



Mr Olli Rehn
Commissioner
DG Enterprise
200, rue de la Loi
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 23 July 2004

Dear Commissioner,

On 29 June 2004, in the presence of Commissioner Liikanen, the European Multi-stakeholder Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility met to finalise twenty months of work through the endorsement of a final report drafted jointly by representatives of its different constituencies. All Forum members expressed their views on the report and accepted it as a fair record of the Forum's work.

Like other players, the business community does not see the totality of its views on CSR reflected in the report. However, we remain convinced that it is an accurate and useful record of common ground in the EU debate on CSR. We therefore confirm our acceptance of this report.

However, employer and business organisations also wish to highlight their astonishment concerning the parallel publication by some stakeholders of resolutions and open letters undermining the report. We deeply regret this attitude, which does not do justice to the evolution of thinking we witnessed during the twenty months of our work in the Forum. We were also amazed by the reopening of the debate after the closing meeting of 29 June, when some NGOs, more than a week after having given their consent to the report, tried to come back on the conclusions agreed.

Employer and business organisations have engaged in the Forum in good faith, while knowing that it would not be an easy process. Several parts of the report raise important challenges for companies, but this was accepted by the business side with a view to giving a chance to a successful conclusion of the Forum.

Having a better common understanding on issues and challenges surrounding CSR and identifying consensus points is an achievement that we value.

Companies will continue to act in accordance with their own CSR commitments and the practice of cooperation with relevant stakeholders will be pursued in real-life situations. As employers and business organisations we will support them, in line with the Forum's agreed recommendations. But the experience of the last weeks of the EU debate after the closing meeting of the Forum has clearly demonstrated that we lack stable interlocutors when it comes to the general CSR policy debate at EU level. This could have a detrimental effect on the development of CSR practices at company level if the wrong conclusions were drawn on the role of the EU in promoting CSR.

Yours sincerely,

For the employer organisations,
coordinated by UNICE:



Philippe de Buck
Secretary General
UNICE

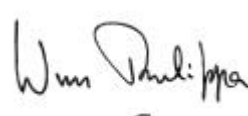
For the business networks and
organisations, coordinated by CSR Europe:



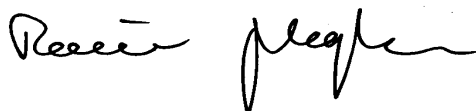
Etienne Davignon
President
CSR Europe



Hans-Werner Müller
Secretary General
UEAPME



Wim Philippa
Secretary General
ERT



Rainer Plassmann
Secretary General
CEEP



Arnaldo Abruzzini
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Xavier Durieu
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