



Cegos 2024 international survey

# **Radioscopy of Human Resources Departments**

HR managers' and employees' crossed views  
on the issues and future challenges  
in Human Resources



As an international leader in Learning & Development, the Cegos Group is committed to working with organisations and their human resources departments to help them keep pace with business change.

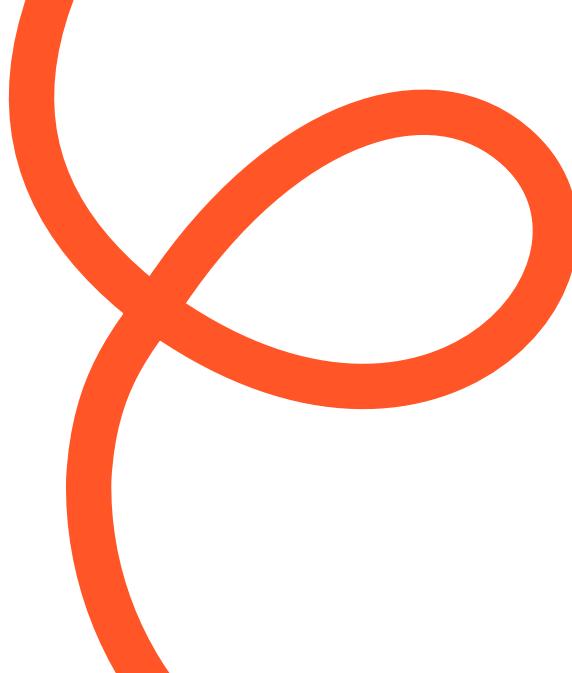
Human resources lies at the heart of the transformations of their organisations. As they are faced with the challenges of today's world, HR professionals need to adapt their practices and skills to support employees and managers.

Cegos has therefore chosen to conduct this international barometer dedicated to the human resources function in organisations, with the aim of understanding:

- The major challenges facing HR professionals,
- Their perception of their role,
- Their priority projects,
- Their interactions with the company's various internal stakeholders, particularly managers.

The barometer was carried out in March 2024 in 9 countries in Europe (France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom) and Latin America (Brazil, Mexico, Chile). This edition polled 5,052 employees and 554 HR decision-makers in private and public sector organisations with 50 or more employees on the issues and future challenges in human resources.





# The Key Figures

## HR decision-makers are legitimate players in the many transformations of their organisations

- According to 68% of employees, HR managers in their organisation support technological developments such as artificial intelligence, the digital transformation of jobs or the digitalisation of the HR function.
- 81% of employees consider they play a role in supporting societal developments (gender equality in the workplace, inclusive HR policy, fight against discrimination...).
- Quality of life at work (60% of HR respondents), support for the development of professions and skills (55%) and diversity and inclusion issues (54%) have a major impact on the work of HR directors.
- HR professionals are facing major strategic challenges in terms of attracting and recruiting staff (45%), retaining talent (41%), supporting transformation (35%) and developing skills (upskilling and reskilling).
- While the integration of artificial intelligence is a strategic issue for 21% of the HR experts, almost 70% of them have not taken it into account in their HR practices.
- HRDs need to address the social challenges facing their organisations, by promoting a better work-life balance for their teams (47% overall) and by taking action to improve health in the workplace (fighting stress and psychosocial risks, 46%).
- Finally, they focus particularly on employee commitment and performance (41%).

## The experience of HRDs is an asset in supporting these changes

- 80% of HR Directors have been in the HR business for more than 3 years and 32% have over 10 years' experience.
- 59% of respondents say they have worked in HR for several years (+5 points vs. 2019).
- The HR function has become more strategic according to 85% of international HR professionals and has also become simpler thanks to the automation of tasks and the streamlining of procedures (59%, i.e. +15 points vs 2019).
- 41% of HR managers see themselves primarily as local HR managers and only 26% see themselves as strategic. On the other side of the mirror, employees see HR staff primarily as business line HRDs (26%) and process management HRDs (22%).
- 56% of HR experts think the main criterion for the attractiveness of the job is the support provided for the development of employees' skills. This is also the main source of satisfaction for 53% of them.



### **Managers are key HR relays for supporting change**

- 80% of HR decision-makers acknowledge the role of managers in human resources management. This view is shared by employees, albeit to a lesser extent (67%).
- For 42% of HRDs, taking into account specific HR objectives has brought managers to change their practices and increase their commitment in this area.

### **In this complex environment, HR decision-makers have constantly to do the splits**

- The main difficulties encountered by international HRDs are reacting to and resolving emergencies (70%), coping with increasing pressure (68%) and adapting to regular changes in strategy (66%).
- HR professionals know that their function needs to change: they anticipate greater commitment in CSR issues (48%) and changes in their practices linked to the difficulty of attracting and retaining talents, changes in working practices and the expectations of new generations (32%).

### **Even if they feel torn apart, HRDs remain fundamentally attached to their missions**

- International HR managers are confident, enthusiastic and involved (38%), and seem to be satisfied with their work-life balance.
- They continue to develop their skills to meet the challenges of their role, thanks to training (62%) and resources available online (59%).
- They are also taking a long-term approach, as 71% of the polled HR managers plan to be in their jobs in five years' time.

# HR decision-makers are legitimate players in the many transformations of their organisations

## A function already mobilised to support business change

According to the polled employees, the HR function is already at the heart of the changes and developments underway. **68% of them believe that their HR department is supporting technological developments** such as artificial intelligence, the digital transformation of jobs or the digitalisation of the function, and **81% acknowledge its role in supporting societal developments** (professional equality between men and women, inclusive HR policy, fight against discrimination, health in the workplace...).

This recognition of the role of HR Directors and HR Managers reflects their commitment, over a number of years now, to topical issues that have a major impact on their work, such as **quality of life at work (according to 60% of HR respondents)**, **support for the development of professions and skills (55%)** and the **challenges of diversity and inclusion (54%)**.

It should be noted that the issue of senior staff employment is emerging (43%), in a context of longer careers on the one hand and labour shortages on the other.



### *In your organisation, what is the impact of the following topical issues?*



Source: Cegos 2024 "Radioscopy of Human Resources Departments" international survey

## HRDs grappling with the strategic challenges facing their organisation

As they are faced with the organisations' transformations, HR professionals are confronted with **major strategic challenges** such as attracting talent and recruiting (for 45% of them), retaining talent (41%), supporting transformation (35%) and developing skills (upskilling and reskilling).

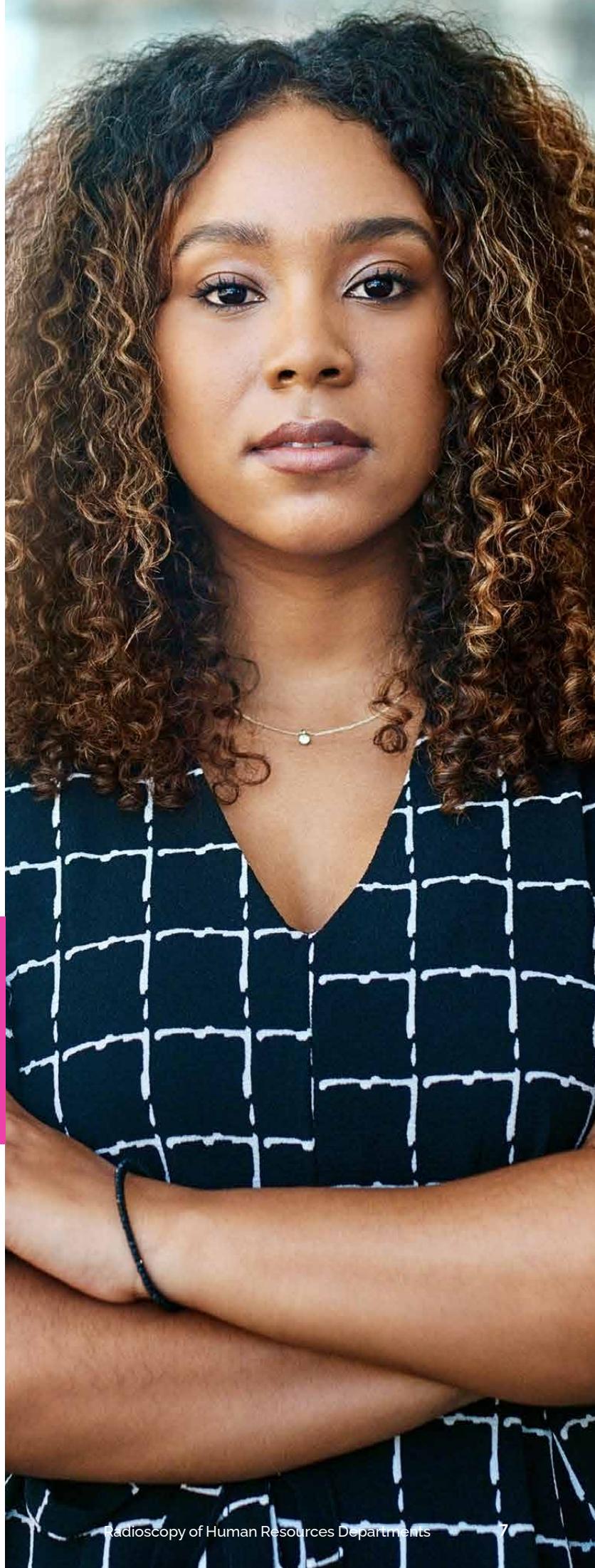
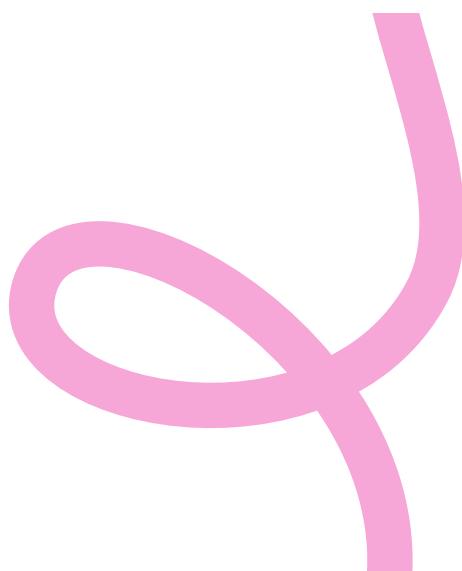
**The integration of artificial intelligence** into working methods and processes is making significant inroads, as it is a strategic issue for 21% of the international HR experts.

And yet, **almost 70% of HR Directors and HR Managers say that they have not taken AI into account in their HR practices**.

And 22% do not seem to have realised the importance of this topic since they have no plans to integrate AI into their practices.

# 69%

of HRDs have not integrated artificial intelligence into their working methods and processes.



## The HR function continues to address and support today's many social and HR issues

HRDs must also support the social climate challenges facing their organisation, in particular by **promoting a better work-life balance for their teams (47%)** and by **taking action to improve health in the workplace (combating work-related stress and psychosocial risks, 46%)**.

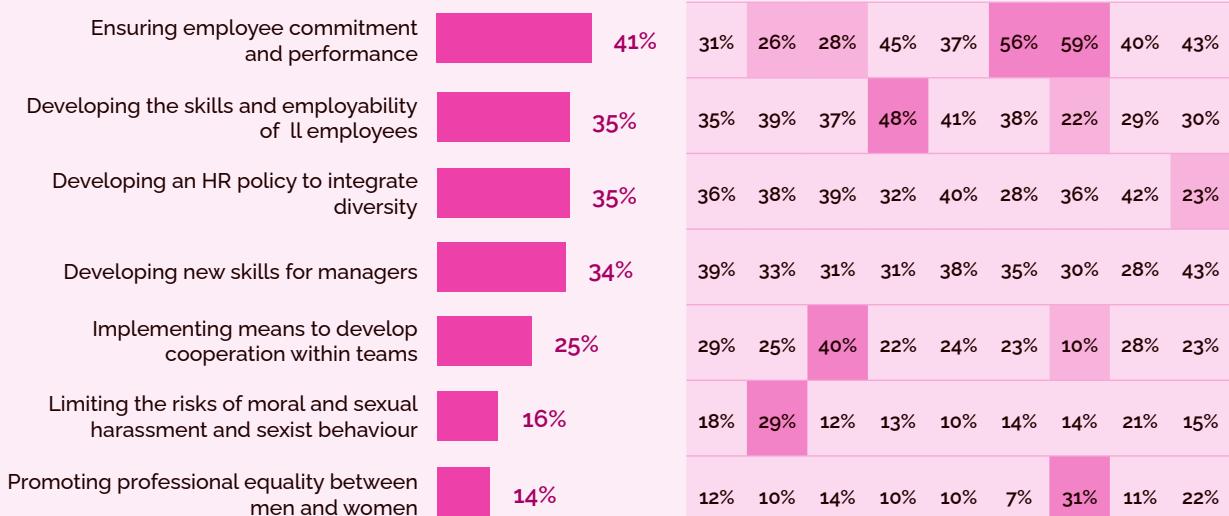
This support is all the more necessary as **the social climate remains unsatisfactory for HR decision-makers (average of 7.3)** and even less so for employees (average of 6.9).

79% of HRDs and 71% of employees feel that companies' social climate is part of a **context in which human relations within organisations have worsen**.

Finally, the HR function continues to support multiple HR challenges, with a particular focus on employee commitment and performance (41%).



### What are the main issues facing your company/organisation?



Source: Cegos 2024 "Radioscopy of Human Resources Departments" international survey



**Isabelle Drouet de la Thibauderie, Offer and Expertise Manager of the 'Human Resources' at the Cegos Group, explains :**

"Over the last few years, HRDs have seen no let-up. After the health crisis, which led them to handle teleworking and hybrid working, these professionals have been faced with emerging new technological challenges (such as the explosion in generative artificial intelligence) and societal challenges (the rise of CSR, diversity and inclusion, professional equality between men and women, employability of senior staff...). All these developments also have an impact on skills. HRDs have therefore been propelled as key players in the strategic transformation of their organisations; they must now assert this position. That requires having the appropriate resources, which they do not always have and being able to rely on strong internal relays. These challenges are all the more important since HRDs know that they must also transform their practices and their own function."

# The experience of HRDs is an asset in supporting these changes



## HR: an experienced function and more diverse profiles

The HR function is an experienced one, with **80% of HRDs/HRMs having been in the job for more than 3 years**, and 32% having more than 10 years' experience.

While 59% of respondents say they have worked in HR for several years (+5 points vs. 2019), it is interesting to point out that **41% of them previously held another position**:

- 19% of them chose to take up an HR position;
- 22% were offered an HR position to enrich their career plan (14%).

This is reflected in the diversification of HRD profiles.

## A function that is also more demanding, complex and strategic than it was 5 years ago

The vast majority of international HRDs feel that their role has changed:

- 87% of them believe that they have broadened their scope;
- 85% that their role has become more strategic, i.e. +9 points compared with 2019.

**85%**

of HR professionals believe that their role has become more strategic.

Most of them stress the growing complexity of their job, which has had to adapt to the sometimes divergent requirements of the various stakeholders (89%) and which has to address a wide variety of issues and a multiplicity of subjects (85%).

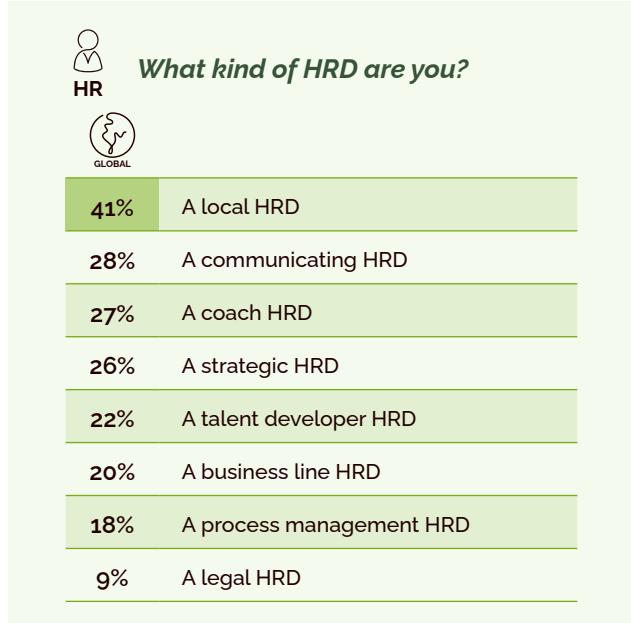
However, 59% also believe that the HR function has become simpler thanks to the automation of tasks and the streamlining of procedures (59%, i.e. +15 points vs. 2019).

## Could the automation enable HR decision-makers to add value to their various roles?

The majority of HRDs see themselves as professionals who work in the field and engage in dialogue, with **41% of them claiming to be local HRDs**. While few see themselves as legal HRDs, more of them see themselves as communicating HRDs (28%) or coach HRDs (27%).

It should be noted that the majority of these professionals do not see themselves as strategic (26%) or talent developers (22%) HRDs.

And employees have a different vision of the HR function. They are aware of the need for HR experts to be better communicators (61% overall), closer (52%) and more strategic (47%), but on a day-to-day basis, they see them more as business HR managers (26%), process managers (22%) and local HR managers (21%).



Source: Cegos 2024 "Radioscopy of Human Resources Departments" international survey

## Helping people to develop their skills: a major driver of attractiveness and a source of satisfaction

When asked what motivated them to take up this role, HR managers were most interested in supporting employee skills development (56%).

This is followed by :

- Supporting organisational change and transformation projects (37%);
- Enabling HRDs to use their influence to regulate human and organisational situations (37%);
- Supporting organisational performance (35%).
- These drivers of attractiveness correspond more or less to the tasks that HR Directors have discovered once they hold the position. For example, 43% of them continue to place support for skills development at the top of their list, followed by exerting influence to regulate human and organisational situations (36%), supporting the organisation's performance (36%) and developing its culture (36%).

Finally, the most satisfactory dimensions in HRDs'

job are:

- Supporting the development of employees' skills (53%);
- Using their influence to regulate human and organisational situations (38%);
- Supporting organisational performance (35%);
- Contributing to regulate social dialogue (35%).

**41%**

see themselves first and foremost as local HR managers.



# Managers are key HR relays for supporting change

## Sharing the HR function with managers now seems to be a given

**67%**

of employees think the HR function is totally and seriously shared with their managers.

80% of HR decision-makers acknowledge the role of managers in human resources management, whether they are fully involved (38%) or just beginning to play this role (42%).

Employees share this view, albeit to a lesser extent: 67% of them feel that the function is "totally" and "seriously" shared.

## This shared viewpoint is due in particular to the fact that HR skills are taken into account in managers' performance objectives

According to 42% of HRDs, integrating specific HR objectives has changed managers' practices and helped to increase their investment in this area.



*In your opinion, the HR function is shared and managers are fully involved. How do you explain this situation?*



GLOBAL



Source: Cegos 2024 "Radioscopy of Human Resources Departments" international survey

**Annette Chazoule, Offering and Expertise Manager  
of the 'Management and Change' at the Cegos Group, adds:**

"This 2024 Radioscopy highlights the fact that managers are a solid pillar and an efficient relay for HR policies and their implementation within organisations. Cooperation between managers and human resources professionals is now a given, yet the latter must address a major challenge: they still need to train managers to support the many emerging transformations, particularly in relation to artificial intelligence, CSR and quality of life and working conditions".





## In this complex environment, HR decision-makers have constantly to do the splits

**The main difficulties faced by HRDs are handling emergencies, coping with pressure and dealing with frequent strategic changes in their organisation**

In recent years, HR professionals have dealt with many operational emergencies linked to the health crisis and the explosion in teleworking and hybrid working. They have also had to continue to support the strategic transformation of their organisations. **And yet, on a day-to-day basis, they are still mainly absorbed in managing emergency situations (70%).**

**It's hardly surprising, then, that 68% of HR decision-makers ranked managing pressure as the second most difficult problem they encounter.**

**70%**

of HR experts spend most of their time managing emergency situations.



### **What difficulties do you encounter on a daily basis in your job?**



|  |            |
|--|------------|
| I spend a lot of time reacting to and resolving emergencies                                    | <b>70%</b> |
| I am under increasing pressure   | <b>68%</b> |
| I am faced with regular changes of strategy  | <b>66%</b> |
| I spend a lot of time on the legal and regulatory aspects of the job                           | <b>63%</b> |
| I have to implement decisions with which I am not in phase or in which I have not participated | <b>60%</b> |
| I lack the time to invest in the strategic aspect of the job                                   | <b>60%</b> |

Source: Cegos 2024 "Radioscopy of Human Resources Departments" international survey



**As they are caught up in day-to-day management, HR experts are aware that their function must also be transformed**

**48% of HR professionals anticipate greater involvement in CSR issues** (psychosocial risks, well-being at work, diversity and equality) over the next five years.

They also expect to carry out their role in a dematerialised environment, with more virtual processes (46%), which challenges the proximity expected by employees and the human dimension of the position.

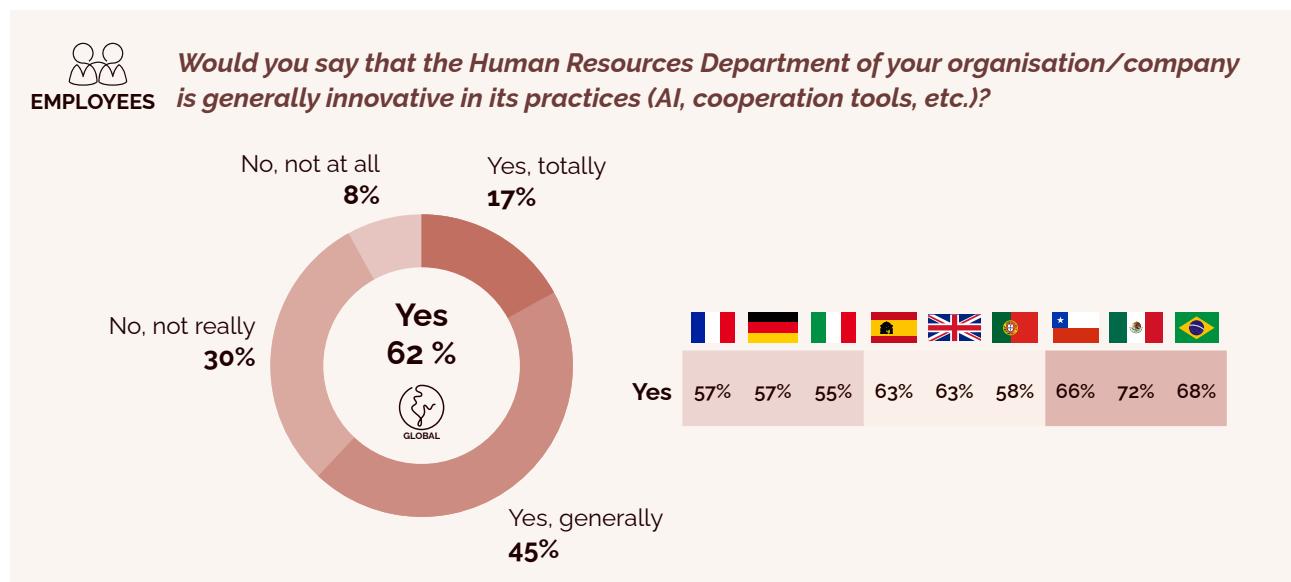
Last, they foresee the function to become increasingly outsourced (20%) and disintermediated (12%).

**They know they must develop their practices and go on innovating**

According to the polled HRDs, the five main factors driving the evolution of HR practices are:

- Difficulty attracting and retaining talent (40%);
- Changing ways of working (hybrid, teleworking - 34%);
- The expectations of new generations (32%);
- Stress and suffering in the workplace (psychosocial risks - 31%);
- Technological developments: artificial intelligence, big data, social networks (28%).

**The HR function must also continue to innovate in its practices** (62% of employees feel that their HR manager has done so).



Source: Cegos 2024 "Radioscopy of Human Resources Departments" international survey

# Even if they feel torn apart, HRDs remain fundamentally attached to their missions

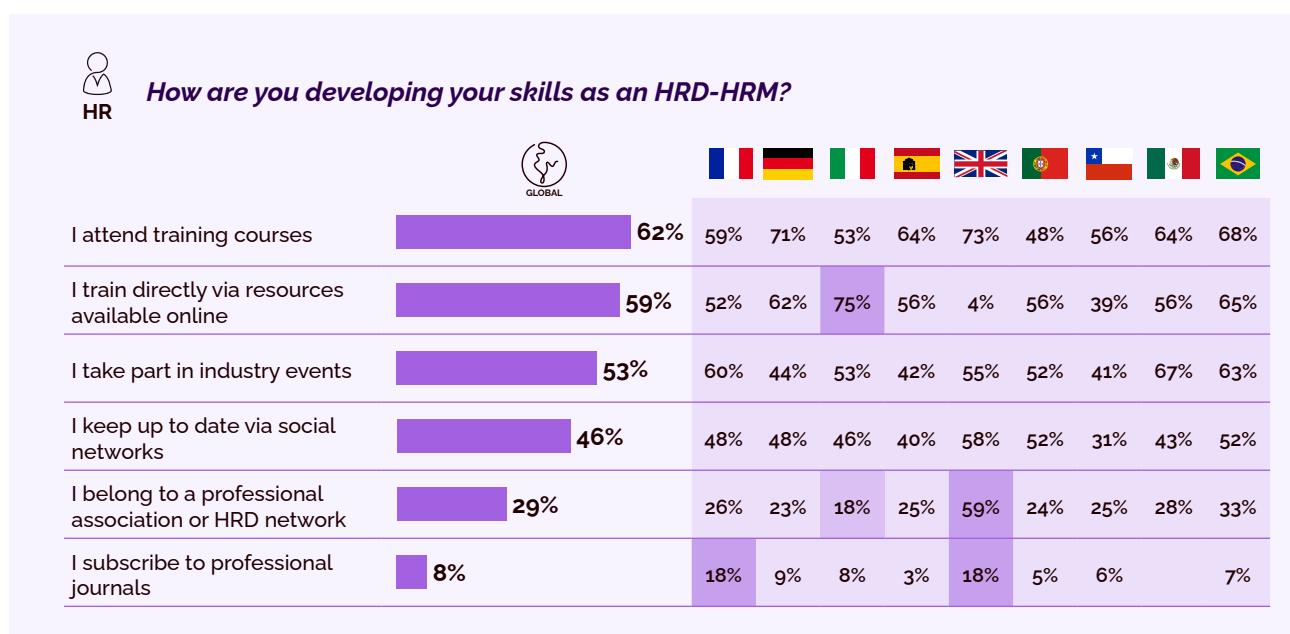
**HRDs are confident, enthusiastic and involved, and seem satisfied with their quality of life at work**

38% of HR Managers say they are enthusiastic, involved and confident about the challenges ahead.

91% of the respondents say they act in line with their ethics and values, and 83% feel fulfilled in their professional activity as they operate in a climate of cooperation and trust (80%).

## They are committed to developing their skills

As they are faced with changes in their job and many challenges, HR professionals continue to develop their skills, mainly through training (62%) and online resources (59%).



Source: Cegos 2024 "Radioscopy of Human Resources Departments" international survey

**38%**

of DHR-RRH remain enthusiastic, committed and confident.

According to employees, **to be successful in the future, HRDs will need to strengthen some of their soft skills and cross-functional competencies**, such as empathy (25%), being close to their teams (23%) and listening (20%), in addition to the necessary development of their CSR and digital skills.

They are also taking a long-term approach, as **71% of international HR managers plan to be in their jobs in five years' time (+2 points vs. 2019)**.





# The Cegos Group at a glance

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every year and

**1 M**

users of our  
Group Digital Assets

**236 M€**

million in turnover

**20,000**

customer companies

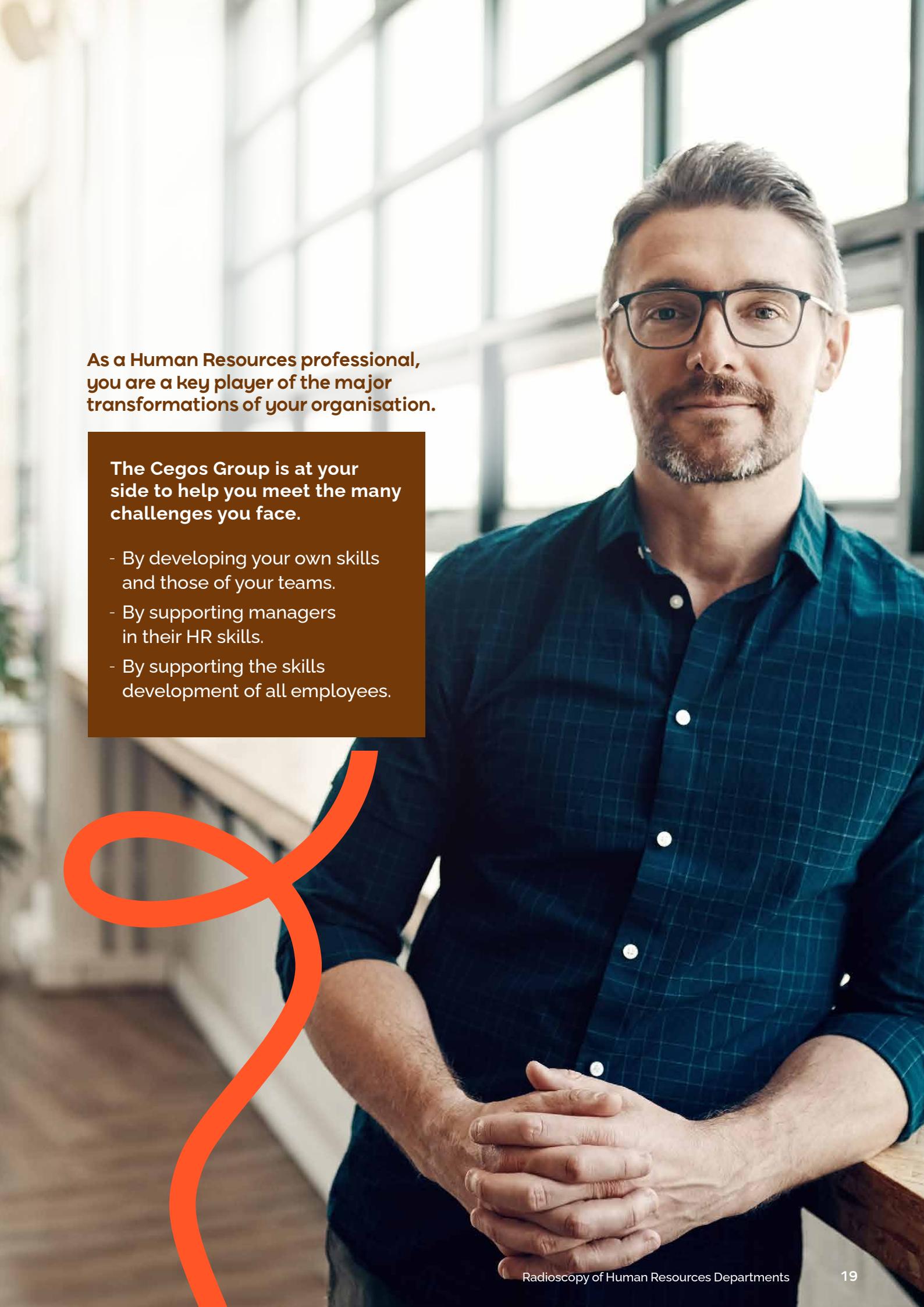
**2.5 M**

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- By supporting managers in their HR skills.
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