

Prof. Damien FABREGUE, INSA Lyon, France, Application for CESAER

In a world increasingly influenced by fake news and divisive opinions, science and technology—through the voice of universities in Europe—must assert themselves to build a European area of higher education and research founded on rationality and serving the common good. It is with this conviction that I submit my application to join the Board of Directors of CESAER.

After 14 years as a professor of metallurgy and head of student exchanges in the Materials Department at INSA Lyon, I was appointed Vice President in charge of European and International Relations at INSA Lyon six years ago. In this role, I have been a member of several executive committees (Unitech, GE3, etc.) and participated in international commissions at the local (Université de Lyon) and national (INSA Group) levels.

During this period, I was able to appreciate the essential and crucial work that CESAER carries out on a daily basis to ensure that the views of science and technology universities are heard by stakeholders and decision-makers in Europe. This is particularly important for INSA Lyon, the largest engineering school in France, as CESAER's values align perfectly with our founding principles, such as inclusion and ethics, but also the central place of science and technology in our society.

In order to realistically address major global challenges, science and technology universities must be supported to provide the highest standard of education, coupled with effective, cutting-edge research and enhanced innovation capabilities. This support must be both financial, through European funding programmes, and institutional; in other words, the Commission must provide simple and effective tools to enable science and technology universities to carry out their missions with confidence.

If elected to the CESAER Board of Directors, I will definitely be committed to supporting the four pillars of network's action. However, I would also like to contribute ideas based on my own experience.

Firstly, my institution was founded by a philosopher, Gaston Berger, who pioneered the concept of *prospective*—a method based on envisioning possible futures to make the best decisions today. This method could be implemented to inform CESAER's choices, as a tool for the collective intelligence process of the task forces, in order to consider CESAER's action within the landscape of European Union's stakeholders and decision-makers by imagining the future. This process is at the very heart of INSA Lyon's strategy and is ultimately very much in line with CESAER's current functioning. We could use this tool first to develop the 2028/29 action plan, but also through a broader exercise involving everyone in CESAER to determine the 2035 strategy.

Additionally, my institution has long been committed to taking sustainable development issues into account in all our activities. This theme, which is now the subject of the Task Force Sustainability, could benefit from becoming a cross-cutting theme in our thinking. Each task force could thus take this issue into account in its work, because sustainable development must be addressed at all levels in our universities (education, research, innovation, organisation, institution, etc.), as should be the case in all human activities today. Each member of CESAER could be a real resource centre in this area, and the pooling of our initiatives and their detailed analysis should inspire European policies.

Furthermore, we are all aware of the growing need to ensure Europe's scientific and technological sovereignty. I would therefore propose that CESAER becomes a European platform that brings together complementary expertise and shares it among its members, thereby strengthening this independence. For instance, I believe it is crucial for CESAER to be able to suggest a shared European strategy for data management. This would facilitate the development of secure, European-owned digital tools, free from reliance on external powers.

Finally, in the context of establishing a European engineering degree, the INSA Lyon's fully integrated approach to the student experience (education, accommodation, catering, extracurricular activities, etc.) could be an interesting topic for discussion within Europe. I will therefore work to ensure that CESAER continues to be a resource for the European Commission in highlighting best practices, difficulties and advantages in the implementation of joint engineering degrees.

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Damien Fabrègue, INSA Lyon, France