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**2009 REVIEW MEETING
OF THE EUROPEAN MULTISTAKEHOLDER FORUM ON CSR
10 FEBRUARY 2009**

GENERAL REMARKS

The European savings banks have a longstanding commitment to CSR. Savings banks across the world have an embedded social commitment to the communities where they operate and this is an integral part of their identity and one of their distinctive features amongst retail banking financial institutions. Our involvement stretches from engagement in microcredit, financial inclusion and financial education projects to environmental action, preservation of cultural heritage and a number of other areas.

In relation to the aspect of CSR activities carried out within savings banks, as an incorporated way of conducting their business in a responsible manner, the European Savings Banks Group (ESBG) will continue to advocate the importance of taking a voluntary approach towards CSR and reporting on CSR alike as we are convinced that a burdensome administration for responsible business may hinder the development of CSR instead of promoting it.

ESBG'S CSR ACTIVITIES 2007/2008

Collecting, exchanging and disseminating information about CSR

- Update and development of a report on European savings banks' CSR experiences and achievements (October 2007)
http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/ESBG/CSR_Activities/study%20esbg%20november%202007screenview.pdf
- Special reports on member banks' initiatives in the fields of:
 - ✓ Financial education (September 2007)
[http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_Research_\(WSBI_only\)/financialeducation%20wsbi%20screen.pdf](http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_Research_(WSBI_only)/financialeducation%20wsbi%20screen.pdf)
 - ✓ Microcredit (September 2007)
[http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_Research_\(ESBG_only\)/brochure%20screen%20view.pdf](http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_Research_(ESBG_only)/brochure%20screen%20view.pdf)
 - ✓ Environment (May 2008)
<http://www.esbg.eu/template/event.aspx?id=2622§ion=Proceedings>





- Reorganisation of ESBG dedicated CSR webpages
<http://www.esbg.eu/template/event.aspx?id=2246>
- Dedicated CSR pages in newsletter News&Views on members' CSR commitment and initiatives/strategy:
Lloyds TSB (UK), CECA (Spain), Austrian Savings Banks Association – *Die Zweite Sparkasse*, Montepio (Portugal), Groupe Caisse d'Epargne (France) – *Sustainable Development Labelling*
<http://www.esbg.eu/template/content.aspx?id=1666>
- ESBG Europe Day Conference on “*Environmental challenges and opportunities - Towards a greener European savings and retail banking sector*” (May 2008)
<http://www.esbg.eu/template/event.aspx?id=2622>

Interacting with EU stakeholders to define supportive policies, in specific fields

- CSR and SMEs (May 2007)
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/csr/conference_3_may_2007/r_e_exchange_final.htm;
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/csr/conference_3_may_2007/ree_catalogue.pdf
- CSR and local employment development (July 2007)
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/local_employment/led_csr_en.htm, (April 2008)
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/local_employment/events_en.htm
- Financial education (December 2007)
<http://www.esbg.eu/template/press.aspx?id=2584>
- Microcredit (February 2008)
http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/Position_papers/1195_final%20version.pdf
- Microcredit (November 2008)
http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/Position_papers/ESBG%20Comments%20Microcredit.pdf
- Financial Inclusion (November 2008)
http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/Position_papers/ESBG%20Comments%20on%20Financial%20Inclusion.pdf

Contributing to the European CSR Alliance

- Mobilisation of members to take part (15 Cajas de Ahorros in Spain, 31 German Sparkassen, Lloyds TSB in the UK, Erste Bank in Austria, OTP Bank in Hungary, Banque et Caisse d'Epargne de l'Etat in Luxembourg, Montepio in Portugal, Groupe Caisse d'Epargne in France) <http://www.csreurope.org/pages/en/supporters.html>
- Development of a CSR “Lab” on Business Involvement to enhance social inclusion at the local level (December 2008)
[http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_Research_\(ESBG_only\)/CSR%20lab%20report%20%20with%20annexes%20def.pdf](http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_Research_(ESBG_only)/CSR%20lab%20report%20%20with%20annexes%20def.pdf) and http://www.csreurope.org/pages/en/social_inclusion.html

Involvement of members in Labs

- ✓ CECA (Spain): Environment http://www.csreurope.org/pages/en/environment_financial.html, Sectoral reporting http://www.csreurope.org/pages/en/csr_reporting.html
- ✓ Lloyds TSB (UK): Corporate Responsibility and Market Valuation of Financial and Non-Financial Performance <http://www.csreurope.org/pages/en/marketvaluation.html>



Enhancing the capacity of businesses to understand and integrate CSR

- Development and adoption of an ESBG Charter for Responsible Business (May 2008) <http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/Announcements/0092%20fin%20.pdf>
- ESBG Resolution on the Environment (May 2008) <http://www.esbg.eu/uploadedFiles/Announcements/resolution%20screen%20view%20with%20UN%20logo%20.pdf>
- Development of a Guidance framework on Climate Change for ESBG Members (December 2008)

Including CSR in education and in the curriculum

- Coordination of the Stock Market Learning, a pan-European, financial education initiative involving each year more than 250,000 students from several EU countries (AT, FR, GE, IT, LUX, LV, SP, SW) (yearly since 1998) <http://www.stockmarket-learning.eu>

ESBG's CSR ACTIVITIES : OUTLOOK FOR 2009 AND BEYOND

- In 2009, the ESBG will pursue its contribution to the EU CSR policy, especially through the further promotion of the EU Alliance on CSR within its membership. It will also disseminate and promote the findings of the CSR Lab it did facilitate on “*Business involvement to enhance social inclusion at the local level*” and work on enlarging the dialogue with interested stakeholders.
- The ESBG will remain in a leading position, in providing expertise in the area of **financial inclusion**, built on its members’ practical and longstanding experience. The ESBG particularly wishes to play an important role in the context of the upcoming work of DG Employment in this context, by taking part to the planned consultation on basic banking services.
- **Microcredit** will also stay in the focus of the ESBG during 2009. The work carried out within ESBG member institutions in this field is well-known among EU policymakers and the commitment of the ESBG to continue to provide its members’ views and expertise as regards microcredit provision remains.
- ESBG members have been and will remain active in providing training to European citizens on financial matters through various **financial education** schemes. Two experts from ESBG member institutions are also involved at EU level through participation in the Commission Expert Group on Financial Education. In this field, the ESBG also continues to be practically involved through coordinating the European Stock Market Learning.
- The ESBG will provide further impetus and assistance to its members to implement the provisions of the **Environment** Resolution by organising a series of workshops to exchange information, experience and best practice on climate change related topics in 2009. The first workshops in the series will cover such topics as the carbon footprint of financial institutions, environmental risk assessment, socially responsible investment and new business opportunities created by climate change.