

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

The report draws on extensive documentation and around 60 interviews, including with public authorities, unions, employers' associations, and workplace surveys.

It compares France's management practices with EU averages in key dimensions: employee well-being, trust in management, and cooperation with employee representatives. It states that France performs below EU27 averages.

France: Health, Safety & Recognition

- Motivations for health & safety measures in France: legal compliance (87 %), employee demands (84 %), avoiding labour inspection fines (63 %), brand reputation (60 %), and productivity gains (38 %).
- Only about 49 % of French workers feel they have career advancement opportunities - compared to 65 % in Germany and 68 % in the UK.
- Statistical analyses suggest positive links between employee recognition and company profitability - though results need further validation through targeted surveys.

International Comparison: Germany, Ireland, Italy, Sweden

- **Germany:** High levels of employee participation (69 % vs EU average ~75 %), frequent labour inspections (48 % vs France's 25 %), and strong co-decision via works councils. Digital surveillance and AI in HR are key topics in social dialogue.
- **Ireland & Italy:** Annexes cover these countries, focusing on unique participatory mechanisms (e.g., in Italy, gender equality strategies).
- **Sweden:** Management emphasises consensus, fairness, and psychological support - though international economic pressures are prompting debates about whether that model remains fully adaptable.

Standards, ESG & Sustainability Reporting

- Focus on international standards like ISO 45001 for occupational health & safety and emerging ESG frameworks (notably ESRS S1 under CSRD). These stress leadership, accountability, culture, employee inclusion, and transparency regarding workforce and training.
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Quantitative Analysis

- Utilises World Management Survey frameworks and econometric methods to explore links between management quality (e.g., recognition, employee pride) and key economic outcomes (EBE – gross operating surplus).
 - Findings indicate positive correlations but limited statistical significance due to sample sizes; suggests further robust studies are needed.
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Key Takeaways

1. **French management practices lag behind EU peers** in well-being, trust, and employee involvement.
2. **Recognition and participation** appear tied to better financial performance, but more rigorous research is required.
3. **Learning from international models** (especially Germany, Sweden) could help enrich France's approach - particularly via social dialogue and co-determination.
4. **Alignment with standards (ISO 45001, CSRD/ESRS)** may boost both employee well-being and company performance.
5. **Suggests rolling out deeper field-based studies** for better causal evidence and designing policies to leverage management practices for broader social and economic goals.