

2024 - 2029


2024 European
elections manifesto

For a sovereign, exemplary, open and democratic Europe



June 2024

cdefi
Conférence des Directeurs
des Ecoles Françaises
d'Ingenieurs

The background of the page is a solid blue color with several light blue, five-pointed stars scattered across it, reminiscent of the European Union flag. The stars are of varying sizes and are positioned in the upper and left portions of the page.

CDEFI enjoins French and European higher education scientific communities to actively partake in the 2024 European elections, in order to support the European values and initiatives, around which their action revolve. This election campaign is a crucial opportunity to shape the future of European policies in a world that faces numerous challenges such as armed conflicts, foreign interference, the rise of illiberal regimes and growing ecological threats. In such circumstances, we would like to reaffirm the role of higher education and research as an essential foundation of the European project, embodying the values of collaboration, innovation and progress that underlies the EU. Among these initiatives, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP) and the Erasmus+ Programme especially stand out. These two emblematic programmes have already greatly contributed to strengthening scientific, academic and cultural cooperation within Europe. With a massive budget of more than 100 billion euros for 2021-2027 period, the Framework Programme is a key pillar. The Erasmus+ Programme is of crucial importance as well, especially in relation to the development of the European Universities alliances and the European diploma. By actively taking part in the upcoming elections, we can positively impact the future of these initiatives and ensure a continuous support to European scientific and academic cooperation.

CDEFI reiterates its deep attachment to the values of the EU, such as human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights. These principles guide CDEFI's commitment to education, research and innovation, and underpin the active involvement of French engineering schools in programmes such as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe, promoting mobility, intercultural exchange and international collaboration for a more united, inclusive and innovative Europe.

This manifesto is a declaration of values and principles that are essential to CDEFI. It also urges French and European legislators to take up these issues with determination.

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AXIS 1

A Europe free to train, learn and research

Academic freedom is a crucial foundation for democracy and intellectual progress, encouraging the unhindered exploration of new perspectives, the challenging of set standards and the promotion of open and critical dialogue. Preserving academic freedom stimulates innovation and supports the development of authentic and impartial knowledge, which are essential for societal progress and collective well-being in Europe.



➤ **Proposal**

Monitoring, strengthening and protecting academic freedom in education institutions to ensure that researchers, teachers and students are free to conduct research, teach, publish and discuss ideas without any outside interference.

AXIS 2

Open and shared European science

CDEFI promotes open science in Europe, which involves the free dissemination of scientific discoveries, guaranteeing universal access to knowledge without financial or technical constraints. We consider open science as essential to foster transparency and European scientific collaboration, while encouraging innovation and progress, thus playing a key role in the democratisation of knowledge.

➤ **Proposal 1**

Making open science easier to use by introducing more centralised and unified (open databases, data management plans, etc.).

➤ **Proposal 2**

Developing and disseminating training courses on how to use Open Research Europe.

AXIS 3

Trust in science, a foundation of democracy and progress in Europe

In a world of growing mistrust of scientists, prone to question objective facts based on data, it is critical to integrate scientific thinking at the core of education. This fosters a spirit of constructive scepticism and informed criticism, encouraging the never-ending quest for truth. In addition, strengthening the bond between science and European citizens should be a priority, in order to promote a deeper understanding of scientific issues and avoid the dissemination of biased or false information.

↘ **Proposal 1**

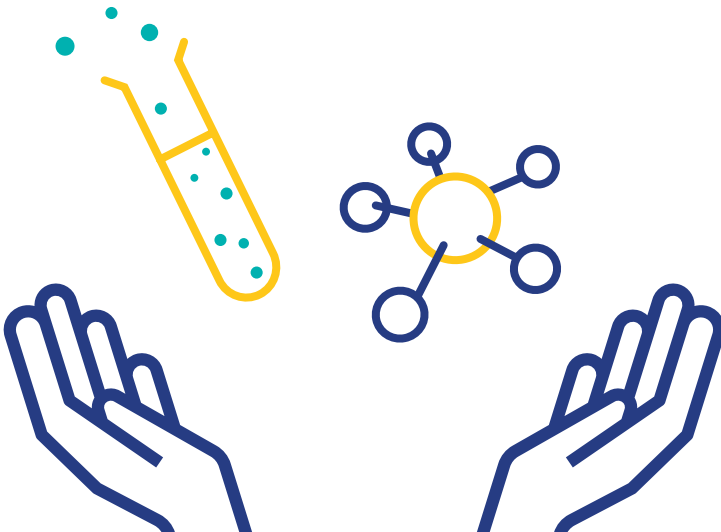
Promoting science education in Europe from an early age to stimulate critical thinking and understanding of scientific issues in our society.

↘ **Proposal 2**

Intensifying efforts to combat disinformation, especially during election campaigns.

↘ **Proposal 3**

Fully integrating science, impartial data and rigorous scientific analysis into the EU's decision-making processes to enhance the quality and effectiveness of its public policies.



AXIS 4

Promoting Europe's sovereignty through reindustrialization

The political ambition to reindustrialise Europe comes along with an ambitious project for European sovereignty. This ambition is the foundation on which we can build the economic and technological autonomy we need to meet the emerging challenges, particularly those regarding the transition to a more sustainable and resilient economy. However, in order to successfully carry out this reindustrialisation, a sufficient number of talents is required to lead the projects. Yet, as highlighted in the Commission's 2023 report on the evolution of employment and social developments in Europe (ESDE), Europe currently faces a serious shortage of engineers¹. Furthermore, growing foreign interferences in sensitive technological sectors is threatening Europe's sovereignty and competitiveness. Indeed, some non-European companies are exploiting legal loopholes to gain access to EU funding for their projects, putting at risk Europe's security and technological independence.

➤ **Proposal 1**

Creating a European programme dedicated to research in engineering, in order to support the reindustrialisation of Europe and strengthen its global competitiveness.

➤ **Proposal 4**

Making Europe more attractive to talents from third countries by elaborating an open and demanding policy that focuses on the academic success of international students, enhancing our research and innovation capabilities, and strengthening Europe's position as a hub of knowledge on a global scale.

➤ **Proposal 2**

Intensifying efforts to create a common framework for internships within the EU in order to address the lack of skilled staff in technical jobs.

➤ **Proposal 5**

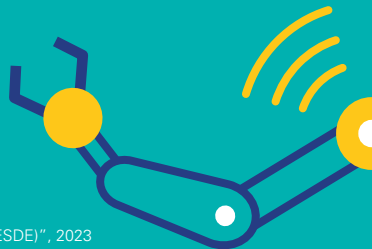
Receiving uprooted populations with dignity following a structured, confident, ambitious and responsible approach. This requires to efficiently coordinate flows of displaced persons, to work closely together between Member States, and to elaborate a solid and inclusive integration policy.

➤ **Proposal 3**

Creating a European apprentice statute and a European trainee statute.

➤ **Proposal 6**

Limiting the involvement of specific non-European competitors in certain technological areas to protect European sovereignty and draw up a map of sovereign technologies that excludes collaboration with third countries.



1. The European Commission's report "Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE)", 2023

AXIS 5

A responsible, exemplary Europe

Although the EU has made progress towards achieving most of the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015², there is still a pressing need to take effective actions regarding growing climatic challenges. In the urgent race towards environmental sustainability, engineering, higher education and research are the fundamental pillars for technological innovation and progress. Massive European investment in these areas is critical to foster technological breakthroughs and innovative solutions that can respond to the complex challenges of transitions. Recognising the potential of these sectors in terms of transformation and providing them with the necessary resources is a priority, as well as promoting a vision of research and innovation focused on diversified, sustainable and fast-acting impacts, going beyond the economic criteria of growth and employment.

↘ Proposal 1

Encouraging the adoption of a frugal model of technological innovation, to overcome regulatory contradictions at both national and European level in order to move towards a coherent and pragmatic management of environmental and social transitions in society.

↘ Proposal 2

Doubling the budget of the next European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation to ensure greater support for engineering, higher education and research in view of their key role in the ecological transition.

↘ Proposal 3

Stepping up efforts to accelerate the ecological and societal transition.



2. Eurostat, "Sustainable development in the European Union — monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context, 2023 edition".

AXIS 6

An inclusive and humanist Europe that protects its citizens

CDEFI reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the principles of inclusion, diversity and mutual respect, emphasising that these fundamental values significantly contribute to social cohesion within Europe. From this humanist perspective, science must be acknowledged as a vector of universalism that is able to transcend geographical and cultural boundaries to encourage shared knowledge and international collaboration. By promoting an open and collaborative approach to science, we are strengthening ties between peoples and helping to build a fairer and more united world, where technological progress serves the well-being of all humankind.

📌 **Proposal 1**

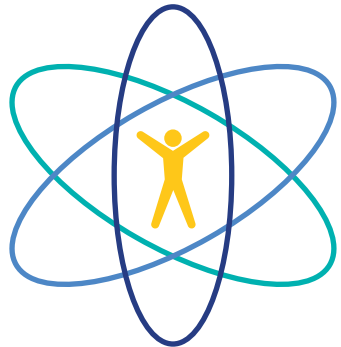
Protecting the fundamental values set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union against any drift, in particular by providing for an effective use of existing sanctions to make sure these values are observed.

📌 **Proposal 2**

Guaranteeing equal opportunities and promoting an inclusive European society where every individual is respected, regardless of their origins, religion, physical condition, gender or sexual orientation.

📌 **Proposal 3**

Acknowledge engineering and science as areas of inclusive and diverse opportunities to encourage young talents to explore these paths and contribute to Europe's progress and innovation.





About CDEFI

CDEFI (Conference of Deans of French Schools of Engineering) is a non-profit association of Deans of French public and private schools of engineering and universities of technology authorized by the CTI (a French accreditation agency) to deliver the French engineering degree. Created in 1976 by a decree issued by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, CDEFI is the local, national and international political and public voice of French schools of engineering and universities of technology.

Website: www.cdefi.fr

X (ex-Twitter): x.com/Cdefi

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/5323901/

Press contact

MadameMonsieur Agency

Stéphanie MASSON

smasson@madamemonsieur.agency

+33 6 84 65 17 34