

BUSINESSEUROPE



Corporate Social Responsibility

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CSR's response to the economic crisis:
Dialogue between stakeholders in CSR

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Voice of European Business

- **40 Employers' and Business Federations**
- **34 European Countries**
- **22 million companies**
- **Social responsibility at all levels**
- **European Multi-Stakeholder Forum on CSR**
- **European Alliance on CSR**
 - ✓ strategic partner
 - ✓ Laboratory on *Fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and promoting entrepreneurship education*

European Business ahead in CSR

- **European companies do not just engage in CSR in booming times**, but continue in times when the outlook is not quite so bright.
- Despite the current economic downturn, European companies show **no signs of lowering their level of ambitions in their CSR activities**
- On contrary European businesses realise that socially responsible conduct is crucial to meeting today's challenges
- CSR provides all companies, whether large MNEs or domestic SMEs with a value-based tool which can help systematically to anticipate and respond to internal and external economic, social and environmental challenges

CSR is more than just words

- CSR is **an integral part of doing business**
- CSR takes place at company level and should be driven by business
- **Practical, company-level solutions**
- **No “single model”** of how to be social responsible
- Importance of the **external dimension of CSR**
- EU concept of CSR should be disseminated outside the EU
- CSR is growing and the impact of the crisis simply poses **new challenges.**

Transparency is the future

- Modern business is **transparent business**
- Companies today consider transparency a **fundamental element** in their business strategy.
- During recent years, more and more companies across Europe have become increasingly transparent about their business operations and their supply chains
- But each individual company provides transparency **in its own unique way.**
- Any reporting should be **a results-oriented process**
- Mandatory ESG disclosures or standardised transparency indicators could only be counterproductive

Expectations versus real needs

- Business creates growth and jobs
- Business is a driver of CSR activities
- **BUSINESS is not in isolation**, there are the other stakeholders
- **Expectations and real needs of stakeholders should be balanced**
- Specific approach to SMEs
- To target different stakeholders and **to reconcile** their expectations – it could be one option for how to meet real needs

What policy-makers should focus on

- Recognising CSR Alliance launched in 2006 as a good basis for further initiatives at the European level
- **Creating the best possible framework conditions** for European companies (focusing on skills developments, diversity policies and support of new technologies).
- **Strengthening European business competitiveness by viewing CSR in an international rather than a purely European context.**
- Noting the fact that European companies have already made strenuous efforts to uphold and implement the principles set out by the ILO, the OECD and the UN.
- **Pursuing a regular stock-taking exercise** to update and raise the general level of knowledge about different paths to CSR in the EU member states.