



European Multi-stakeholder Forum Review Meeting 10 February 2009

Activities undertaken by BUSINESSEUROPE and member federations on CSR in 2007 - 2008

Introduction

BUSINESSEUROPE's member federations and their member companies have continued to work on the issue of CSR during 2007 and 2008 and there is a deep and broad ownership of CSR amongst member federations and companies. Numerous CSR activities have been developed in a wide range of areas, many of which reflect the commitment to the recommendations of the Multi-stakeholder Forum. Examples of these activities are given in section A.

BUSINESSEUROPE itself has been an integral partner in the development of the European Alliance for CSR during 2007 and 2008 at a strategic level and will continue to cooperate with the other business organisations and networks in the future development of the Alliance. On a more practical level BUSINESSEUROPE also developed its own laboratory on stimulating entrepreneurial mindsets and encouraging entrepreneurship education. More information is available in section B.

Finally section C highlights BUSINESSEUROPE's recommendations for the future.

A. Recommendations of the Multi-stakeholder Forum

1. Raising awareness and improving knowledge on CSR

1.1 Raising awareness of core values and key principles embodied in reference texts

- Irish Business and Employers Confederation, IBEC contributed to the development of ISO standards on CSR in cooperation with the Irish National Standards Authority.
- Industriellenvereinigung, IV (Austria) participated in a platform named "Migrascope", which was created by internationally renowned Austrian companies who commit themselves publically to issues such as the handling of migration and integration and enhancing awareness-raising, as part of managing diversity.
- Fédération des entreprises de Belgique (FEB-VBO) is participating in activities addressing the issue of diversity, such as diversity plans and discussion workshops with companies.
- Bundesverband de Deutschen Industrie und Bundesverband der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände, BDI and BDA (Germany) developed a CSR internet portal to communicate on activities run under the European Alliance for CSR.
- IBEC (Ireland) developed a new 'Sustainable Enterprise Group' to reflect the development of CSR as a sustainability concept – the group exchanges information and experience on themes related to social responsibility and sustainability.

- BDA (Germany) published in 2008 the brochure “Human rights and multinational enterprises - Possibilities and limits of what business can do”. The brochure serves as an introduction to the issue of human rights and multinational enterprises. It is intended to inject some objectivity into an often highly emotional and politicised discussion and to identify where and how companies can realistically contribute to implementation of human rights around the world.
- IV (Austria) in cooperation with the Austrian Standards Institute contributed to the creation of a German Speaking Task Force (GTF) within the ISO Working Group on Social Responsibility (ISO 26000). Its aim is to promote communication and stakeholder dialogue on ISO 26000 within all German speaking countries or communities.

1.2 Collecting, exchanging and disseminating information about CSR

- BDA (Germany) organised a laboratory meeting on corporate volunteering in 2007, focusing on how to integrate Corporate Volunteering into the CSR strategy of a company, the resources that are necessary for Corporate Volunteering, how it is managed and the main outputs.
- A series of roundtables was organised by the Latvian Employers’ Confederation, LDDK, for example on the role of organised business in society in 2007.
- Awareness-raising and CSR promotion activities were organised by the Polish Confederation of Private Employers, PKPP, including meetings between editors/publishers and companies to exchange information and best practice on CSR.
- The Confederation of British Industry, CBI further developed the web resource of case studies on CSR.
- BDA and BDI (Germany) together with ZDH and DIHK awarded in 2007 and 2008 again the prize “Freiheit und Verantwortung” for the CSR activities of small, medium and large companies. The award ceremony was accompanied by a seminar on responsible business conduct.
- The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise, NHO, jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, launched a series of CSR awareness raising seminars throughout Norway which will continue in 2009.
- 2008 was the 5th anniversary of TRIGOS - an award initiated by IV (Austria), for companies which enact social responsibility. This prize contributes to sensitizing the Austrian public to CSR and enhances the discussion around sensitive issues. It is now led by a platform of economy, NGOs and media.

1.3 Researching and improving knowledge about and action on CSR

- MEDEF (France) actively participated in the *Grenelle de l’environnement* in working groups on ecological democracy and the impact of the environment on jobs and competitiveness.
- LDDK (Latvia) and the Latvian State Chancellery announced an award on efficient governance, which gathers best practice on efficient management and strengthens the collaboration of public and private sectors.
- Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise, NHO organised a series of training workshops on how to avoid corruption.

2. Developing capacities and competences to help mainstream CSR

2.1 Enhancing the capacity of business to understand and integrate CSR

- The CSR Compass was developed by the Confederation of Danish Industries, DI - an online tool where companies can generate a standard code of conduct on responsible supply chain management and receive detailed information on the implementation.
- A vademecum on CSR for SMEs was developed by Confindustria (Italy), which allows SMEs to make a first assessment of their position on CSR, by making simple references to the nature of CSR and setting out some specific criteria.
- CBI (UK) set up a taskforce and produced a report on climate change, which catalysed action amongst businesses and other stakeholders to reduce carbon emissions.
- Confederation of Finnish Industries, EK developed a project with the Finnish government and Business in society to create practical tools to help SMEs on CSR.
- BDA and BDI (Germany) are partners in the new CSR portal “CSR WeltWeit” of the Bertelsmann Foundation and the German Foreign Ministry. The aim of the new portal, launched in 2008 is to support companies in their CSR activities abroad.

2.2 Including CSR in education and the curriculum

- Fédération des Industriels Luxembourgeois, FEDIL collaborated with the Ministry for Employment and Ministry for Education and Training to organise training seminars based on matching of skills between unemployed people and companies.
- BDA and BDI (Germany) launched the programme *econlearn* with schools and universities, to enhance knowledge on sustainability, including roll play exercises and lecturing at higher education institutions. This is part of the Econsense initiative, which brings together companies and economic organisations on the theme of CSR and sustainability.

3. Ensuring an enabling environment for CSR

3.1 Creating the right conditions for CSR

- EK (Finland) assisted in developing voluntary agreements on energy saving and energy efficiency.
- Hellenic federation of enterprises, SEV signed a protocol of cooperation with other stakeholders for promotion of equal opportunities for men and women in the workplace.
- Vereinigung VNO-NCW (Netherlands) signed jointly with the Dutch government a sustainability agreement, by which businesses are obliged to make efforts to achieve more energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and innovate in this sector.

3.2 Developing stakeholder dialogue

- Spanish Employers’ Confederation, CEOE assisted in creating and developing a CSR council, which includes government, worker and employer representatives, think-tanks and universities.
- EK (Finland) continues to participate in the Finnish Ethical Forum, bringing together companies, business organisations, trade unions and other stakeholders to discuss business ethics and CSR-related issues.

- LDDK (Latvia) organised a Forum in November 2007 to discuss collaboration on CSR between businesses, state and municipal institutions.
- VNO-NCW (Netherlands) continues to organise regular round table meetings on human rights and business, bringing together multinational enterprises and NGOs.
- NHO (Norway) established an Ethics and CSR advisory board, where member companies and external stakeholders are represented.

B. BUSINESSEUROPE activities in the European Alliance for CSR

Progress in the CSR Alliance has been increasingly visible in 2007-2008. Numerous individual companies, the different business organisations and networks have joined their forces to deliver ideas, conceive projects, enter into cooperation, exchange good practices and develop new solutions. This has resulted in a number of key tools produced by the Alliance laboratories. BUSINESSEUROPE has been a strategic partner in this development over the course of 2007-2008 and will now work with the other business organisations and networks to further develop the Alliance in 2009 and longer term. BUSINESSEUROPE is committed to future work to disseminate the concrete results of the laboratories more widely, thereby increasing the uptake of CSR.

In 2007 and 2008, BUSINESSEUROPE launched and developed a laboratory on “Fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and promoting entrepreneurship education”. The aim of the laboratory was to increase the willingness of young people to become more entrepreneurial and to create businesses, which is a major success factor in making the EU more competitive. Working with JADE and JA-YE, the laboratory has assisted in developing new and existing partnerships at national level between companies and academic institutions, such as business schools and universities. It has also produced a compilation of good practices in this field, which is part of the CSR Toolbox. More information available: <http://www.busesseurope.eu/Content/Default.asp>

C. BUSINESSEUROPE recommendations for future activities

In terms of future activities in 2009 and longer term, BUSINESSEUROPE reiterates the importance of retaining the voluntary approach to CSR, as a commitment by business over and above their legislative obligations. In 2006 the European Commission chose the most appropriate way forward to promote CSR. The continuous development of CSR activities by companies as an integral part of their business development is evidence of this. For the successful future development of CSR, this approach should be maintained.

As highlighted above, BUSINESSEUROPE is committed to further development of activities at EU level through the European Alliance for CSR. In the context of the voluntary approach to CSR, this has proved to be a particularly useful and productive forum for furthering actions amongst companies, particularly in terms of critical analysis from other stakeholders involved in many of the laboratories.

The Multi-stakeholder Forum continues to have a role to play in bringing together all stakeholders to discuss key issues related to CSR in a constructive manner. BUSINESSEUROPE is committed to providing information on the CSR activities of its member federations and European companies in this way and to constructively discussing the issues pertinent to the current CSR debate.



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