



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from:	Commission
to:	Council (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumers)
Subject:	Communication from the Commission: "Implementing the partnership for growth and jobs: making Europe a pole of excellence on corporate social responsibility" - Written information from the Commission ("Other business" item)

Delegations will find attached a note from the Commission on the above subject, for the Council (EPSCO) meeting on 1 and 2 June 2006.

Written information from the Commission

**Subject: Commission communication on "Implementing the partnership
for growth and jobs: making Europe a pole of excellence
on corporate social responsibility"
[COM(2006)249]**

On 22 March the Commission adopted a communication on "implementing the partnership for growth and jobs: making Europe a pole of excellence on corporate social responsibility (CSR)". The communication stresses the important role played by CSR in the implementation of the Lisbon agenda, to which the Commission gave a fresh start by launching a Partnership for Growth and Jobs in February 2005 and renewing its Sustainable Development Strategy in December 2005.

1. CSR is of increasing importance to the smooth operation of the market economy.

In the context of intensive global competition with which European enterprises must contend, the Union needs to create a climate conducive to sustainable growth, job creation and innovation. CSR can also help workers better adapt to changes and acquire the skills necessary in a 21st century economy. It can also help make equal opportunities a reality in European firms and encourage the integration of disadvantaged groups.

2. The communication of 22 March is based on the Commission's achievements in the field of CSR.

In recent years, the Commission has helped bring about a better understanding of what CSR means to all parties concerned. Following the Green Paper of March 2001 and the

Communication of 2002, the European Multistakeholder Forum, which met from 2002 to 2004, was an important stage in the building of the European strategy and in making all stakeholders aware of the need for CSR.

3. The Commission backs the launch of a European Alliance on CSR.

The partnership launched is an open alliance intended to give fresh impetus to CSR initiatives. The Commission thereby invites European firms to demonstrate their commitment to the Lisbon objectives. It places the emphasis on the contribution which firms can make to sustainable growth, maintaining the quality of employment and creating high quality jobs in the Union by going beyond their legal obligations.

It is an alliance open to all European firms, whatever their size. It is a political umbrella for new or existing initiatives taken in the field of CSR by large firms, SMEs and the players concerned. The alliance should create new partnerships with stakeholders.

4. To promote the future development of CSR, the new Communication sets out eight areas of priority action (awareness-raising and best practice exchange; support for stakeholder initiatives; closer cooperation with and between Member States; transparency and consumer information; research; education; facilitating the exchange of information between SMEs; the international dimension).
5. The Commission will continue to facilitate and support initiatives by all stakeholders and will convene the Multistakeholder Forum before the end of 2006.

In its Communication, the Commission proposes reconvening the Forum at regular intervals in order continuously to review the progress made. CSR is the fruit of a successful partnership and all stakeholders must be on board.