



CÍRCULO
DE EMPRESARIOS

ideas para crecer
ideas for growth



Annual Report **2023**



**CÍRCULO
DE EMPRESARIOS**

*ideas para crecer
ideas for growth*

Annual report corresponding to the financial year 2023,
presented by the Board of Directors to the Annual General Meeting on March 19, 2024.

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OUR MISSION

The Círculo de Empresarios is a think tank in which around two hundred business people and senior executives from major national and multinational companies in Spain participate.

Its main goals consist of fostering free markets and private enterprise, the acknowledgement of the social value of business people as creators of employment, wealth and well-being as well as the promotion of an entrepreneurial spirit.

Under the motto “ideas for growth”, the Círculo promotes the growth of our economy and our businesses, improvements to the quality of our institutions and responsible and

ethical conduct in the business world. The Círculo wishes to contribute with its thoughts on and proposals for improving Spanish society, at all times furthering the common good.

Registered as a non-profit, the Círculo de Empresarios is an entirely independent Group Project for Business Responsibility which is financed exclusively by the fees of members who, on February 29, 2024, consist of 200 senior executives personally representing more than 150 of the leading companies operating in Spain, both national and multinational.

The Chair and other positions on the Board of Directors are not remunerated. Solely the staff, comprising twelve individuals under the General Secretary, are remunerated.

“The Constitution is the expression of the sovereign will of citizens who recognise themselves as equals in rights and dignity”

HIS MAJESTY THE KING FELIPE VI



HANDOVER OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP



Juan María Nin Génova.

On 14 November 2023 and at the behest of its Nominations Committee, the Board of Directors of the Círculo de Empresarios unanimously appointed its vice-chairman Juan María Nin as the future Chairman of this business association for the period 2024-2027.

This appointment is effective as of March 19, 2024, the date on which the current Chairman, Manuel Pérez-Sala, stands down, having been at the helm of the Círculo for the past three years.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Manuel Pérez-Sala

From being a full democracy, Spain is transitioning towards one in name only. The breakage of the separation of powers, of the principle of equality of citizens before the law and of the rule of law, has placed us in 2023 in a much more serious situation than the country was in when our association was founded. We have witnessed personal attacks on some business people from the government, simply on the basis that their decisions were not to its liking. Very recently we have seen a dishonest legislative initiative, unprecedented among our democratic neighbours, to buy votes in exchange for impunity, to satisfy the lust for power of a person who, unfortunately, governs in his own interest rather than that of the public good.

Although I regret having to begin this letter with such serious statements, it is our duty as a think-tank to denounce actions and events that gravely endanger Spain's economic stability. With no rule of law, in the absence of legal certainty and without economic freedom, there is no enterprise or wealth creation, employment or welfare, there is no prosperity.

We would all have hoped that as a result of the elections on July 23 2023, Spanish society would recover its capacity for dialogue and consensus in the political centre ground, a moderate space occupied by the vast majority of Spanish citizens. We are however witnessing a merciless struggle to hold on to power at any price, a price we will all pay in the long run. The major problems faced by the Spanish economy remain unresolved or have even worsened. The major structural reforms that our country needs are still not being addressed. Spain is squandering its prestige on the international stage. The Spanish economy is sailing aimlessly into murky waters, despite the colossal efforts of its business people.

Beyond our economic proposals to deal with a distressing economic scenario, the defence of institutions and entrepreneurial freedom have become the main task of the Círculo at this time, while continuing to insist, naturally, on the urgent structural reforms that our country desperately needs, Employment, Tax, Pensions, Public Administration and Education Reforms.

I once again wish to thank **His Majesty the King** for his support and endorsement of our association and, more specifically, for his presence in Barcelona at the presentation of the VIII Reino de España Business Career Award to Isak Andic. I also thank the Presidencies of the Congress and the Senate for their support of the Executives-Parliament Programme (PEP), now resuming activities under a new format adapted to new times.

Lastly, I would like to ask you to give **Juan María Nin**, taking over the chairmanship of the Círculo de Empresarios, the same support that you have provided me over the past three years, and wish him the best of luck in this difficult period. Many thanks to all of you for having given me the honour of chairing the Círculo de Empresarios.

“With no rule of law, in the absence of legal certainty and without economic freedom, there is no enterprise or wealth creation, employment or welfare, there is no prosperity”



“In the coming months we will publicly present our proposals in relation to the Future of Young People, a topic we are working on alongside our new sponsoring partner PwC”

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT



Antonio Oporto

Throughout 2023, the Círculo has remained highly active as a think tank and launched new formats that strengthen the relationship with its two hundred members.

Within the field of ideas and in addition to the Business Survey directed by **Miguel Iraburu**, which this year boasted the participation of more than 400 companies, it is worth mentioning position statements on Energy Transition, based on an excellent work by the experts **Pedro Mielgo** and **Nemesio Fernández-Cuesta**, and another on the European Union and fiscal deficits, supervised by the chair of the Economy and European Union working group and incoming Chairman of the Círculo, **Juan María Nin**.

Among the projects currently underway, it is important to highlight that which refers to the future of young people. Right now, we are working in tandem with our new sponsoring partner PwC, with whom we have set up a Committee to Support the Future of Young People, with the participation of Círculo member **Emma Fernández** and a dear, accomplished acquaintance of ours, **Alicia Coronil**. We will present our proposals publicly during the coming months.

As a meeting and connection point for its members, the Círculo has several initiatives. Among the most significant are the annual members' dinner, with **Matías Rodríguez Inciarte** as the speaker of honour this year, along with the Spring Cocktail for members and friends of the Círculo, the first edition of which, due to inclement weather, was held

at the Casino de Madrid. The next meeting will take place in May at the Hotel Mandarin Oriental Ritz.

Among the new formats we are launching, I wish to highlight the Agora, launched with the ENGIE Spain Observatory on Citizens, Climate Change and Energy Transition, with the participation of our member **Loreto Ordóñez** and the chairman of GAD3, **Narciso Michavila**. We are also in the process of launching our Coffee-Debates, of which we have held two so far, one with the entrepreneur **Diego Hidalgo** and the other with the Managing Director of the European Commission's Legal Service, **Daniel Calleja**.

This year we have resumed the members' missions to other countries interrupted by the pandemic. The last mission took place in June 2019, with a group of partners travelling to Israel to gain a better understanding of its technology innovation ecosystem. The destination on this occasion was Germany, to learn about the political, economic and social current affairs of this major country in the midst of the transition of its economic, energy and geopolitical model.

The Círculo's ideas remain ever-present in Spanish society through various media and social networks. One of the best performing initiatives is "Conversations with the Círculo" designed specifically for YouTube, and of which we have already published five with climbing viewing figures. The most recent of these, in which the journalist **Pilar García de la Granja** and our member **Tomás Pascual** talked about the figure of the entrepreneur in Spain, has already been viewed more than 238,000 times.

Chairman



Manuel Pérez-Sala

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Honorary Chairs



Manuel Azpilicueta



Claudio Boada



**Carlos Espinosa
de los Monteros**



Ana Argelich



**José María López de
Letona**

Vice-chairs



Mónica de Oriol



**Javier Vega de
Seoane**



John de Zulueta



Juan María Nin



Alberto Terol

Treasurer



Hilario Albarracín

Legal Counsel



**Santiago Martínez
Lage**

General Secretary



Antonio Oporto

Board Members



Carlos Abad



Miguel Carmelo



Mercedes Chalbaud



**Juan
Fernández-Aceytuno**



Emma Fernández



Gil Gidron



Miguel Iraburu



Dilip Khullar



**Francisco Javier
Latasa**



**Mónica Martínez
Walter**



Ingemar Naeve



Pedro J. Nieto



Loreto Ordóñez



Pedro Pérez-Llorca



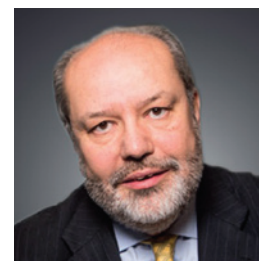
Teresa Rasero



María Río



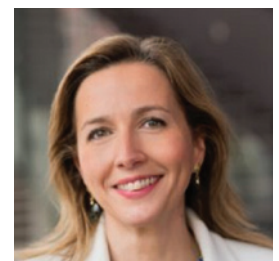
Alfredo Rodríguez



Rafael Roldán



Francisco Román



María Vila

WORKING AND DISCUSSION GROUPS



Juan María Nin
Economy and European Union



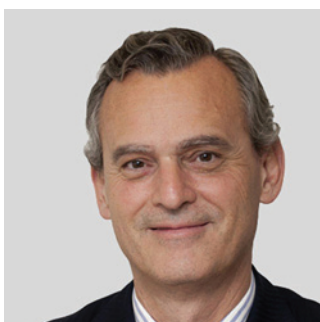
Teresa Rasero
Energy and Environment



Carmen Mateo
Relations and Programmes



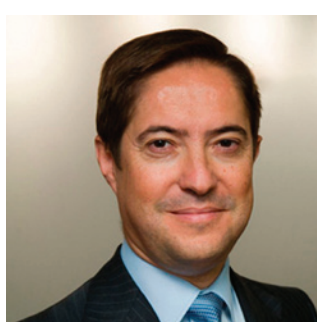
Francisco Román
ESG



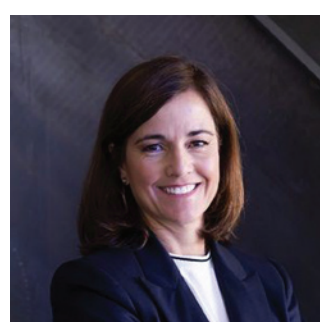
Alberto Terol
Corporate Governance



Ignacio Moreno
Corporate Governance



Eugenio Prieto
Education, Training and Youth Employment



Rocío Hervella
Education, Training and Youth Employment



Pedro J. Nieto
Healthcare



Isabel Dutilh
Legal Certainty



Alfonso Serrano-Suñer
Digital Transformation



Miguel Iraburu
Barometer



Gil Gidron
Science and Innovation



Vicente López-Ibor
Science and Innovation



Íñigo Sagardoy
Employment and Diversity



Ricardo Martínez Rico
Pensions and Public
Sector Reform



Santiago Aguirre
Real estate



Juan Fernández-Aceytuno
Real estate



Jesús Prieto
Intermediate and
Medium-Sized Enterprises



Ingemar Naeve
Spain 2030



Alberto García Valera
Taxation



José M^a López de Letona
Communication



Manuel Azpilicueta
Reino de España Award



Isak Andic.

ISAK ANDIC, WINNER OF THE VIII REINO DE ESPAÑA BUSINESS CAREER AWARD

On May 4, the businessman **Isak Andic**, founder and chairman of **Mango**, was the winner of the **VIII Reino de España Business Career Award**, presented by **His Majesty the King** on March 18, 2024 at the **IESE Business School** in Barcelona. The organising bodies for this Award are the **Círculo de Empresarios**, the **Cercle d'Economia** and the **Círculo de Empresarios Vascos**.

The Jury's decision was made on the basis of his contribution to the economic and social development of Spain over several decades of hard work, creating jobs, internationalising activities and contributing to the improvement of the country's situation and welfare; all this by perfectly combining his professional interests with social, artistic and cultural causes to set a benchmark for future generations".

The award jury comprised distinguished representatives of Spanish civil society. Under the chairmanship of **Santiago Muñoz Machado**, Spanish academic and director of the Spanish Royal Academy, the jury included **Luis Mateo Díez** (member of the RAE and winner of the Cervantes Prize 2023), **Adela Asúa Batarrita** (former Vice-president of the Constitutional Court), **José María Bermúdez de Castro** (paleoanthropologist at the National Centre for Research on Human Evolution), **Núria Cabutí** (CEO of Penguin Random House), **José María Guibert** (Rector of the Universidad de Deusto), **Sara de la Rica** (Director of the ISEAK Foundation), **Elvira Roca Barea** (writer and essayist) and **Miquel Roca Junyent** (founding partner and President of Rocajunyent). The Secretary General of the **Círculo de Empresarios Vascos**, **Enrique Portocarrero**, acted as jury secretary.

THE CÍRCULO ON THE MOVE: MISSION TO GERMANY

Following almost three pandemic years, the Círculo de Empresarios resumed its partner missions to other countries. The most recent, in June 2019, visited Israel to learn more about its technology innovation ecosystem.

The mission to Germany aimed to improve knowledge of its current political, economic, social and business situation at a time of transition in terms of the country's economic, energy and geopolitical model.

During their stay, the members of the mission met representatives of various government parties, including Jens Ulbrich, Director of Economics at the Bundesbank and Ricardo Martínez, Spanish Ambassador to Germany, among others.

The working trip, in which almost twenty members of the Círculo from various sectors participated, took place between Berlin and Frankfurt from September 19 to 21, 2023.

Armgard Maria Wippler, Deputy Director General of the SME Policy Department of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Action BMWK.



Stefan Müller, President of the Germany-Spain Friendship Group and members of the German Bundestag.



Delegation of the Círculo de Empresarios at the Chancellery of the Federal Republic of Germany.



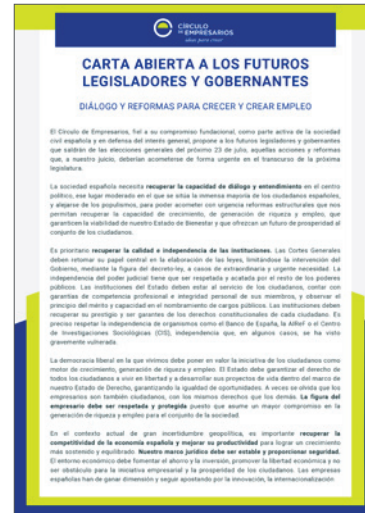
Delegation of the Círculo de Empresarios at the European Central Bank.

OPEN LETTER TO FUTURE LEGISLATORS AND POLITICAL LEADERS

On July 5, we presented our traditional *Open Letter to the future Legislators and Political Leaders* who would emerge from the general election held on July 23. The Letter was presented by the Chairman of the Círculo de Empresarios, **Manuel Pérez-Sala**.

True to our founding commitment as an active player in **Spanish civil society and in defence of the general interest**, the Círculo wishes to propose those **actions and reforms** that, in our opinion, should urgently be pursued during the course of the legislature.

Spanish society needs to **recover its capacity for dialogue and understanding** in the political centre ground, a moderate space occupied by the vast majority of Spanish citizens. It is necessary to move away from populism in order to urgently tackle **structural reforms** that will enable us to recover a capacity for **growth, wealth creation and employment** that



ensure the viability of our **welfare state** and which offer future prosperity to all citizens.



Manuel Pérez-Sala.



Manuel Pérez-Sala.

INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION IN DEFENCE OF THE CONSTITUTION

On November 15 we published a manifesto in **Defence of the Constitution**. As a **think tank** serving society as a whole, we have a duty to warn of the historic drift of our country towards the **erosion of ethical, social and economic standards**.

Over the past 45 years, Spain has achieved the **most outstanding progress in terms of politics and social and economic welfare in its history**, strengthening the democratic commitments taken on with the 1978 Constitution, which enshrined the Rule of Law, Parliamentary Monarchy and the separation of powers. Nevertheless, we currently run the risk that **our country will transition from full democracy to democracy in name only**.

In **democracy**, not everything goes. Many Spaniards will now have to legitimately defend our **rights** using every legal tool at our disposal.



A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN TAX COORDINATION

On November 29, under the title *European Union and fiscal deficits. A new framework for tax coordination?*

We published a position statement welcoming a new framework for fiscal coordination in the European Union in an attempt to curb and reverse excessive deficits and unsustainable public debt in the medium and long term beyond the acceptable boundaries set by the Eurozone.

This proposal for **greater fiscal transparency** has encouraged **Bruegel**, the renowned European economic think tank, to forecast which member states will be on the horizon of 2033 in the first division of **compliant countries** (public sector deficit representing less than 3% of GDP and public debt levels below 60%), those who will be in the second division of **semi-compliant** countries (meeting one of the two ratios) and which will be in the third division of **non-compliant** coun-

tries (meeting neither of the two ratios). Within this context, we consider that it is not unlikely that **Spain will be in the third division** and that there is no consolation or justification in being joined by six other nations, two of which, France and Italy, are, like Spain, systemic Eurozone sovereign states.

In particular for systemic sovereign states, we advocate **strengthened governance** with **effective sanctions procedures**, as well as a **strong independent European fiscal institution** accountable to the European Parliament given that the current European Fiscal Board lacks substance. It also proposes **strengthening national independent fiscal institutions, such as our AIREF**, providing greater visibility to the **"comply and explain"** principle, whereby public authorities in breach of their obligations can be held to account by the European Parliament.





Pedro Mielgo, Manuel Pérez-Sala and Nemesio Fernández-Cuesta.

TOWARDS AN AGREED, CREDIBLE AND STABLE ENERGY TRANSITION

On November 3, we published the position statement *The Círculo de Empresarios and Energy Transition*, in which we stated that the approach to energy transition, representing a **commitment to future generations**, requires a national strategy that is consensual, credible and stable over time. Energy transition requires **progressive adaptation to new production, distribution and consumption schemes** and the objectives of this must be

clearly, concisely and prudently defined, **favouring economic growth**.

Participating in the presentation were **Manuel Pérez-Sala** and the experts **Pedro Mielgo** and **Nemesio Fernández-Cuesta**, on whose work *Transition and energy crisis. Reform of the Electricity Market* the text published by the Círculo is based.





Miguel Iraburu and Manuel Pérez-Sala.

THE GOVERNMENT’S VIEW OF BUSINESSES DAMAGES COMPETITIVENESS

On October 10, we presented the *Círculo’s 2023 Business Survey* at the Pérez-Llorca Auditorium, the results of which show that **business people consider that the main obstacles to competitiveness are worsening**, in particular the **government’s perception of business people, government intervention in business activity and institutional quality**.

More than 400 companies of varying size and sectors of activity participated in the survey, presented by the chairman of the Círculo and the chair of the working group responsible for its preparation, **Miguel Iraburu**. The **Association of Financial Journalists (APIE)** collaborated in this presentation, represented by its president, **Jorge Zuloaga**. Alongside the Círculo de Empresarios, the following participated in the survey **Institución Futuro de Navarra**, the **Círculo Empresarial Leonés**,

the **Círculo de Empresarios de Galicia**, **Cercle d’Economia de Mallorca**, **Observatorio Económico de Andalucía**, **Fundación Conexus**, **Círculo de Empresarios de Gran Canaria**, **Club de Exportadores e Inversores** and the **Madrid Foro Empresarial**.



Miguel Iraburu presented the *Círculo’s Business Survey* in Leon on November 28, at an event organised by the *Círculo Empresarial Leonés*.



Miguel Iraburu, with José Luis Galán, member of the Board of Directors of the Andalusia Economic Observatory, during the presentation of the *Círculo’s Business Survey* on February 12, 2024 in Seville.



It was further publicised in Navarra on November 22, where a round table was held with the participation of José María Aracama, chairman of the *Institución Futuro*, among others.

THE FUTURE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

In addition to the defence of institutions and proposals for structural reform aimed at the modernisation and progress of Spain, the **future of young people remains one of the main areas of consideration** that the Círculo has addressed in recent years.

Alongside our collaborating partner **PwC, through its Foundation**, we have already launched the initiative **Youth and Business**, which aims to consider **various aspects particularly affecting young people and how this transfers to the business world**, with the aim of providing valuable contributions to enable us to be **better prepared for the changes** that are taking place in this context.

A total of **five working sessions** will be held, at the end of which a report with final conclusions and proposals will be published. So far, the working sessions have dealt with topics such as **“Demography and Immigration”** and **“Education and Training”**. Issues such as **“Labour Market and Entrepreneurship”**, **“Housing”** and, finally, **“Consumption and Leisure”** will be dealt with before issuing the final report by Summer 2024.



The future of young people has been one of our main areas of concern over recent years.

THE CÍRCULO'S VIEW ON THE 2024 BUDGET

Following a year marked by General Elections in our country, the result of which did not lead to the investiture of the current President of the Government until 16 November, in accordance with the provisions of article 134.4 of the Spanish Constitution, the previous year's budget is au-

tomatically considered extended until the approval of a new one. **The Círculo de Empresarios will then publish our traditional analysis of the State Budget**, aware that the budget approved last year, due its recklessness, **lack of credibility** and **self-serving nature**, did not amount to what Spain needs.



The Congress of Deputies.

**Every year the Círculo
participates in a significant
number of events in conjunction
with other entities.**



FUNDACIÓN “LA CAIXA” LECTURES ‘THE ECONOMY AND COMPANIES IN A CRUCIAL YEAR’

On February 27, the Chairman of the Círculo, **Manuel Pérez-Sala**, together with the Chairman of the **Cercle d’Economia, Jaume Guardiola**, spoke at the “**la Caixa**” Foundation in a series of talks on relevant questions regarding the present-day economy and society.

During the meeting entitled ‘**The economy and companies in a crucial year**’, presented by **Juan Carlos Gallego**, Chairman of **MicroBank**, and moderated by the **historian and professor of economics, José Luis García Delgado**, Manuel Pérez-Sala offered an analysis of different topics such as the **current geopolitical situation**, the management of Euro-

pean **Next Generation funds** and the **deterioration of the Spanish economy**.

The chairman also pointed out a series of **structural reforms** needed in our country, concerning the **labour market, education** and the **pensions system**. Regarding the latter, he highlighted the proposals of the Círculo de Empresarios contained in the document *Una reforma inaplazable de nuestro sistema de pensiones* (An urgent reform of our pension system), referring to the postponement of retirement, the adoption of a notional accounts system and granting citizens the possibility of choosing when to retire.



Juan Carlos Gallego, Manuel Pérez-Sala,
Jaume Guardiola and José Luis García
Delgado.



Manuel Pérez-Sala and Jaume Guardiola.

WEALTH CREATION IN THE 'EL DIARIO MONTAÑÉS' FORUM

On November 21, **Manuel Pérez-Sala**, chairman of the Círculo participated as a speaker at the *El Diario Montañés* Economic Forum held in Santander, where he highlighted the role of entrepreneurs in a debate moderated by the newspaper's editor, **Íñigo Noriega**, and the journalist **Pilar González**.

According to Pérez-Sala, it is possible that job and wealth creation is frowned upon in today's society, adding that **profits are in fact a good thing and the best way to aid society**. Business objectives should revolve around long-term profitability, necessarily implying a **commitment to its environment and to society as a whole**.



Ignacio Pérez (Editorial Cantabria), Luis Manuel Taboada (Unicaja Banco), Luis Revenga (Revenga Nietos Abogados), Manuel Pérez-Sala, Ainoa Quiñones (PSOE Cantabria), Francisco Hevia (Galletas Gullón) and Íñigo Noriega (El Diario Montañés).

THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURS IN THE 'EL NORTE DE CASTILLA' FORUM

On May 23, the Chairman of the Círculo participated as a speaker at the **Economic Forum** organised by *El Norte de Castilla* during the conference **'Business people, drivers of growth and employment'**, where he laid out the Círculo's proposals regarding the structural reforms necessary to improve **Spain's economic competitiveness**. Pérez-Sala ad-

vocated the existence of a **state at the service of its citizens**, where there is **effective separation of powers** and necessary reform of the election system to the General Council of the Judiciary in order to depoliticise this. With regard to the labour market situation in Spain, he pointed out that **unemployment is the source of the greatest inequality in our country**.

Goyo Ezama, Managing Director of El Norte de Castilla and the representatives of the sponsors of the Economic Forum (Banco Sabadell, Galletas Gullón, Corporación Llorente y Collosa and Media-Markt Business Solutions, technology partner of the Forum), together with Manuel Pérez-Sala, Chairman of the Círculo de Empresarios.



IX TOURISM INNOVATION FORUM (HOTUSA): “COMPETITIVENESS”

On January 16, the Chairman of the Círculo de Empresarios participated as a speaker at the IX Hotusa Explora Forum during the round table “Keys to the competitiveness of a strategic sector”. Moderated by the journalist and former Secretary of State for Communication in the Spanish Ministry of the Presidency, Carmen Martínez Castro, in a panel comprising the Chairman of

Deloitte Spain and partner of the Círculo, Héctor Flórez, and the former Minister of Energy, Tourism and Digital Agenda, Álvaro Nadal. Over the past fifty years, tourism has been key to Spain’s economic activity. It has been decisive throughout the various phases of the economic cycle, driving recovery in situations of crisis or consolidating it in upturns.



Carmen Martínez Castro, Manuel Pérez-Sala, Álvaro Nadal and Héctor Flórez.



Carmen Martínez Castro and Manuel Pérez-Sala.

FIRST BAROMETER ON PUBLIC OPINION OF ENTREPRENEURS

The Valencia Association of Entrepreneurs (AVE), chaired by Vicente Boluda, presented on September 12 at the Paco Pons Auditorium EDEM School of Entrepreneurship the 1st Barometer on Public Opinions of Entrepreneurs, a national project that will seek annually to ascertain and re-evaluate the opinion of Spanish society regarding entrepreneurs. During the presentation ceremony,

attended by more than 200 people, a round table discussion was held with the participation of Manuel Pérez-Sala, Chairman of the Círculo de Empresarios; Jaume Guardiola, Chairman of the Cercle d’Economia; Agnès Noguera, Vice-president of AVE; Ángela Pérez, Vice-president of business development at Health in Code; and Andrés Sendagorta, Chairman of the Instituto de Empresa Familiar (IEF).



Eva Altaver, Jaume Guardiola, Agnès Noguera, Ángela Pérez, Manuel Pérez-Sala and Andrés Sendagorta.



Manuel Pérez-Sala, during his participation.

V TOJA-VÍNCULO ATLÁNTICO FORUM

On September 27, 28 and 29, a new edition of the **V La Toja-Vínculo Atlántico Forum** was held, organised by the president of the **HoTusa Group** and Círculo member **Amancio López Seijas**, with **Manuel Pérez-Sala** attending as a guest. Held on the **Island of La Toja**, the Forum was inaugurated by **H.M. King Felipe VI** and brought together

more than 40 major speakers and in excess of 100 prominent representatives of companies, institutions and entities related to the economic, political and academic world. Over the course of three days of debate, they analysed the challenges facing society, the problems that need to be tackled and the possibility of doing so jointly.



H.M. the King inaugurating the V La Toja-Vínculo Atlántico Forum.



Manuel Pérez-Sala greets H.M. the King.

XXVI NATIONAL FAMILY BUSINESS CONGRESS

Bilbao hosted the **26th National Family Business Congress** on October 23 and 24. The event, organised by the **Family Business Institute (IEF)**, sought to assert the importance of these businesses in terms of their **commitment to local areas, employment** and the medium term in **business development**. The slogan chosen for this latest edition, **"The Strength of People"**, expresses the idea that it is people who, by means of their work, talent and enthusiasm, drive **this country forward**, and that these people are found and develop in **family businesses**.

together with **Jaume Guardiola**, Chairman of the **Cercle d'Economia**, **Andrés Arizkorreta**, Chairman of the **Círculo de Empresarios Vascos** and **Íñigo Fernández de Mesa**, Vice-chairman of the **CEOE**.

Inaugurated by **H.M. the King**, the event was attended by top-level representatives from the business world. The Chairman of the Círculo, **Manuel Pérez-Sala**, participated in the round table discussion **'The business perspective'**, moderated by **Andrés Sendagorta**, Chairman of the **Family Business Institu-**



Íñigo Fernández de Mesa, Jaume Guardiola, Andrés Sendagorta, Manuel Pérez-Sala and Andrés Arizkorreta.

FERNANDO SOBRINI, NEW CHAIRMAN OF SECOT

Fernando Sobrini was appointed as the new **Chairman of SECOT** on September 20, replacing **Inocente Gómez**, a former **Repsol** executive. Only a few days later, on October 16, they visited the headquarters of the Círculo de Empresarios where they held a meeting with our chairman. **SECOT** is an association founded and promoted by the Círculo

lo which, since creation in 1989, has proved a great success. Through SECOT, for three and a half decades, entrepreneurs and managers who have come to the end of their working age, but maintain a spirit of work and collaboration, unselfishly put their experience and know-how at the service of new business projects.



Inocente Gómez, Manuel Pérez-Sala and Fernando Sobrini.

SECOT EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2023 - FUNDACIÓN REPSOL

The “**SECOT Excellence Awards 2023 Fundación Repsol**” ceremony was once again held in collaboration with the Círculo de Empresarios on June 14 in an event that aims to give visibility to the efforts made on a daily basis

by entrepreneurs supported by SECOT. The winning projects were announced in the categories of: Sustainable Entrepreneur, Female Entrepreneur and Project with the Greatest Impact.



Manuel Pérez-Sala presenting the prize for the winning project in the Sustainable Entrepreneur category to Kreios Space.

CYD FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

A meeting of the Board of **Trustees of the CYD Foundation** was held on March 6, attended by, among others, **Nieves Segovia**, President of **SEK International Schools**, and, as guests, **Manuel Pérez-Sala** and **Jaume Guardiola**,

Chairman of the **Cercle d'Economia**. Chaired by **Ana Botín**, the CYD Foundation (Knowledge and Development Foundation) has been promoting the contribution of Spanish universities to the economic and social development since 2002.



THE FIGURE OF THE ENTREPRENEUR IN SOCIETY, AT THE UDIMA

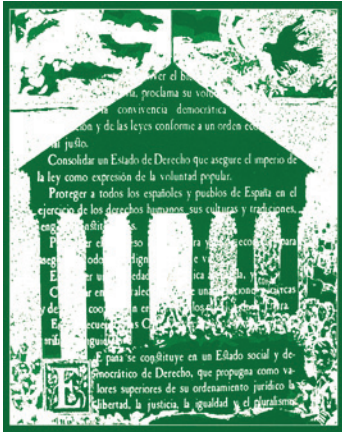
On May 1, the Chairman of the Círculo was interviewed by the journalist **Graciano Palomo** in a new edition of the programme **'Territorio Líder'** of the **Universidad a Distancia de Madrid (UDIMA)**, where he **defended the figure of entrepreneurs, their work and freedom** to act in an open, Eu-

ropean society. **Pérez-Sala** pointed out that cases such as those of **Amancio Ortega** and **Juan Roig** are magnificent examples of the outstanding work and vocation of entrepreneurs. They are considered models of success that are efficient, profitable, imitated and valued by society, of whom we should be proud.



Graciano Palomo and Manuel Pérez-Sala.

NEW EXECUTIVE-PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM (PEP)



During the pandemic years, the normal functioning of the **Executives-Parliament Programme (PEP)** was disrupted. Although some sessions were conducted remotely during this period, the format was not suitable for such a large-scale programme. This temporary hiatus provided an opportunity to reflect on the future of the PEP and to review its procedures, updating its principles

and functioning on the basis of the experience accrued to date. Following **37 years in existence** during twelve legislatures, the PEP has so far involved **1,733 graduate parliamentarians and senators**, belonging to **28 graduations**.

As set out when created, the fundamental objective of the PEP will continue to be based on encouraging and **supporting dialogue and rapprochement between the various democratic institutions and the business world**. The goal is to achieve a better understanding of respective issues and problems. Aimed at parliamentarians, the programme offers training, knowledge and experience related to private sector business, enabling them to carry out their responsibilities with the best information available.

EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME

Throughout 2023, the Círculo has continued to promote the **Educational Cooperation Programme (Coopera)** with the Faculty of Economics and Business Studies of the **Universidad Autónoma de Madrid**. The success of this

programme now spans more than thirty years. On June 1, the ceremony for the 37th graduating class of Business Administration and Management and the 26th graduating class of Economics took place for the 2022-2023 academic year.





Medium-sized enterprises form an essential part of the economy and drive wealth and job creation.

CRE100DO AND ETIs

On November 16, the **CRE100DO** Foundation, of which the Círculo de Empresarios is a founding patron, held its **Annual Event** at the **Mutua Madrileña Auditorium**, with the aim of promoting business excellence by grouping and supporting outstanding companies in the segment known as Intermediate Size Enterprises (ETI).

This event once again highlighted the value, importance and contribution of the Spanish middle market enterprise segment, the characteristics of which **have the capacity to improve the general competitiveness of the production model**.

In Spain there are around 1,800 companies belonging to the ETI segment. Far from being subsidiaries of foreign multinationals, these businesses have their decision-making centred in Spain and turnover of between 50 and 500 million Euro. CRE100DO today brings together **130 outstanding businesses** belonging to a wide variety of sectors that have managed, among many other things, to forge a clear vision, transform themselves, internationalise and innovate, serving as models for other smaller companies aiming to achieve excellence. The total contribution generated by CRE100DO companies to the country's economy is **19 billion Euro per year**, whilst **employing more than 250,000 people** either directly or indirectly.



ETIs are born out of a clear vocation in terms of innovation and incline towards constant change and transformation, resilience and adaptability.

THE CÍRCULO'S FIRST AGORA WITH ENGIE ESPAÑA

The first Agora of the **Círculo de Empresarios** was held on October 18 with the formal presentation of the **"ENGIE ESPAÑA Observatory: Citizens, Climate Change and Energy Transition"**. This was created in 2021 as part of ENGIE's commitment to climate action.

The event was attended by the Chairman of the Círculo, **Manuel Pérez-Sala**; **Loreto Ordóñez**, CEO of **ENGIE Spain**; and **Narciso Michavila**, president of **GAD3**. The event was moderated by journalist and presenter **Marta Jaumandreu**.

The event reflected on the most important challenges facing companies regarding the energy transition. The need to achieve common responses in the **fight against climate change and in energy transition** was also highlighted.

The Observatory's mission is to **promote the generation of relevant data and information regarding the public's perception of the fight against climate change and energy transition**, highlighting the need to achieve common responses to this global challenge.



Marta Jaumandreu, Narciso Michavila, Loreto Ordóñez and Manuel Pérez-Sala.

FIRST OBSERVATORY ON ESG/SUSTAINABILITY WITH EY

The **Círculo de Empresarios** and **EY** launched their first **ESG/Sustainability Observatory** on May 25, with a conference dedicated to the **regulatory impact on sustainability** in general, and especially on the practical consequences for Spanish companies of the new European Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (**CSRD**) and the European Sustainability Standards (**ESRS**) that are being finalised by the

European Union. Participating in the conference were **Manuel Pérez-Sala**, Chairman of the **Círculo**, **Francisco Román**, Chairman of the ESG working group of the **Círculo de Empresarios**, **Alberto Castilla**, Partner in EY's Sustainability and ESG practice, **Alberto Andreu**, Senior Advisor to the firm, **Hugo Bombín**, Senior Manager and **María José Gálvez**, Head of ESG for the EY team.



Alberto Castilla and Francisco Román.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

A conference on Artificial Intelligence (AI) was held on May 1, illustrating **practical cases of the application of artificial intelligence** in different areas (finance, virology, industry, energy). Organised by the Digital Transformation working group chaired by **Alfonso Serrano-Suñer**, the event was moderated by **Ana Díaz**, a partner at **MS** in the area of Digital Transformation and was attended by

Joan Vidal, Director of Risk Analytics at **CaixaBank**, **Esteban Domingo**, virologist and CSIC ad honorem professor at the "**Severo Ochoa**" **Molecular Biology Centre (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)**, **Álvaro López**, IT research lecturer at the **Universidad Pontificia Comillas-ICAI**, and **Ainhoa Ortiz**, Head of Digital Hub Adoption (Iberia) at **Enel Grids**.



Joan Vidal, Esteban Domingo, Álvaro López, Ana Díaz and Ainhoa Ortiz del Río.

COFFEE DEBATE

DANIEL CALLEJA

On June 16, a **Coffee Debate** was held with **Daniel Calleja**, Managing Director of the **European Commission's Legal Service**. He was introduced by **Pedro Pérez-Llorca**, partner and director of **Pérez-Llorca** and member of the Círculo's Board of Directors.

Daniel Calleja spoke about the current situation of the Legal Service of the European Commission and its main **challenges for the future**.



Pedro Pérez-Llorca, Daniel Calleja and Santiago Martínez Lage.

DIEGO HIDALGO



Gil Gidron, Diego Hidalgo and Manuel Pérez-Sala.

Another **Coffee Debate** was held on June 29, with **Diego Hidalgo**, the author of *Anestesiados. La humanidad bajo el imperio de la tecnología* (Anesthetised. Humanity in the grip of technology) published in 2021. In addition to being a writer, Diego is an entrepreneur and currently an adviser at the **Embassy of the Sovereign Order of Malta** in Morocco.

Was talked about the keys to understanding the **role of humanity** in the face of increasingly **invasive and autonomous technology** that reduces our freedom.



Manuel Pérez-Sala welcomed the attendees.

SPRING COCKTAIL FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE CÍRCULO

We held our first **Spring Cocktail Event for members and friends** of the Círculo on June 7 in the Real Casino de Madrid, with more than 200 attendees.

Together with their companions and friends, members were able to enjoy the exceptional surroundings to network and spend an unforgettable evening together.



More than 200 participants at the inauguration of this initiative.



The evening was enlivened by a Jazz performance.

ANNUAL MEMBERS' DINNER



Matías Rodríguez Inciarte and Manuel Pérez-Sala, during their speeches.

Once again this year, the traditional annual members' dinner was held on October 25 in the **Casino de Madrid**, with the participation of **Matías Rodríguez**

Inciarte, President of **Santander Universities** and member of the Círculo, as speaker of honour. Around 200 people attended the event and were thanked by **Manuel Pérez-Sala**.



Around 200 people attended the annual members' dinner.

FORUMS OF THE CÍRCULO

In line with recent years, the Forums of the Círculo sessions were held both virtually and in person. Major personalities accompanied us throughout 2023.




Isabel Pardo de Vera
 Secretaria de Estado de Transportes, Movilidad y Agenda Urbana
 Foro Círculo
 14-02-2023

The then Secretary of State for Transport, **Isabel Pardo de Vera**, spoke about the current situation and various transport initiatives in Spain, whilst outlining some of the objectives of the Ministry of Transport, such as the modernisation of the road network and its maintenance.

The UK Ambassador to Spain, **Hugh Elliott**, gave a presentation on current issues affecting Spain-UK and Spain-Europe relations, such as the development of Brexit and the point which this has reached, the war in Ukraine and management under the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak.




Hugh Elliott
 Embajador del Reino Unido en España
 Foro Círculo
 24-05-2023




Ronald Cohen
 Presidente de GSG y fundador de Apax Partners
 Foro Círculo
 12-06-2023

We were visited by the founder and President of the Global Steering Group for Impact Investment, **Ronald Cohen**, to talk about the challenges and opportunities for business in the new economic impact model.

FORUMS OF THE CÍRCULO

The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Spain, **Maria Margarete Gosse**, gave us a clear view of the current situation in Europe and the challenges we face, such as the war brought about by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.



The Israeli ambassador to Spain, **Rodica Radian-Gordon**, analysed the context in which the conflict between Palestine and Israel is taking place following the attack unleashed by Hamas on October 7.

Julissa Reynoso, United States Ambassador to Spain and Andorra, visited our headquarters to analyse the current issues affecting relations between the US, Europe and Spain, highlighting the great bond that exists.



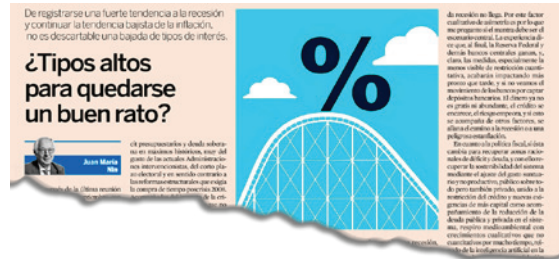
“The defence of the figure of the entrepreneur and essential legal certainty for the economic development of our country, have led us to remain ever present in the media”



PRESS, RADIO, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Our defence of the figure of the entrepreneur and essential legal certainty for the economic development of our country, have led us remain ever present in the media. Contributing new ideas with our assessments regarding the defence of our Constitution and other relevant aspects for civil society, such as the degradation of the rule of law brought about by the Amnesty Act, we have remained ever present through articles and interviews in the **press and on television, radio, digital media and social networks**, where the spokespersons of the Círculo have had a constant presence throughout 2023.

Expansión



Expansión

Nada como la Ley de su falta de consenso, de la seguridad jurídica de los propietarios o del impacto en el ahorro del sector inmobiliario.

Lo que no vive la Ley de Vivienda

Manuel Pérez Sala, presidente del Círculo de Empresarios, analiza, que también se ve en el artículo 47 de la Constitución española, el impacto de la Ley de Vivienda en el sector inmobiliario y en el ahorro de los ciudadanos. En un momento en el que la vivienda es una de las principales preocupaciones de los ciudadanos, la Ley de Vivienda plantea un reto importante para el sector inmobiliario y para el ahorro de los ciudadanos.



EL MUNDO

MIS RAZONES CONTRA LA AMNISTIA (17)

LOS DAÑOS ECONÓMICOS

MANUEL PÉREZ SALA

Manuel Pérez Sala, presidente del Círculo de Empresarios, analiza el impacto de la Ley de Vivienda en el sector inmobiliario y en el ahorro de los ciudadanos.

El sector inmobiliario es uno de los sectores más importantes de la economía española. Sin embargo, la Ley de Vivienda plantea un reto importante para el sector y para el ahorro de los ciudadanos. Manuel Pérez Sala, presidente del Círculo de Empresarios, analiza el impacto de la Ley de Vivienda en el sector inmobiliario y en el ahorro de los ciudadanos.

ENTREVISTA EN COPE

MANUEL PÉREZ SALA
PRESIDENTE DEL CÍRCULO DE EMPRESARIOS

“ES RESPONSABILIDAD DE NUESTROS FUTUROS LEGISLADORES Y GOBIERNANTES ACORDAR AQUELLOS ASUNTOS QUE NECESITAN LOS CIUDADANOS”

THE OBJECTIVE

Es la inseguridad jurídica, estúpido

«Entre los valores que sustentan la decisión de Ferrerrol, destaca la necesidad de disputar del marco jurídico adecuado para favorecer su expansión»

ENTREVISTA EN radio intereconomía

MANUEL PÉREZ SALA
PRESIDENTE DEL CÍRCULO DE EMPRESARIOS

“NUESTRA PREOCUPACIÓN ES QUE ESTAMOS TRANSFORMANDO DESDE UNA DEMOCRACIA FORMAL A UNA DEMOCRACIA APARENTE”

ENTREVISTA EN radio intereconomía

MANUEL PÉREZ SALA
PRESIDENTE DEL CÍRCULO DE EMPRESARIOS

“EL SISTEMA DE PENSIONES SE ESTÁ ACEGANDO PELIGROSAMENTE AL ABISMO”

ENTREVISTA EN EL DIARIO MONTAÑÉS

MANUEL PÉREZ SALA
PRESIDENTE DEL CÍRCULO DE EMPRESARIOS

“SE ESTÁ PONIENDO EN ENTREDICHO EL ESTADO DE DERECHO Y ESTO AFECTA DE MANERA NEGATIVA A LA ACTIVIDAD EMPRESARIAL”

ENTREVISTA EN ABC

MANUEL PÉREZ SALA
PRESIDENTE DEL CÍRCULO DE EMPRESARIOS

“EL GOBIERNO SE NEGIGA A BUSCAR ENCUENTROS Y LOS ENCUENTRA SIEMPRE EN LOS EMPRESARIOS. QUE SON LOS QUE GENERAN EMPLEO Y RIQUEZA”

ENTREVISTA EN THE OBJECTIVE

MANUEL PÉREZ SALA
PRESIDENTE DEL CÍRCULO DE EMPRESARIOS

“NINGUNA REFORMA TAN IMPORTANTE COMO LAS QUE HAY QUE ACOMETER SI NO DURADERAS SI NO HAY CONSENSO EN EL CENTRO DEL ESPECTRO POLÍTICO”

ENTREVISTA EN TRÉCE

MANUEL PÉREZ SALA
PRESIDENTE DEL CÍRCULO DE EMPRESARIOS

“SI NO HOGEMOS NADA NO PODREMOS PAGAR LAS PENSIONES”

ENTREVISTA EN El Confidencial

MANUEL PÉREZ SALA
PRESIDENTE DEL CÍRCULO DE EMPRESARIOS

“LA ACTIVO DEL GOBIERNO HACIA LOS EMPRESARIOS ES HOSTIL”

ENTREVISTA EN EL DEBATE

MANUEL PÉREZ SALA
PRESIDENTE DEL CÍRCULO DE EMPRESARIOS

“FERRERROL SE VA POR LA FALTA DE SEGURIDAD JURÍDICA, Y LAS REACCIONES DEL GOBIERNO LE ESTÁN DANDO LA RAZÓN”

DECLARACIONES EN servimedia

MANUEL PÉREZ SALA
PRESIDENTE DEL CÍRCULO DE EMPRESARIOS

“FERRERROL HA TOMADO UNA DECISIÓN LEGÍTIMA PARA DEFENDER LOS INTERESES DE TODOS SUS ACCIONISTAS”

“CONVERSATIONS WITH THE CÍRCULO”

After beginning the initiative ‘Conversaciones del Círculo’ last year, in which we reflect and debate various current issues with opinion leaders, 2023 has seen consolidation as a successful format on our YouTube channel.



Together with **Tomás Pascual**, President of **Calidad Pascual** and member of the Círculo de Empresarios, the journalist **Pilar García de la Granja** talked about the image of entrepreneurs in our society, their contribution to the welfare state and perceptions within the Government.

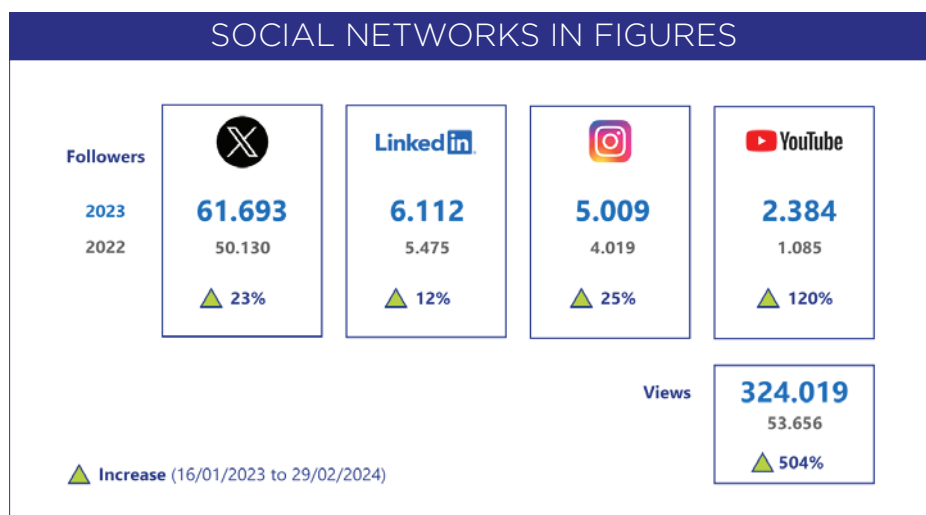
As of February 29, 2024, this episode had been **viewed 238,894** times, a **historic success** for the Círculo’s YouTube channel.

The journalist and head of Economics at **Cadena Ser**, **Javier Ruiz**, together with **Juan Fernández-Aceytuno**, member of the Board of Directors of the Círculo de Empresarios and Co-chair of the Real Estate Working Group, debated the housing market in Spain following the approval of the new Housing Act, its shortcomings and the implications regarding rentals and legal certainty.



SOCIAL NETWORKS

Special mention of our Social Networks should once again be made this year. These represent a direct communications tool of the highest order, on which we have an increasingly **greater presence**.





JUAN MIGUEL ANTOÑANZAS



Juan Miguel Antoñanzas (1932-2023), founding member of the **Círculo de Empresarios**, passed away on March 26, 2023, at the age of 90. He began his career in 1958 in the automotive firm Barreiros and held key positions in companies such as **Seat**, **Chrysler**, **ITT**, **Marconi**, **Técnicas Reunidas** and **Uralita**, among others. In 1975 he was appointed Chairman of **INI**, where he remained until early 1977, and was president of the **Spanish Association of Automotive Professionals (Asepa)** until 2006. He was awarded the **Spanish Grand Cross of Merit**.

Josep Piqué Camps (1955-2023), former Vice-chairman and member of the **Círculo de Empresarios**, died on April 6, 2023 in Madrid at the age of 68. A politician and economist, he was chairman of the chemical company Ercros before his appointment by José María Aznar in 1996 to the portfolios of **Industry and Energy** in his first government (1996-2000), in which he also acted as spokesman. He was then appointed Minister for **Foreign Affairs** (2000-2002) and Minister of **Science** (2002-2003). As Industry Minister, he was responsible for completing the privatisation of some of the most important public corporations, such as **Repsol**, **Telefónica** and **Endesa**. He was also Chairman of the airline **Vueling** (2007-2013), CEO of **OHL** (2013-2016), Chairman of **ITP Aero** (2017-2023) and board member of **EADS**, **Seat**, **Aena** and **Abengoa**. (1955-2023).

JOSEP PIQUÉ



CÉSAR ALIERTA



César Alierta Izuel (1945-2024) was a member of the **Círculo de Empresarios**. He passed away on January 10, 2024 in Zaragoza. He was Managing Director of the Capital Markets division at **Banco Urquijo in Madrid** between 1970 and 1985 and subsequently founder-chairman of the firm **Beta Capital**, a responsibility which he combined with the chairmanship of the **Spanish Institute of Financial Analysts** from 1991. He was also a member of the Board of Directors and the Standing Committee of the Madrid Stock Exchange. In 1996, he became Chairman of Tabacalera, S.A., a position from which he fostered and encouraged a cross-border merger with the French company **Seita**. This merger saw the birth of **Altadis**, a company that he chaired until July 2000, when he was appointed Chairman of Telefónica, a position he held until April 8, 2016.

José Lladó Fernández-Urrutia (1934- 2024) former Vice-chairman and member of the **Círculo de Empresarios**, died on February 14, 2024 in Madrid. He was the founder and main shareholder of the Spanish engineering and infrastructure multinational **Técnicas Reunidas**. Besides being Minister of Trade between 1976 and 1977 and later Minister of **Transport and Communications**, in both cases under the presidency of Adolfo Suárez, he also served as Spanish Ambassador in Washington between 1978 and 1982. He was the first Chairman of the **Royal Board of Trustees of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía**, a post he held from 1986 to 1994.

JOSÉ LLADÓ





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