



Research Institute for
Managing Sustainability

Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration

WIRTSCHAFTS
UNIVERSITÄT
WIEN

Analysis of national policies on CSR,
in support of a structured exchange of information on national CSR policies and initiatives
(Tender No VT/2005/063)

**CSR Awareness Raising in EU Member States –
Summary of survey results**

Reinhard Steurer, Gerald Berger, Astrid Konrad, Andre Martinuzzi
www.sustainability.at

Purposes of the survey and structure of the summary

At the CSR HLG meeting on May 30, 2006 “CSR awareness raising” was identified as one of the three topics that will be described and analyzed in-depth in this project. The **purposes of the survey** were:

- A) To amend the information given in the compendium,
- B) To derive a typology of different policy approaches,
- C) To characterize different policy instruments and approaches used,
- D) To get a first idea about success factors and challenges
- E) To identify interesting or good practice cases and

This summary paper is structured according to these purposes.

A) Countries and initiatives surveyed: Some figures

- ∅ We conducted **24 telephone interviews** in August and September 2006 **covering 20 EU Member States** (those not covered were out of reach despite several attempts of making contact).
- ∅ The results reflect the knowledge of the person interviewed and can not be regarded as a complete picture of CSR awareness raising in Europe.
- ∅ The telephone survey revealed **85 CSR awareness raising initiatives** originating in the public sector, of which **only 20 (23.5%) are mentioned in the “Compendium”** of the DG Employment website.
- ∅ Thus, the average number of CSR awareness raising initiatives per country is 4.3. The range of initiatives is zero (Poland and Estonia) to nine (Spain and Ireland).

B) Types of policy instruments

- ∅ Generally speaking, **CSR policies** make use of the following **instruments**:
 - Informational or endorsing instruments (e.g. campaigns, guidelines),
 - Partnering instruments (e.g. networks, partnerships),
 - Financial or economic instruments (e.g. incentives, like subsidies),
 - Mandating instruments (e.g. regulations, laws).

Ø The **85 initiatives** we found in the survey are mostly informational and partnering instruments. They can be **categorized and specified** as follows:

- Informational or endorsing instruments:
 1. Education activities, e.g. conferences, seminars, trainings 17.7 per cent
 2. Government-sponsored guidelines 10.6 per cent
 3. Information resources, e.g. website, studies, reports etc. 10.6 per cent
 4. Information/awareness raising campaigns 9.4 per cent
 5. Platform/centre/institution 8.2 per cent
- Partnering instruments:
 6. Networks/partnerships/agreements: 10.6 per cent
 7. Multi-stakeholder fora 4.8 per cent
- Financial or economic instruments:
 8. Prizes and awards (CSR audits/labels) 8.2 per cent
 9. Economic incentives (loans, grants, subsidies) 3.5 per cent
- Hybrid tools and others (mentioned once)
 10. Action plans/programmes/strategy for CSR 9.4 per cent
 11. Others 7.0 per cent
 - a. Regulatory initiative (decree)
 - b. Trade mission (international trade relations)
 - c. Various activities in the regions (esp. in Germany, Austria)

C) Characterizing the instruments with selected examples

1. Education activities:

Latvia: The Conference “Business and Society – Mutual Social Responsibility”: brought together large and small companies to discuss quality management issues and CSR good practices.

Denmark: One module of the larger programme “People & Profit” trains managers and employees of Danish SMEs in CSR as well as trainers (“train the trainer”). Training material and a handbook for CSR has been developed.

2. Government-sponsored guidelines:

Austria: The Austrian Ministry of Economics and Labour, the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and “respACT” (the Austrian platform for CSR) developed 10 sector-specific CSR Guidelines for SMEs, to be disseminated among a planned target group of 120,000 companies in the course of 2007.

3. Information resources:

UK: Between 2002 and 2004, the UK government published numerous studies, reports and a variety of news on CSR and CSR policies (including legislation, projects and programmes) on the website www.csr.gov.uk.

4. Information/awareness campaigns:

Denmark: The campaign “Our Common Concern” informs companies about good practices in CSR. The campaign is accompanied by a long-term survey (1999-2009) on CSR company engagement.

5. Platforms/centres/other institutions:

The Netherlands: In April 2004, the Dutch government established a “Knowledge and Information Centre” on CSR. The Centre aims to disseminate knowledge and good practices about CSR nationally and internationally, it promotes stakeholder dialogues

between businesses, NGOs, (local) governments and citizens, and it aims to foster collaborative partnerships.

6. Networks/partnerships/agreements:

Sweden: “Globalt Ansvar” is a partnership for global responsibility that aims to encourage Swedish companies to adhere to the OECD guidelines and the principles for the UN Global Compact. Companies that wish to show their support publicly are invited to join the partnership.

7. Multi-stakeholder fora:

Hungary: A dialogue among various stakeholder groups is fostered in the form of different councils. The so-called “Reconciliation Council” negotiates labour rights and social issues among trade unions, employers’ federations and the government. The Social and Economic Council discusses social plans with trade unions, the academy of sciences and NGOs.

8. Prizes and awards:

Austria: Companies that try to combine economic success with an outstanding CSR practices are awarded annually with the “Trigos”. Since 2003, more than 150 Austrian companies have applied for the award, 19 of which received an award with considerable media attention.

9. Economic incentives:

Sweden: Swedish companies are confronted with CSR when they want to export or invest abroad. Export credits and state guarantees for foreign investments are only provided if companies sign an anti-corruption agreement. By linking foreign investments to CSR, the government raises awareness for CSR among companies which are usually hard to reach.

10. Action plans/programmes/strategies for CSR:

Denmark: “People & Profit” is a program that was initiated in 2004 and will run until 2006. With a total budget of €2.5 Mio it includes a broad variety of activities, such as research, training, and dissemination of information. The main goal of the project is to enhance the competitiveness of Danish companies by providing them with the education and tools to work strategically with CSR as a business case.

D.1) Success factors and challenges

In the interviews we asked for success factors and challenges in the context of CSR awareness raising. The following points summarize some of the key **success factors** mentioned:

- Ø CSR awareness raising requires an active role of governments. Governments have many tools at hand for this purpose, and they should make use of them [mentioned by 2 interviewees].
- Ø CSR awareness raising initiatives should be of practical relevance for companies, they should focus on the needs of companies rather than on abstract conceptual questions. Companies need easily adaptable information for the introduction of CSR into their operations [mentioned by 4 interviewees].
- Ø CSR awareness raising works best when governments cooperate with companies. A close cooperation is to the benefit for both parties (both in terms of exchanging information and triggering synergies) [mentioned by 2 interviewees].

- Ø A close cooperation is also important between different stakeholders and (if applicable) between different political levels [mentioned by 2 interviewees].

The key **obstacles** of CSR awareness raising can be summarized as follows:

- Ø It is often difficult to motivate companies to take part in CSR initiatives. It is particularly difficult to mobilize SMEs as they consider themselves as always busy and faced with a lack of resources [mentioned by 3 interviewees].
- Ø Generally, there is often a lack of personnel and financial resources for CSR initiatives in public authorities and companies alike [mentioned by 2 interviewees].
- Ø It is difficult to foster collaboration for CSR between different ministries in a country and to reach agreement about CSR between different actors [mentioned by 2 interviewees].

D.2) General issues

- Ø It is frequently mentioned by the interviewees that **CSR is now firmly rooted in the business community and the public sector** and thus becomes part of a social-institutional framework. Nevertheless, it seems important to come up with more concrete examples of successful CSR measures in companies to illustrate the business case of CSR.
- Ø The interview partners from the **New Member States** said that awareness raising is an important CSR policy issue, but they would need more information on what and how to disseminate because CSR is rather new to them. One interview partner mentioned that another obstacle for CSR awareness raising in CEE is that companies are often suspicious of ‘state advice’ because of the communist past.
- Ø Some interview partners mentioned the importance of the **European Commission** with regard to CSR awareness raising in the Member States (also in the New Member States). In this context, some of the interviewees mentioned that the latest Communication on CSR (2006) is rather a step back.

E) Next steps

In a next step we will take a closer look at the following three initiatives of CSR awareness raising:

- Ø Denmark: “People & Profit” (see instrument #10 above)
- Ø Sweden: “Globalt Ansvar” (see instrument #6 above)
- Ø The Netherlands: “Knowledge and Information Centre” (see instrument #5 above).

Later this year we will start with the next survey on CSR in public procurement. We thank you very much for your support, which is crucial for conducting the surveys and case studies!