at the same time. Also, adding new members is crucial but it is not with immediate effect so we need more short-term actions and sponsorship is a good idea.

Conclusions:

The participants agreed that CEEMET should

- **Not request EU Commission funding**
- **Cooperate as much as possible with other employers / industry associations**
- **Work on a strategy to attract new members - also with national members**
- **Investigate possibilities of sponsorship**
- **Check which national members on staff secondment options to the Secretariat**
- **Keep the protection clause for the moment and look at it every five years**

For the next Board, the Secretariat should :

- **Circulate options, with a preference before summer recess.**
- **Investigate the membership models of other employers' organisations in Brussels**
- **Put membership services on the agenda of the next Board**

ITEM 4 – CEEMET ACTIVITIES

a. European Employers' Institute

The European Employers' Institute was launched in October 2024 with nine members and we are now 18. There are 8 European sectoral organizations (Ceemet, EBF, Eceg, Eurocommerce, FIEC, Geopa, Hotrec and WEC-Europe), 1 European cross-industry organization (SME United), and 9 national sectoral associations (Dansk Industri, Technology Industries of Finland, Gesamtmetall, Teknikföretagen, UIMM, IKEM, Byggföretagen, the Swedish Association of Industrial Employers and Norsk Industri).

In terms of topics, the first project is a study on the use of artificial intelligence in European companies, which is being carried out in cooperation with the IW Cologne and the Institute for Applied Labour Studies (ifaa), among others. In addition to collecting up-to-date data, the project should help to develop a common understanding of the opportunities and risks associated with the use of AI in the modern world of work. Furthermore, a study will be conducted on the topic of productivity in the EU member states. It will deliver three reports in 2025. In addition, also legal studies are planned for 2025: the first one will be on subcontracting in the EU.

Replying to Minna Helle, Delphine Rudelli explained that BusinessEurope is running their own research project. The EEI is in contact with BE members to keep them updated of the work of the Institute , waiting for BusinessEurope to change their position.

b. Main lobbying files

Delphine Rudelli updated the participants on the files on which Ceemet has been working actively since the end of January 2025 namely:

Ceemet was invited to the following High-Level political Consultations

- Clean Industrial Deal : consultation meeting with Executive Vice-Presidents Séjourné, Ribera and Minzatu (26 February)
- Strategic Dialogue for the Automotive Industry: consultation with Executive Vice-President Minzatu (18 February)
- Omnibus Package : kick-off meeting with Commissioner Dombrovskis (5&6 February)
- Tripartite Social Summit : Ceemet is part of the employers' delegation (19 March)

Ceemet could participate in the below Social partners' Hearings

- Union of Skills (4 February)
- Single Market Strategy (11 February)
- Women's rights Strategy (equality men & women) (27 January)
- STEM strategy (21 January)

Ceemet actively followed and lobbied on the following legislative files

- European Works Council Directive
- Restructuring Motion for Resolution
- Traineeship Directive
- Talent pool
- eDeclaration Regulation
- and now Omnibus package (CSRD& CS3D)

Indra Hadeler informed the Board that the IORP dossier, which was already discussed some years ago, could come back.

c. AHG Artificial Intelligence

Following a short presentation by Delphine, the participants agreed to:

- **Change the status of the Ad-Hoc Groups on Artificial Intelligence to a formal Working Group**
- **Keep the survey on AI running until Easter**

Item 5 – National situation in the geopolitical context

In **Germany** , the situation in the automotive sector is very difficult but the defense is doing better. As outcome of the elections, the only possibility would be to have a coalition between CDU and Social-Democrats but with a very small majority. The real question will be to know how to get a new budget. CDU doesn't want to increase the debt while discussions are needed on

Infrastructure, defense and regions. The Greens will therefore be needed for the vote.

In **Hungary**, there is hope that the increase of the defense budget will bring business benefits: companies are indeed mainly tier 2 and tier 3 sub-contractors. The Hungarian government is stable and strong and the deficit is also stable. The inflation rate will increase to 7 or 8% in 2025and we will have to see what happens with the government elections next year.

In the **Netherlands**, the country is facing very much pressure on labour costs and increase of wages which makes it very hard to produce in the country. The situation in the MET is very diverse: basic metals are facing hard times while others are doing better. It is difficult to obtain investment to make green steel and it has been almost impossible to sign a good Collective Agreement with trade unions in a situation which is so diverse.

In the **United Kingdom**, the country is going from political turmoil to more stability. Inflation has fallen, interest rates have reduced, but government has communicated negatively on the situation and the need to increase income taxes. The manufacturing sector is facing a problem of energy prices and a strong competition from Chinese cars. In the field of social policy and employment law changes, many developments with negative impact: increase of minimum wage, provisions which make it more difficult to make people redundant. Therefore, we see a reduction of confidence despite good order books. The new government is attempting to reset the EU/UK relationship but with mixed messages. It is difficult to say what the UK wants but it is a good opportunity to relaunch the discussion and redefine the relationship. The threat of new Atlantic and wider global trade disruption is fast emerging as a concern to UK business. Defense sector co-operation between the UK and EU has accelerated as an important issue, given the change in tone from the new US Administration. BusinessEurope has started a working group and we would support a similar working group/discussion group initiative at Ceemet level.

In **Finland**, geopolitics is critical and the government is thinking on how to position themselves and which game changer should they take into account. They are to see that EU is willing to take charge of its defense which is a big change for the MET industries. TIF is launching a reflection on resilience and defense. In Finland, there is no economic growth and the government is changing their goals. TIF signed a new collective agreement with new salary settlement. It's a three-year collective agreement. Employers are quite happy as it comes after four weeks of strikes. Inflation is 0,5% in February 2025 vs. 1,5% in January 2025.

In **Turkey**, MESS is facing a tough collective bargaining process of five months this year. Trade unions are very aggressive. They ask for increases of 6 or 7 times of inflation and they go for illegal actions, illegal strikes. But it is important that MESS signs as it affects all other sectors of economy. Inflation rate is very high (60%) last year. What happens in other countries is important as EU is the most important export market, especially Germany. So this year, signing the collective agreement will be very difficult.

In **Switzerland**, 2024 was a disappointing year compared to 2023: decline for exports by 3,1%
Tariffs imposed by USA will impact exports. Government will try to accelerate trade agreements with other countries in Asia and Mercorsur and also with the EU.

In **Spain**, the GDP growth forecasts are not too bad: 3,2% in 2024, 2,5% in 2025 and 1,9% in 2026 (with all uncertainties so to be taken cautiously). Weakness as always is unemployment with a positive evolution however (11,6%). Particularly problematic is youth unemployment 24%. The government doesn't have annual budget since three years. Extreme left is part of the left coalition and number of measures impacting companies are adopted regularly without consulting employers. Initiatives concern wages, working time etc. Also problem of skills shortages which is why Confemetal launched the Metall Generation initiative for young people.

In **France**, the debated is focusing on sovereignty and the social partners are deeply involved in the discussion. The question is how to finance defense. The pension reform is another hot topic. The French government is trying to move forward on administrative simplification. As regards the economic situation, GDP growth was 1,5% in 2024 and order books are bare in all sectors except aerospace (the most difficult sectors are automotive and mechanical equipment). The unemployment rate reached 7,4% . The negotiations in the MET sector for the wages failed. Other negotiation topics are now: employee savings plan and employment , training and older workers policy.

Item 6 - AOB

a. Mandate CCMI

The mandate of Gerardo Arroyo is coming to an end in December 2025. The participants accept **Stefan Solle** (Gesamtmetall) as new Ceemet candidate for the next mandate.

b. Date and place of next Board meeting

A meeting dedicated to the **defence strategy** will be held in **Brussels on 6 May 2025 between 16.00 and 18.00** (after the 45th GA)[1].

The **date for the 101st Board meeting will be set up by doodle.**

As no other items are raised, the Chair concluded the 100th Board meeting.

Hubert Mongon Chair of the Board	Delphine Rudelli Director General

Enclosures: 1. List of participants / 2. Agenda / 3. Ceemet accounts 2024

[1] In the meantime, it has been decided – for organisational reasons, to integrate the discussions on defence during the 45th General Assembly.

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100th Board of Directors
Budapest, 14 March 2025

Participants List

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FRANCE UIMM	Mr. Hubert **MONGON**
GER MANY Gesamtmetall	Mr. Oliver **ZANDER** Ms. Indra **HADELER**
HUNGARY	Mr. Laszlo **DEAK**
THE NETHERLANDS	Mr. Erik **TIEROLF**
SPAIN Confemetal	Mr. Andrés **SÁNCHEZ DE APELLÁNIZ** Ms. Yolanda **SANZ MARTIN**
SWITZERLAND Swissmem	Ms. Kareen **VAISBROT**
TURKEY MESS	Mr. Fatih **AY** Ms. Şeyda **BISCAYA**
UK MakeUK	Mr. Ben **FLETCHER** Mr. Richard **RUMBELOW**
Ceemet	Mrs. Delphine **RUDELLI**

PRACTICAL INFO

100th Board of Directors
14 March 2025
09:00-13:00

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100th Board of Directors

Budapest, 14 March 2025

AGENDA

Item 1 - Adoption of minutes of 99th Board of Directors

Item 2 – Ceemet accounts 2024

Item 3 - Review of the budgetary rules

Item 4 – Ceemet activities

a. **European Employers' Institute**
b. **Main lobbying files**
c. **AHG Artificial Intelligence**

Item 5 – National developments in the context of the geopolitical turmoil

Item 6 - AOB

a. **Mandate CCMI**
b. **Date and place of next Board meeting**

ENCLOSURE 3 – 83/25 – 10/04/2025

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Accounts 2024 - Please find the enclosure 3 attached to the email.