



Approved version of 23 October 2014

Joint position on CSR - Eurocadres and CEC

## **Professionals and Managers crucial for successful CSR**

In 2011, the European Commission stated its expectations concerning socially responsible business practice in its communication "A Renewed Strategy for Corporate Social Responsibility" and put *effective social dialogue* at the heart of this strategy. In that communication, CSR was defined as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society", to achieve which "enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders". The recent EU legislation introduced on disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large companies and groups (COM(2013) 207 final) is an initiative that can promote corporate transparency. Eurocadres and CEC welcome these developments and will assume the responsibility on European level to make the voice of more than 6 million professional and managers heard in Europe.

The financial crisis and the resulting economic crisis clearly show the strong need for sound CSR practices in companies and business. Although the concept of CSR now has been in use for several decades, it has not yet become a true success story from all points of view.

Eurocadres and CEC want to underline that one reason for the lack of a profound success of CSR is linked to the fact that managers and professionals are not sufficiently involved in most concepts of CSR. Nevertheless, managers and professionals are key actors in the whole process of conceptualisation, planning, implementation and evaluation of standards. Managers and professionals know their workplaces, co-workers and employees as well as the firms' objectives and strategies very well and therefore need to be involved in all stages of the process for successfully leading and implementing CSR strategies and policies. Managers and professionals are useful partners in bridging companies' aims and goals with the requirements by external and internal stakeholders, but filling this function can be difficult if these are inconsistent and contradictory. However, companies should not pass on the responsibility of the application of CSR policies and strategies solely to professionals and managers. It is the companies' overall responsibility of successful CSR implementation.

How to solve this dilemma? Managers and professionals need to be represented and to be able to contribute – from the development of CSR policies and strategies to implementation and monitoring. Otherwise they can end up in situations leading up to interest conflicts between personal abilities, convictions and their duties, the companies' aims and the stakeholders' demands. Effective social dialogue indeed has to be at the heart of developing and implementing CSR standards. The European

sectoral social dialogue can provide an important added value by working out framework agreements for multinational companies.

### **Eurocadres and CEC therefore call on**

1. **enterprises** to integrate CSR in their core businesses and thus assume the responsibility to harmonize their key performance indicators (KPI) with CSR objectives they aspire to achieve. The use of key performance indicators (KPI) without links to CSR can easily create clashes between company business goals and personal values, as well as personal business goals and company values.
2. **trade unions and works councils** to engage in social dialogue to ensure that companies are aware of and take steps to comply with relevant regulations and guidelines on CSR. Especially trade unions for managers and professionals should address the need and push for the harmonisation of business goals and CSR standards in the social dialogue in all sectors and from European to company level.
3. **the EU Commission** to recognise managers and professionals as key actors in implementing CSR and accordingly to that to adjust its strategies on CSR.
4. **all actors** to foster knowledge about the implementation of CSR and therefore promote and support hands-on training for managers and professionals.
5. effective implementation and further development of EU legislation on disclosure of non-financial and diversity information