

# CHIRO

## THE ORCHESTRATOR OF THE ADAPTIVE ORGANISATION

Leading through an era of constant change



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The obstacle to AI adoption is rarely budget, it's a matter of mindset. As AI becomes built into the platforms we already work with, adoption may become less of a choice and more of a natural evolution.

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**Jean-Sébastien Blanc**

Executive Vice President in charge of Human Resources  
ENGIE

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**Christian Vasino**

Founder and CEO  
*Chaberton Partners*

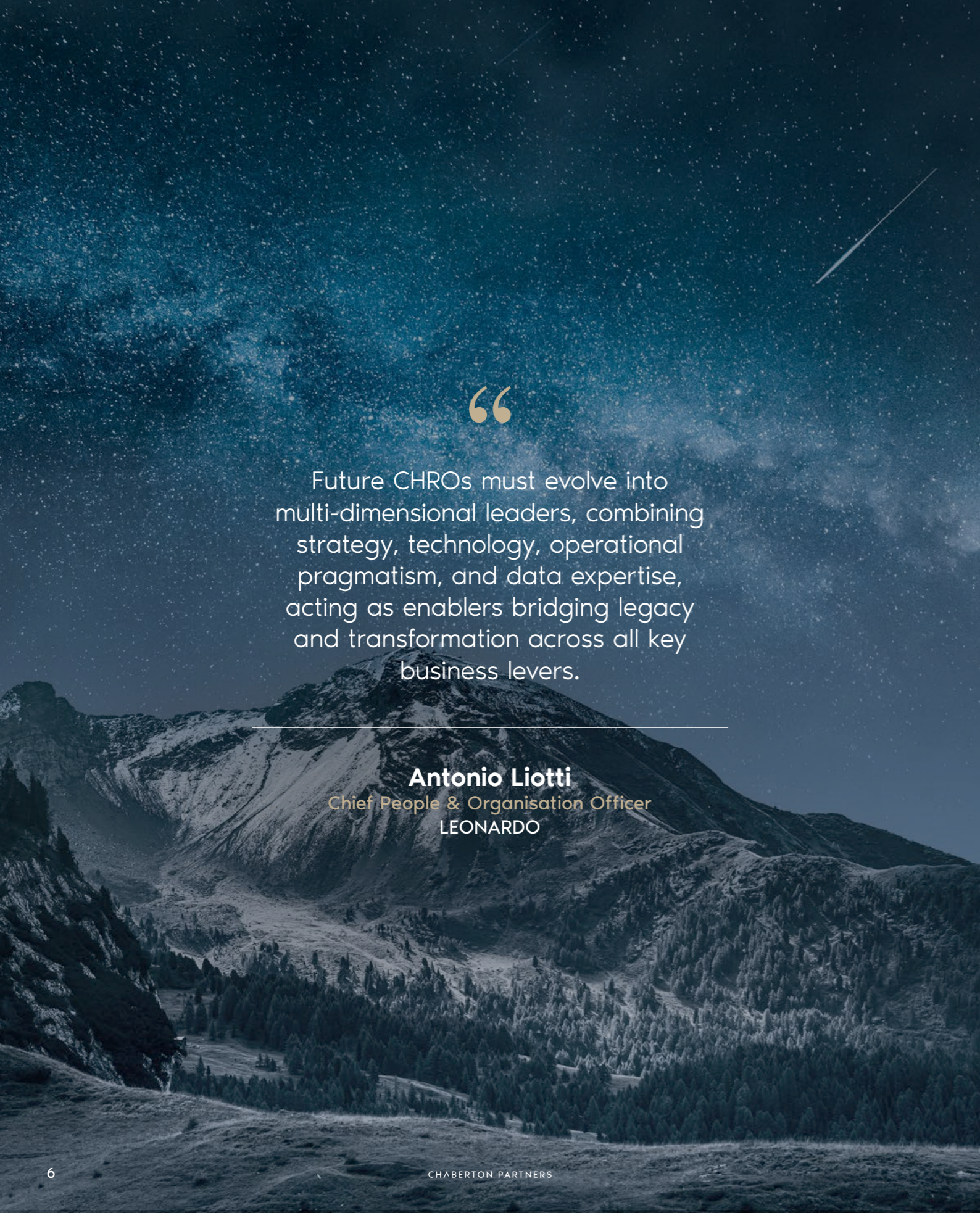
Welcome to the new edition of our research: CHRO, the Orchestrator of the Adaptive Organisation.

The world CHROs navigate today has fundamentally changed. Geopolitical fractures, technological acceleration and the growing complexity of workforce dynamics are redefining what HR leadership means, and what it demands. In this context, CHROs are the orchestrators of how their organisations adapt and grow through it.

At Chaberton Partners, our work is rooted in a deep belief in the power of human leadership. We walk alongside our clients helping them find and build the people who make transformation real. This research is an expression of that commitment, capturing tensions, priorities and ambitions shaping the HR agenda for the next years.

We are deeply grateful to every CHRO who contributed their invaluable insights. Their honesty, curiosity, and willingness to share successes and challenges are what give this work its depth. We trust this publication will serve as a useful mirror and a meaningful resource to support the CHRO community strategic thinking and acting.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'CVasino', located at the bottom right of the page.



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Future CHROs must evolve into multi-dimensional leaders, combining strategy, technology, operational pragmatism, and data expertise, acting as enablers bridging legacy and transformation across all key business levers.

**Antonio Liotti**  
Chief People & Organisation Officer  
LEONARDO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE  
**orchestrator**  
OF THE ADAPTIVE ORGANISATION

**T**his paper is the result of more than a hundred conversations with CHROs of large, medium and small companies operating across **Europe**, spanning across Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. This report deepens our understanding of the challenges and opportunities that define businesses' agenda from a CHRO perspective. The sample interviewed operates on an international scale, although the report maintains a strong European focus as its primary scope, with 93% of organisations headquartered in the continent.

The emerging themes reflect the shared priorities, structural shifts and evolving leadership considerations across a variety of industries.

The insights confirmed much of what we observe in our daily work with clients, while also prompting us to reassess some assumptions. While priorities such as talent attraction and retention, digital transformation, and managing cultural cohesion across increasingly multigenerational workforces continue to shape the European HR agenda, we identify three key themes that are fundamentally reshaping the role CHROs are increasingly called upon to play.

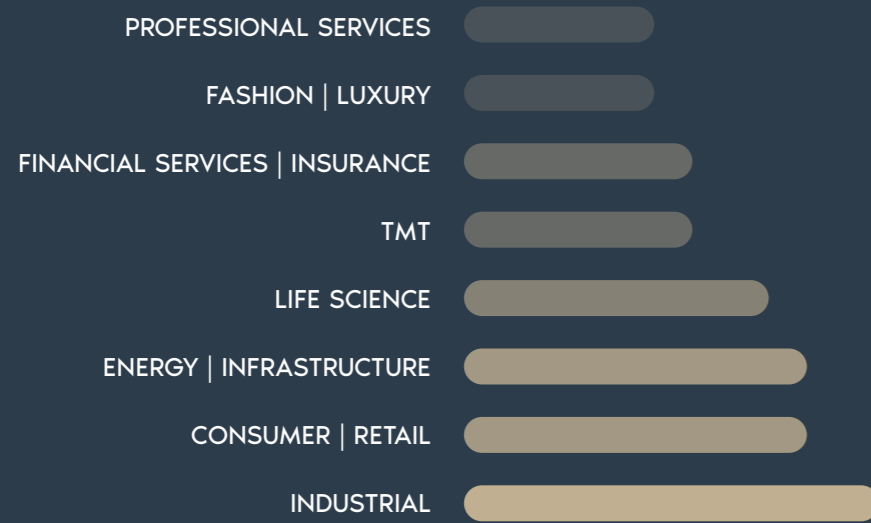
**THE THREE KEY THEMES**

- 1** The **AI adoption paradox**: bridging the gap between ambition and reality, and scaling AI transformation across the business balancing technological innovation with human judgment, ethical responsibility, and robust governance.
- 2** Designing a **resilient organisation** capable of facing the new era of geopolitical disruption, economic uncertainty, and constant business change, while fostering the agility to operate in an increasingly complex and unpredictable environment.
- 3** The imperative to **shape culture as a strategic asset**, bridging generational diversity and channelling technological change into sustainable performance.

CHROs face a defining moment: moving beyond functional leadership to become **strategic orchestrators** of constant change, connecting people, technology, and culture to shape organisations capable of thriving in an increasingly complex world.

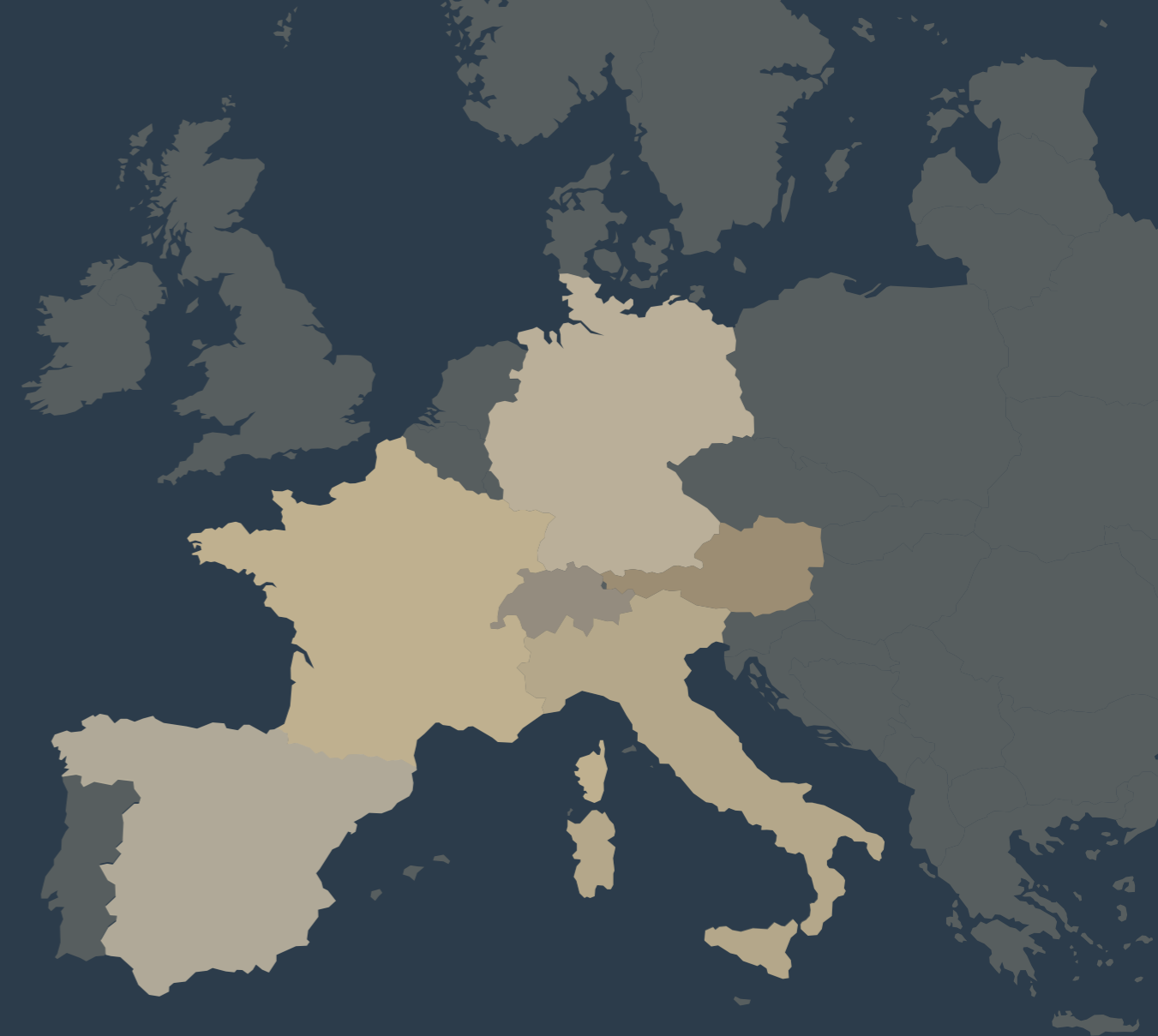
RESEARCH SAMPLE:  
**100+ companies**

BY SECTOR



LISTED COMPANIES

**56%**



AUSTRIA | FRANCE | GERMANY | ITALY | SPAIN | SWITZERLAND

# EMPLOYEES



SCOPE

**65%**  
GLOBAL

**22%**  
EUROPEAN

**13%**  
DOMESTIC

“

Redesigning culture is not a soft topic: it is the precondition for business model transformation to succeed at scale.

Armelle Saint Raymond

CHRO  
TAG HEUER

“

The CHRO should maintain a discerning view of external global dynamics and decode ongoing global shifts to strategically drive the transformation inside the company.

Veronica Quercia

CHRO  
IVECO GROUP

# Orchestrating value

## THE CHRO NEW STRATEGIC MANDATE

The role of the CHRO is undergoing a profound redefinition. Today's HR leaders are increasingly expected to act as orchestrators of business value, connecting people, technology, and organisational design in ways that directly drive profitability, productivity, and sustainable growth.

This evolution is reshaping how CHROs exercise leadership. Their instrumental value will lie in **board-level leadership**, in their capacity to influence upwards, challenge the CEO and ExCo, and raise uncomfortable topics such as talent scarcity, AI risk, cultural fragmentation and geopolitical instability.

To play this role, CHROs clearly see they will need a different **portfolio of capabilities**. Business acumen and financial literacy move to the foreground: understanding markets, operating models, and geopolitical dynamics while being capable of anticipating scenarios. Technology and data fluency will be the second defining pillar. Future CHROs are expected to be AI-literate and data-fluent, able to govern where and how AI is deployed in recruiting, learning, performance, workforce planning and beyond. But at the same time, the CHRO of tomorrow will be defined just as much by advanced social and

interpersonal capabilities. Emotional intelligence, active listening, the ability to manage tension and constructive dissent, and to protect psychological safety in times of constant change are still seen as decisive differentiators.

Looking ahead, CHROs will be required to evolve into orchestrators and leaders of transformation. They will translate strategy into scalable, measurable, and sustainable people architectures; systematically elevate both human and digital capabilities; and continuously balance the dual imperatives of innovation and inclusion.

In doing so, they will move beyond enabling change to actively **shaping change**, ensuring that organisational design, talent systems, and leadership models are fully aligned with long-term value creation in an increasingly complex and technology-driven environment.

We would like to thank all CHROs for their valuable insights during our conversations.

#### PROJECT TEAM

Erika Perez (Partner Lead), Claire Brizzi, Grégoire Conquet,  
Matthieu Galian, Michael Koch, Jörn Ottendorf,  
Roberta Pacchiarotta and Micol Scabbia.

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