

## The Cercle CTO: A Think Tank for Working Better and Longer in Industry

Ségolène Journoud *Anact, France*

- **A Think Tank Approach to Sustainable Industrial Work and Workplace Innovation**
- **From Prevention to Workplace Innovation: Inside the Cercle CTO – a French Industrial Think Tank**
- **Advancing Sustainable Work in Industry through Workplace Innovation**

*Faced with ageing workforces and intensifying work, industrial companies are rethinking how people work and stay healthy over time. The Cercle CTO is a corporate think tank where organisations experiment collectively with workplace innovation and sustainable work.*

How can industrial work remain sustainable over longer careers, while adapting to technological change, demographic ageing and rising work intensity? This question is shared by many European industrial companies and lies at the heart of the Cercle CTO (Working Conditions and Organisation Circle), a corporate think tank facilitated by Anact, the French National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions.

The Cercle CTO was launched to create a collective space where companies can reflect on work sustainability, prevention of work-related wear and tear, and the long-term attractiveness of industrial jobs. It resonates strongly with the objectives of workplace innovation, understood as the joint optimisation of organisational performance and quality of working life through participation, dialogue and learning.

### Starting from real work situations

The first cycle of the Cercle CTO brought together four major industrial companies—**Vinci, SNCF Réseau, Vicat, and Serge Ferrari Group**—around the theme *“Working better and longer in the industrial sector: sustainability of work, prevention of wear and tear, and territorial revitalisation.”*

Rather than focusing only on formal prevention policies or technical solutions, Anact chose to start from **real work experience**. In-depth interviews were conducted with **frontline managers**, using a qualitative approach based on *work narratives*. These narratives made visible how physical, organisational and psychosocial constraints combine over time, and how local regulation—often informal and collective—helps workers and managers cope with these demands. This approach reflects key principles of workplace innovation: recognising employees’ expertise, valuing frontline management as a resource for organisational learning, and treating work organisation as a central lever for health and performance.

### Collective learning and social dialogue

Insights from the fieldwork were shared during a first **webinar**, which introduced Anact’s analytical framework on professional wear and tear. This was followed by an **in-person seminar**, where participants discussed the findings collectively.

These exchanges highlighted the importance of **employee participation, co-design of solutions, and social dialogue** in prevention strategies. While physical strain is increasingly well addressed in industry, participants agreed that other dimensions—mental and psychological strain, career stagnation, and the impact of longer working lives—remain insufficiently integrated into organisational and managerial decisions.

### **Opening up to European perspectives**

In **2026**, the Cercle CTO will deepen its work on these issues, focusing on sustainable career paths, professional mobility, and work organisation in a context of intensified work and rapid technological change.

In addition, the Cercle will organise a **seminar in spring 2026** dedicated to **European research and initiatives** related to sustainable work, ageing at work, and workplace innovation in industry. This event aims to connect company practices with academic research and European experiences.

The Cercle CTO is **open to proposals from the EUWIN community**, whether in the form of research contributions, case studies, or innovative practices from across Europe.

A concluding seminar is planned for **autumn 2026**, with the objective of sharing lessons learned more widely and contributing to European debates on sustainable industrial work.

.....

*Anact is France’s national agency for improving working conditions, supporting workplace innovation through field-based experimentation and collaboration with social partners. Anact is member of EUWIN Executive Board.*

**Contact:** For proposals or further information, please contact **Ségolène Journoud (Anact)** at [s.journoud@anact.fr](mailto:s.journoud@anact.fr)

## **European Workplace Innovation Network (EUWIN)**