

# The Conference Board Europe

An introductory guide

THE CONFERENCE BOARD



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*Celebrating 30 Years in Europe*



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## Mission

The Conference Board creates and disseminates knowledge about management and the marketplace to help businesses strengthen their performance and better serve society.

Working as a global, independent membership organisation in the public interest, we conduct research, convene conferences, make forecasts, assess trends, publish information and analyses, and bring executives together to learn from one another.

## Our approach

The Conference Board's service offerings for senior corporate executives are based on a disciplined, rigorous approach that is strong on analysis, metrics and frameworks. This methodology allows us to provide reliable world-wide economic and business intelligence that enables executives to make the right decisions, in the right place, at the right time. Our objective is to broaden perspective and bring insight to the global business community.

Through our conferences, councils and other events, we provide members with regular opportunities to meet with business leaders, experts and peers to examine and discuss the key business issues of the day. These meetings also help facilitate the building of personal networks of trust and allow members to share experience, best practices and potential synergies – all with complete confidentiality.

## Welcome to The Conference Board in Europe

*European businesses today are in a challenging yet privileged position. Europe is the largest economic trading bloc, and European companies' international approach provides them with a natural sensitivity to the complex issues facing today's increasingly global business environment.*

*Making a virtue of a necessity, European companies have gained extensive experience dealing with complex differences in cultures, languages and markets. This gives them a unique advantage in terms of international opportunity. But to fully leverage that advantage, they need special insights. The Conference Board is dedicated to providing Europe's leading companies with the comparative knowledge and perspective they need to develop their regional and world-wide potential.*

*In our capacity as a non-partisan, not-for-profit organisation, we seek to help executives of our member companies broaden their knowledge and understanding of business, economic and societal issues that will affect not only their business performance but also the tenor of their contributions both to their own companies and to the communities in which they work and live.*

**Barbara Reno**  
*VP & Managing Director  
Europe & India*

# Programmes

Membership in The Conference Board Europe enables executives to participate in a variety of knowledge-sharing peer programmes and events. Different formats are developed to suit the varied needs and time demands of today's executives.

## Councils and Roundtables

Councils and Roundtables are private, invitation-only peer groups, generally designed around a particular function but touching on multiple topics confronting senior executives. Council meetings are held throughout the year in major European cities. They provide executives with an opportunity to learn from experts in their field, develop close relationships with peers from other industries and discuss a wide range of issues vital to business today. Council members also receive access to a dedicated Members Only website, as well as regular reports and publications on topics of interest. In Europe, The Conference Board provides some 30 different Councils in the areas of:

- Business Processes, Operations & IT
- Corporate Affairs
- Finance, Economics and Risk Management
- Human Resources

We also conduct regional councils in Hungary and Poland.

### CHATHAM HOUSE RULE

*Council meetings at The Conference Board operate under the Chatham House Rule, which originated at Chatham House in London in 1927:*

*“When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.”*

## Research Working Groups

The Conference Board's Research Working Groups bring together senior executives at leading companies for 9 to 12 months to explore a particular topic or challenge. The group meets in person and via webcast while the research is ongoing. The results are published in a final report shared first with group members and then made available to the wider membership.

## Webcasts

Webcasts are an increasingly popular way for busy executives to 'attend' events and presentations online. Expert speakers present a subject and the participants, from anywhere in the world, can ask questions in real-time via phone, fax or e-mail to a moderator. After the event, the webcasts remain available for viewing on The Conference Board website:

<http://www.conference-board.org/webcasts/>

## Leadership Experience Events

Business leaders have longed turned to military history as a source of inspiration for strategic leadership skills. The Conference Board recognized this connection and, in 2002, launched its first Leadership Experience at Gettysburg. Since then, hundreds of senior corporate executives from all sectors have walked the Gettysburg, Normandy and Waterloo battlefields with us, learning to apply the lessons of military history to the challenges of today's business environment. As *The New York Times* noted, this programme has also proven to be an ideal place to groom "high-potential" managers.

## Special events

### Academic forums

Symposia and other events are organised in partnership with leading universities and government agencies, combining the knowledge and networks of top academic researchers with The Conference Board's rigorous analytical approach and knowledge of the business community.

### Business briefings

Business Briefings are hosted by member companies or industry organisations. The Conference Board's content experts brief executives on the latest economic findings and trends, focusing on issues of specific importance to the member company or industry.

### Conferences and forums

At times different Councils will jointly organise topic-specific Forums, which allow the members of the various Councils to take a transversal approach to issues of common interest.

### Gala dinners

The Conference Board organises a number of exclusive, high-profile events throughout the world each the year. At these invitation-only gala events, The Conference Board's Board of Trustees and top management meet with leading executives from the global business community. Among these are the Annual Dinner, held in New York, and the Trustees & Members Dinner, which takes place each year in a different European city.

## Economic data & analysis

The economics programme provides timely information and analysis on the global economy to ease decision-making and support business planning. Periodicals report on factors affecting competition, trade, relationships, CEO confidence and consumer confidence. Amongst the best known is *StraightTalk*, by Gail Fosler, Executive Vice President and Chief Economist of The Conference Board. She draws on wide-ranging research and expansive networking of government and industry executives to identify issues and trends affecting business and the economy. Her forecasts and insights are highly valued internationally.

The Conference Board is well known for its monthly Consumer Confidence Index (U.S.), widely reported in the news networks and the world's business press. It also produces monthly business cycle indicators for some of the world's leading economies, including France, Germany, Spain, the U.K. and the U.S.

Among its annual studies is the successful series on productivity comparisons in 101 economies representing 98% of global GDP.

## Management research

The Conference Board regularly produces unbiased primary research directed and written by senior researchers. The Research Reports collection, published in print and electronic formats, explores in depth the strategic concerns and best practices of an extensive network of companies. The Executive Action series provides punctual reporting on varied and timely issues, packaged in downloadable electronic papers.

## Periodicals

- *The Conference Board Review* – a monthly magazine of ideas and opinion that explores serious business issues in a lively and often irreverent fashion, but without political or ideological bias.
- *Board Europe* – a bi-monthly newsletter that keeps members up to date on the people, ideas and events that shape the European programme.
- *E-mail Express* – this electronic bulletin gives members news of the latest research and coming events, with links to the Members Only website, where publications and presentations can be downloaded.
- *StraightTalk* – a monthly assessment by the Chief Economist of economic trends, with a global outlook and regional insights.

## At a glance

### Worldwide

• Member Companies	1,800
• Countries Represented	~ 60
• Conferences	260
• Councils	138
• Participating Executives	19,000
• International Media Citations	55,000
• Website Visits	3,800,000

## Business Information Service

The Business Information Service (BIS) is a useful resource for any executive who requires a rapid answer to a practical business question. Culled from more than 15,000 business reference sources, including nearly 1,000 periodicals and on-line databases, information is available on industry overviews and forecasts, consumer demographics, economic statistics, corporate management practices and company financial data.

In today's era of 'information overload', the Business Information Service is a very handy tool.

Tel: +1 212 339 0390

Fax: +1 212 836 9750

Email: [bis@conference-board.org](mailto:bis@conference-board.org)

Or via the Members Only website

## European Trustees

The Conference Board's Board of Trustees is made up of business leaders from around the world.

They contribute their time and extensive international expertise to oversee the business and affairs of the organisation. Their function compares to the board of directors of a commercial private company. Eight of the 24 Trustees are based in Europe and they serve also as European Global Counsellors.

### Josef Ackermann

Chairman of the Management Board and the Group Executive Committee  
Deutsche Bank AG, Frankfurt

### Patrick Cescau

Group Chief Executive  
Unilever plc, London

### Ian E.L. Davis

Worldwide Managing Director  
McKinsey & Company, London

### Francisco González Rodríguez

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer  
BBVA, Madrid

### Klaus Kleinfeld

Former President and Chief Executive Officer  
Siemens AG, Munich

### Padraig McManus

Chief Executive Officer  
Electricity Supply Board, Dublin

### Anton van Rossum

Member of the Board of Directors  
Crédit Suisse Group, Brussels

### G.J. (Hans) Wijers

Chairman, Board of Management  
Akzo Nobel N.V., Arnhem

## European Global Counsellors

The Conference Board is fortunate to draw on the experience and guidance of its European Global Counsellors, business leaders who bring critical insight and counsel to the growth and development of The Conference Board in Europe.

### BELGIUM

#### François M. G. Cornélis

Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of Total and President of Chemicals TOTAL S.A.

#### Viscount Etienne Davignon

Vice Chairman of the Board  
Suez-Tractebel S.A.

#### Julien De Wilde

Member of the Board of Directors  
N.V. Bekaert S.A.

#### Edward G. Krubasik

President  
ORGALIME

#### Thomas Leysen

Chief Executive Officer  
*Umicore*

#### Karel Vinck

Chairman of the Board  
Umicore

### DENMARK

#### Mads Øvlisen

Chairman  
Lego AS

#### Jess Søderberg

Partner and CEO  
A.P. Møller - Maersk Group

### Peter Straarup

Chairman of the Executive Board and the Executive Committee  
Danske Bank AS

### FINLAND

#### Jukka Härmälä

Former President and CEO  
Stora Enso

#### Ole Johansson

President and CEO  
Wärtsilä Corporation

#### Mikael Lilius

President and CEO  
Fortum Corporation

### FRANCE

#### Philippe Camus

Co-Managing Partner  
Lagardère

#### Bertrand Collomb

Honorary Chairman  
LAFARGE

#### Denis Kessler

Chairman and CEO  
SCOR Group

#### Jean-Louis Mathias

Chief Operating Officer  
EDF

**GERMANY**

**Roland Berger**  
Chairman  
Roland Berger Strategy  
Consultants

**Gerhard Cromme**  
Chairman of the  
Supervisory Board  
ThyssenKrupp AG

**Michael Diekmann**  
Chairman of the  
Management Board  
and CEO  
Allianz AG

**Werner Wenning**  
Chairman of the Board  
of Management  
Bayer AG

**GREECE**

**Yannis S. Costopoulos**  
Chairman of the Board  
of Directors  
Alpha Bank

**HUNGARY**

**Zsolt Hernadi**  
Chairman and CEO  
MOL

**IRELAND**

**Brian J. Goggin**  
Group Chief Executive  
Bank of Ireland

**Liam O'Mahony**  
Group Chief Executive  
CRH plc

**NETHERLANDS**

**Peter Bakker**  
Chief Executive Officer  
TNT N.V.

**Rijkman W. J. Groenink**  
Chairman of the  
Managing Board  
ABN AMRO Bank N.V.

**Gerard J. Kleisterlee**  
President and CEO  
Royal Philips Electronics

**Morris Tabaksblat, KBE**  
Retired Chairman and CEO  
Unilever N.V.

**C. J. A. van Lede**  
Member of the  
Supervisory Board  
Akzo Nobel N.V.

**NORWAY**

**Johan H. Andresen, Jr.**  
Owner and CEO  
Ferd Holding AS

**POLAND**

**Maria Wiśniewska**  
Vice President  
Polish Confederation  
of Private Employers

**SPAIN**

**César Alierta Izuel**  
Chairman and CEO  
Telefónica S.A.

**Isidro Fainé Casas**  
President and CEO  
La Caixa

**José Luis Madariaga**  
Executive Chairman, Spain  
PricewaterhouseCoopers

**SWEDEN**

**Tom Johnstone**  
President and CEO  
SKF AB

**Lars G. Nordström**  
Former Group CEO  
Nordea AB

**Marcus Wallenberg**  
Chairman of the Board  
SEB

**SWITZERLAND**

**Fritz F. Fahrni**  
Chairman Innovation  
Management and Logistics  
Institute of Technology,  
Management and  
Entrepreneurship  
University of St. Gallen

**TURKEY**

**Bülent Eczacıbasi**  
Chairman  
Eczacıbasi Holding A.S.

**Güler Sabancı**  
Chairperson and  
Managing Director  
Hacı Ömer  
Sabancı Holding A.S.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

**Sanjiv Ahuja**  
Chairman Emeritus  
Orange S.A.

**Lord Browne of Madingley**  
Former Group Chief  
Executive of  
BP plc

**Harald Einsmann**  
Operating Partner and  
Member of the Board of  
Directors  
Investment Committee  
EQT

**Niall Fitzgerald KBE**  
Chairman  
Reuters Group plc

**Lord Marshall of  
Knightsbridge**  
Chairman  
Pirelli U.K. plc

**Sir Martin Sorrell**  
Group Chief Executive  
WPP Group plc

**Peter D. Sutherland**  
Chairman and Managing  
Director  
Goldman Sachs  
International

# Our history

The Conference Board was established in New York in 1916 by a group of business leaders who were concerned about declining public confidence in business and rising labour unrest in the U.S. Hailing from a variety of industries, the founders concluded that the time had arrived for an entirely new type of organisation. This would not be another trade association, nor a propaganda machine, but a respected, not-for-profit, non-partisan organisation that would bring leaders together and objectively examine those major issues that had an impact on business and society. These are the principles that still drive The Conference Board today.

## Milestones

- 1916** Commences studying minorities and diversity in the workplace
- 1918** Begins tracking issues affecting working women
- 1919** Establishes the first continuous measure of the cost of living
- 1920** Defines the eight-hour workday
- 1924** Accepts its first European member company, BOC Group of the U.K. (today part of Linde AG)
- 1926** Establishes the first peer group Council: The Advisory Council on Human Resources Management
- 1940s** Begins tracking directors' compensation and corporate contributions
- 1967** Launches The Conference Board U.S. Consumer Confidence Index
- 1976** Creates The Conference Board U.S. CEO Confidence Index
- 1977** Establishes first office outside the U.S. in Brussels, Belgium

- 1980** Launches research on the practices of boards of directors
- 1993** Establishes the Global Corporate Governance Center
- 1996** Assumes stewardship of the U.S. Leading Economic Indicators from the U.S. Government
- 1997** Develops presences in India and Hong Kong. Establishes chair at Groningen Growth & Development Centre, University of Groningen, in the Netherlands, to focus on productivity comparisons
- 1999** Launches programme in the Middle East
- 2000** Begins producing Business Cycle Indicators for the U.K. and Germany
- 2000** Appoints first non-American as Chairman of The Board of Trustees: Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge
- 2001** Begins producing Business Cycle Indicators for France and Spain
- 2002** Convenes The Conference Board Commission on Public Trust and Private Enterprise
- 2004** Expands global productivity and labour cost comparisons to 101 countries
- 2005** Produces major research study and conference on Diversity for the European Commission
- 2006** Establishes China Center for Economics & Business in Beijing
- 2007** Celebrates 30th anniversary in Europe!

