

OCTOBER 2025 Newsletter



Stéphanie Pfeiffer (H.15) - President of HEC Life Project Commission

Dear HEC alumni,

It was during my exchange at Wharton, in my first year at HEC, that I first heard the story of Starbucks as a “third place”: neither home nor office, but that space in between - here one feels both comfortable, recognized, and inspired. Howard Schultz, its founder, put it this way:

“At home, you’re part of a family. At work, you’re part of a company. And somewhere in between, there’s a place ... a kind of ‘third place.’”

That idea stayed with me: there are places that are neither purely personal nor strictly professional, where conversations rise above the ordinary, where thinking shifts, and where you can truly breathe. And I believe that’s exactly what we set out to create with the launch of the **"HEC Top Executive"** offer.

Leaders often experience a kind of paradoxical solitude - surrounded, yet seldom truly connected. At this stage of their careers, they've already "seen it all, tried it all": individual coaching, mentoring, leadership programs. What they rarely find, however, is a circle that feels both demanding and familiar - a space where conversations have depth without losing the warmth of connection.

With **HEC Life Project**, we wanted to offer them that professional "third place": a circle of peer exchange, enriched by the exceptional diversity and quality of the HEC network, a trusted environment where words flow freely – without politics or posturing, and above all, that rare feeling of being "at home," even while outside one's usual world.

But ultimately, this promise extends beyond senior executives. **HEC Life Project** offers a wide range of experiences and services open to all and a uniquely rich mentoring program.

If you too are seeking that third place - both demanding and inspiring - discover all that **HEC Life Project** has to offer below.

[Discover HEC Life Project](#)

The 3-minute update



**Shaping the Future of HEC Paris – Launch of the New HEC Foundation
Campaign and HEC Gala Dinner**

On November 25, HEC will begin a new chapter in its history. This event will be a unique opportunity to reconnect with the HEC community, reflect on our shared ambitions for the future, and discover the major campus project that will shape our school for the next fifty years.

[Register now !](#)

Initiative



You can make a difference for our future talents by becoming a School Advisor and supporting our students during their internships!

Over the last 3 years, 300 school advisors have supported over 1500 students. Each year, 3000+ talents go on internships around the world. To ensure they have an unforgettable experience, we need you!

As an advisor, you will dedicate 1 to 1.5 hours per student provide support and follow-up to ensure their internship goes smoothly and be available if needed. You will play a key role in their journey!

A unique experience for everyone:

- For you: a privileged moment of exchange with our students.
- For the student: attentive support and a continuous connection with our institution throughout the internship.

This extensive project is essential for the school, and we hope that many of you will join us: [Click here to become a School Advisor!](#)

Questions? : schooladvisor@hec.fr

DID YOU KNOW?

**AT HEC, WE TEACH BUSINESS
BUT WE DON'T DISTRIBUTE DIVIDENDS.
OUR MISSION IS TO SERVE THE PUBLIC GOOD
THROUGH EDUCATION AND RESEARCH.
AND THAT'S ALREADY QUITE SOMETHING!**

READY FOR THE NEXT MOVE?



"DID YOU KNOW?"

Have you seen it?

Every week, a noteworthy (and often little-known) fact about HEC is delivered straight to your inbox and shared across our social media channels.

👉 A short, direct, and inspiring format to (re)discover 144 years of history, innovation, and transformation at our School.

🔗 Follow in your mailbox and on our LinkedIn accounts of [HEC Paris](#), [HEC Alumni](#), and [HEC Foundation](#).

Your Association



Photo credit: ©Martin Barzilai / Challenges

A New Edition of *Matins HEC* with Rodolphe Saadé - CEO of CMA CGM

The best thermometer of the global economy is the filling of our ships,” remarked Rodolphe Saadé, the 344th guest of Matins HEC. In a powerful talk, he reflected on the journey of building a global leader — one that combines strategic vision with resilience. Mr. Saadé shared his insights on the future of international trade, now shaped by both geopolitical shifts and the ecological transition.

[Discover more](#)



China Greater Bay Area Chapter :

The Chapter hosted a back-to-school event at L'Ecole, School of Jewelry Arts supported by Van Cleef & Arpels, in their beautiful venue overlooking the Victoria harbour in Hong Kong. Their mission is to share the culture of jewelry with a large and varied audience. The event was an insightful conversation with an art historian and art jeweler about the Chinese influence in Art Deco jewellery.

[Discover the China Greater Bay Area Chapter.](#)



São Paulo Chapter :

The Chapter came together to discuss the strategic role of Boards of Directors and how governance practices in Brazil are evolving. The discussion featured [Marcio Mendes](#) (MBA.04), Chairman of the Board of Grupo Fleury, and [Gilles Coccoli](#) (H.93), Executive Chairman of Edenred Brazil. The debate was moderated by [Christiano Moreno](#) (MBA.05), Founding Director of HR1 – Hub de Soluções , and the event was organized with the support of [Dan Signorette](#) (MBA.18), Principal & Founder of Infini Light Capital.

[Discover São Paulo the Chapter.](#)



Belgium Chapter Celebrates the Mercure Award for Julien Vandenitte

The Chapter met for an Afterwork event to reconnect after the Summer break and to celebrate our friend [Julien Vandenitte](#) (H.10), the man behind Bomb Squad, Enygma and WoodCutter who won the 2025 HEC Mercure Award for Europe.

[Discover the Belgium Chapter.](#)

Our HEC Stories Selection



Peter Starr (M.20): Building a World Without Mistakes with Freeda

An American via London and an HEC graduate, Peter Starr traded urban planning for tech entrepreneurship. With Freeda, the start-up he co-founded in 2024, he aims to revolutionize construction by automatically detecting errors in blueprints. A singular journey, driven by one obsession: to build better, faster, everywhere in the world.

[Read the HEC Stories article.](#)

On Campus



The Brand-New Dieter Schwarz Center for Family Business Is Already Making a Name for Itself

HEC Paris and the Dieter Schwarz Foundation have created a Center dedicated to family businesses in order to advance research, teaching, and dialogue around these pillars of the global economy.

On September 24, 2025, the Center partnered with L'Express magazine to host the first edition in France of the Family Business Conference, which explored the human and economic dimensions of family-led companies.

At the international level, the Center's Executive Director, Dr. [Cécile de Lisle](#) (H.04), also co-authored a Harvard Business Review article, published on October 6, examining the nuances and risks of shareholder engagement in family firms.

[Discover the Center](#)

[Read: When Shareholder Engagement Hurts More Than It Helps, HBR, October 6, 2025](#)



Bridging social capital and trust

A new research report by the HEC Paris Sustainability & Organizations Institute shows how trust and social connection across differences strengthen economies, improve well-being, and build social resilience. Marieke Huysentruyt, María de los Ángeles Gutiérrez M., and Yann Algan explore the high costs of loneliness and social fragmentation, the ways in which trust can act as an economic driver, and how Inclusion reduces polarization.

[Read the report](#)

Meetings Not to Be Missed

October 27th from 6.30 p.m - 10.00 p.m (GMT + 2) - HEC Alumni

Exclusive Discussion with Simona Cattaneo, Global President Fragrance & Beauty at CHANEL

The [HEC Alumni Perfume & Beauty Club](#) and Bocconi Alumni Paris are delighted to invite you to an exceptional soirée at the HEC Alumni headquarters in Paris.

[Register.](#)

November 12th from 6.30 p.m to 9.30 p.m - HEC UK House

Whats4U London Mixer : The Art of Encounter : What Makes an Encounter Memorable ?

Whats4u is a collective initiative led by 17 alumni associations from leading schools, dedicated to supporting alumni throughout their professional journeys. This year, we will explore **“The Art of Encounter – What Makes an Encounter Memorable.”**

[Register.](#)

[Discover the HEC UK House](#)