



Position Specification

European Climate Foundation (ECF)
Executive Director, People and Culture

Organisation Overview

The European Climate Foundation (ECF) is a major philanthropic initiative working to help tackle the climate crisis by fostering the transition to a net-zero emission society in Europe and around the world. ECF strive for a positive, people-centred and socially responsible climate transition, working to ensure a healthy, thriving planet for current and future generations.

The ECF is a field catalyst of organisations and part of a global network of regional and sectoral regranters. They believe in a whole-of-society approach to climate action, inviting everyone to be part of the discussion and ensuring no one gets left behind. They work with over 700 partners, including youth groups, trade associations, and university departments, supporting a diverse network to carry out activities that drive urgent and ambitious policy and contribute to the public debate on climate action. They build dialogue with businesses, governments, and civil society, working to depolarise the climate debate and to forge connections between the climate community and those working in fields like human rights, health, education, social justice and the cultural sphere.

The ECF global team, with representation across Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe, work together to build tailored local strategies aligned with eight interconnected priorities, known as the 'big bets', which together will help achieve a greener, more peaceful and democratic society. Their expert teams cover energy policy, strategic communications, philanthropy, and more, bringing together diverse perspectives and backgrounds to find the best innovative solutions to tackle climate change.

ECF's impact

Together with their funders and partners who share their vision and believe in the value of their network, ECF have helped Europe make critical progress and move closer to the goals of the Paris Agreement.

ECF have supported as:

- A **strategic grant-maker**, funding a diverse range of over 700 partners, collaborating with them to identify and support interventions that will get us closer to climate safety.
- A **network enabler**, fostering a stronger, more resilient network by helping partners build their capacities and create new connections. ECF also incubate and sustain new organisations, platforms, and coalitions to fill gaps in the climate ecosystem.
- A **narrative shaper**, using strategic communications to inform key decision-makers, foster discussion on climate, and strengthen broad-based support for climate action. With a network spanning the political spectrum in countries across Europe and the world, ECF drive dialogue with business, governments, and civil society.
- A **thought leader**, working with partners to set the agenda and co-develop impactful strategies for climate action. ECF also convene, coordinate, and connect diverse actors from across the climate community and beyond.

The Opportunity

Following shifts in the EU elections and rising geopolitical tensions, climate policy is under growing pressure. Bold leadership is essential to align climate action with citizens' economic concerns, and to promote innovation, fairness, and resilience. As multilateralism comes under strain, Europe must step up. Together with their partners, ECF are ready to act swiftly and strategically.

The Executive Director, People and Culture (ED, P&C) is a newly created, critical role which will ensure that ECF's people, culture and human resource practices enable impact, equity and organisational sustainability. They will lead the global people agenda and help shape the future of the organisation.

ECF is seeking a senior leader with experience of transformation and a commitment to making a difference. ECF are focusing on engaging and hiring values aligned, high performing people from a wide diversity of backgrounds to

strengthen the cause. If you share their values of respect, innovation, and collaboration, please consider joining them and applying.

Position Summary

Reporting to the Managing Director, the ED, P&C is a key member of the Executive Leadership Team and is responsible for shaping and delivering the organisation's global people strategy. The role provides both strategic and operational leadership across all People domains, including:

- Talent acquisition
- Organisational development
- Total rewards
- Employee relations
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- HR operations
- People analytics

The ED, P&C will design people practices that reflect our philanthropic values and support a diverse, inclusive and high-performing culture across our different European offices.

Location: The Hague, Brussels, Paris, or London

Key Responsibilities

1. People Strategy & Leadership

- Develop and implement a multi-year people strategy aligned with the organisation's mission, vision and global programme priorities.
- Serve as a strategic advisor to the CEO, the Managing Director and wider Executive Team on workforce-related matters, including organisational design, leadership capability and culture.
- Lead, coach and develop the People team to deliver high-quality, values-aligned services across all geographies.

2. Talent, Leadership & Organisational Development

- Oversee global approaches to workforce planning, recruitment, onboarding and succession, ensuring attraction and retention of diverse, mission-driven talent.
- Build leadership and management capability through development frameworks, coaching, learning programmes and performance feedback.
- Partner with programme and regional leaders to ensure organisational structures, roles and skills support effective delivery and future growth.

3. Culture, Engagement & DEI

- Champion a values-driven culture grounded in trust, collaboration, psychological safety and accountability.
- Collaborate with the Works' Council to inform and consult workers regarding transnational issues, such as restructuring, mergers, or significant changes in business
- Lead development and implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion strategies across all offices.
- Oversee engagement surveys and organisational health measures, turning insights into action in partnership with leaders.

4. Policies, Compliance & Employee Relations

- Ensure People policies and practices comply with employment legislation, data protection and social-partner frameworks across relevant jurisdictions.
- Oversee employee relations, ensuring fair, transparent and timely handling of concerns, grievances and performance matters.

- Partner with Legal, Finance and other operational teams on risk management, health & safety and safeguarding-related People processes.

5. Compensation, Benefits & Wellbeing

- Develop and maintain a global reward philosophy and frameworks that are competitive, equitable and aligned with organisational values and resources.
- Oversee regular salary review, benchmarking and job evaluation processes.
- Design and drive employee wellbeing initiatives, including mental health, flexible working and work-life balance, tailored to a globally dispersed workforce.

6. People Operations & People Analytics

- Ensure efficient, user-friendly People operations, including HR systems, data, payroll interfaces and administration across multiple countries.
- Develop people analytics and reporting to inform executive and board-level decision-making (e.g., turnover, DEI metrics, engagement, succession).
- Drive continuous improvement through technology and automation appropriate for a 300-person organisation.

Person Specification

Experience

- Significant senior People and Culture leadership experience (10+ years), including at least one role as Chief People Officer, leadership-level senior HR Director or equivalent.
- Proven track record leading the People function in a multi-cultural, multi-currency distributed workforce.
- Experience in philanthropy, INGOs, foundations or mission-driven sectors preferred.
- Experience working with Worker Councils preferred.
- Demonstrated experience in organisational development, culture change and building inclusive workplaces.
- Experience working with executive teams and advising boards or board committees on people matters.

Skills & Competencies

- Strategic thinker able to translate organisational goals into measurable people strategies.
- Strong relationship-builder and communicator, effective across cultures, disciplines and seniority levels.
- Deep knowledge of HR best practice, employment law and DEI in a European and UK contexts; familiarity with other jurisdictions an advantage.
- High integrity, sound judgement and discretion in handling sensitive information.

Values* & Mindset

- Strong alignment with the organisation's philanthropic mission and commitment to social impact.
- Commitment to equity, inclusion and ethical practice in all aspects of people leadership.
- Collaborative, service-oriented, and confident in providing constructive challenge as a trusted thought-partner.

* Values

Our values guide how we work with each other and our partners to achieve our mission:

- **Partnership**
 - *We seek the unique contributions and capabilities of our colleagues and partners, building trusted relationships to achieve greater impact*
- **Inclusion**
 - *We embrace diversity and actively work to include all people and perspectives, both within and outside the organisation*
- **Agency**
 - *We support our colleagues and partners to take bold action to enable collective achievement*
- **Learning**
 - *We challenge ourselves to learn from both failures and successes, actively seeking fresh perspectives from colleagues and partners*

How to Express Interest

ECF are being supported in this appointment by executive search and leadership advisory firm Russell Reynolds Associates. For an informal, confidential conversation about the role, please reach out to contacts listed below.

The closing date for applications is **23:59 on 7th April 2026**. [Please click here to apply](#). You will be asked to register your details and upload your full CV and Statement of Suitability. All expressions of interest will be acknowledged.

Contact

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