

1.6.1 CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PAST CFE PRESIDENTS

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President of CFE, 2004



The professional experience I have gained through participation in CFE mirrors CFE's own gradual and steady progress as an institution, starting from its establishment on the 1st of July in 1959 in Paris. It has been a long path that we have taken together, our national professional associations, by slowly adapting tasks and purposes to political, economic and social needs that the European Union has had to face, not to mention political and institutional differences.

Certainly our development has encountered issues that sometimes have been political in nature, but the results achieved by our CFE, both internally and in developing connections with the European institutions, confirms the importance of tax topics and the need to analyse the issues arising from the development and differences of economic relationships, and the need to comply with European principles and regulations.

Joining CFE and assuming the related responsibilities as member of the Executive Board and then President allowed me to pursue and develop both the goals already reached and those that required a longer term strategy for development and future needs.

To that end, it was important that CFE proceeded to consolidate its operational activities in one location with adequate staff to ensure a continuous presence in the location of the Commission, a proper control on proposals and a direct knowledge of programs and orientations of the competent offices. The current organisational structure ensures that cooperative relationships will always exist with the EU institutions and embeds CFE within the EU structure.

Challengingly, European taxation policy consists of finding a balance between European and national interests; it is undoubtedly necessary to persist in the perfection of EU legislation which is in compliance with shared principles and without distortions.

The dynamic development of market economies constitutes a major obstacle to coordination on matters of taxation but the CFE, with its innovation and ability to adapt as proved in the past, will undoubtedly be able to respond to these challenges and play a role in the proposals adopted by the EU.

Economic developments, the dynamics of EU politics and the need to balance domestic public budgets, which contain unique challenges in each Member State, together with the diversification of current production systems, represent a true obstacle for tax harmonisation in the future. However, facing these challenges and achieving harmonisation will be pursued not only through a political channels, but also through the support and advocacy on the part of experienced tax experts.

Proposals and solutions which achieve tax harmonisation, essential for the livelihood of the European Union, require the expertise and input representing European tax advisers, and CFE has a pivotal role in this process.