



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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LIMITE

SOC	426
MI	206
ENV	569
CONSOM	91
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NOTE

of: the Presidency

On: 14 October 2002

Prev. doc. : 12379/02 SOC 406 MI 182 ENV 511 CONSOM 80 ECO 295

No. Cion prop.: 10735/02 SOC 345 MI 136 ENV 391 CONSOM 65 ECO 243

Subject : **Communication from the Commission concerning Corporate Social
Responsibility
- Draft Council Resolution**

Delegations will find attached a draft Council Resolution on CSR, prepared by the Presidency, for examination at the Social Questions Working Party on 22 October 2002.

Draft Council Resolution on Corporate Social Responsibility

Recalling:

The Commission Green Paper on promoting a European framework for Corporate Social Responsibility¹, which launched a consultation procedure on the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR);

The Council Resolution of 3 December 2001 on follow-up to the Commission's Green Paper^{**}, which recognised that CSR can contribute to reaching the objectives laid down by the European Council in Lisbon, Nice and Göteborg for the European Union to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world fostering social integration and sustainable development;

The Commission Communication concerning Corporate Social Responsibility: A business contribution to Sustainable Development^{***}, which constitutes a follow up to the Green Paper;

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and the adopted plan of implementation according to which the international community should promote CSR, accountability and the exchange of best practices in the context of sustainable development;

Welcoming the Communication from the Commission, including the Commission's view that a strategy to promote CSR should be based on:

- recognition of the voluntary nature of CSR;
- a need for credibility and transparency of CSR practices;
- a focus on activities where Community involvement adds value;

¹ COM(2001) 366 final.

^{**} OJ C 86, 10.4.2002, p. 3.

^{***} COM(2002) 347 final.

- balanced and broad approach to CSR, including economic, social and environmental issues as well as consumer interests;
- attention to the specific needs and characteristics of SMEs; and
- support of, and compatibility with, existing international agreements and instruments (ILO core labour standards, OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises, WTO, etc.);

Supporting the intentions of the Commission, in particular to focus its strategy on:

- increasing knowledge about the positive impact of CSR on business and societies in Europe and abroad, in particular in developing countries;
- developing exchange of experience and good practice on CSR between undertakings, including SMEs, both individually and as parts of business networks;
- promoting the development of CSR management skills;
- facilitating convergence and transparency of CSR practices and tools;
- launching a Multi-Stakeholder Forum on CSR at EU level;
- integrating CSR into Community policies; and

Emphasising that CSR should be a voluntary supplement to national and Community legislation, which should continue to be properly enforced;

Calls upon the Commission and the organisations represented in the Multi-Stakeholder Forum:

- to ensure transparency of the work of the Multi-Stakeholder Forum;

- to make sure that the views of companies at national and international level, of governments and the other Community institutions, and of other relevant organisations representing civil society not represented in the Multi-Stakeholder Forum, will be channelled into the work of building a strategy for CSR, including the work of the Multi-Stakeholder Forum;
- to make sure that any proposals for concrete elements, such as codes of conduct, labels, public awards and management standards, take fully into account and respect the above-mentioned principles of CSR;
- to continue to put an emphasis on how CSR can contribute to the objectives of the European Union as laid down particularly at the European Councils in Lisbon, Nice and Göteborg; and
- to take into account, when developing a European strategy on CSR, the goals agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg;

Calls upon the Member States:

- to promote CSR at national level in parallel with the building of a strategy at Community level, in particular by using its potential in the fight against social exclusion and by making companies aware of its benefits,
 - to integrate CSR into national policies.
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