



NSZZ „Solidarność” National Commission, Foundation CentrumCSR.PL, Friedrich Ebert Foundation – Warsaw Office and Pomerania Democratic Institute invite to the conference

„ BUSINESS SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE (CSR) AND THE WORK ENVIRONMENT”

Gdańsk, April 28th (Sat.), 10 AM - 4.30 PM
Wały Piastowskie 24 Str., Room „Akwen”

Conference is free of charge. Number of places limited. Simultaneous interpreting available.
Registration and information: rejestracja@centrumcsr.pl

CONFERENCE GOALS

- To increase Polish trade unions interest in corporate social responsibility.
- To send a strong signal to the public opinion, that implementation of CSR strategies by enterprises is closely related to the respect for trade unions rights.
- To debate other countries experience in building trade unions' approach towards CSR.
- To assess perspectives for using CSR as an important element of social dialogue and for shaping the relation CSR – trade unions, as well as to discuss the eventuality of Polish trade unions involvement in CSR.

CSR

CSR is not a phenomenon which can be ignored by trade unions. CSR means for them a new challenge, but at the same time gives a chance for improving labor conditions and pays, for building community in the work environment and for acting on behalf of employees dignity. In that sense CSR can be used for working out the proper relations between labor and capital.

Enigmatic abbreviation “CSR” seems to be gaining popularity. Some say it is one of the most important trends in global economy in recent years, which in some way tries to answer negative consequences of globalization. Many things can be said about CSR: at the same time it is a certain concept of business management, but also a kind of broader social phenomenon. In the theory CSR is a strategy of running business with the respect for sustainable development principles, meaning that enterprises take into consideration not only economical, but equally ecological and social aspects of their operations. They consider their impact on all of so called “stakeholders” – those who may be affected.

Employees constitute one of the key groups of these stakeholders. The idea of CSR is to work on behalf of better work environment.

Enterprises introduce CSR because of various reasons – they not only see it as an instrument of human resources management, motivating employees to more effective work, but also in response to growing social expectations. Business recognizes also positive impact of CSR on reputation – a socially responsible company has a good opinion, it differs in a positive way from other companies, which may lead to improving its position on the market, gaining competitive advantage. However, it is a misunderstanding to treat CSR just as a new type of public relations.

CSR – A CHANCE AND A THREAT TO TRADE UNIONS

If the CSR contributes to the better work environment, and the employees are its beneficiaries, it seems that implementing CSR should be favorable for the natural form of employees representation – the trade unions.

For the CSR not to be accused of being just another mutation of public relation, it should be based on standards, if not be a subject of independent verification. Examples of these not legally binding standards can be Global Compact Principles, OECD Guidelines for MNEs, SA 8000 norm or GRI standard – all of them in their content refer to trade unions rights. Therefore promoting these standards appears to be favorable for the trade unions.

Practice indicates that sometimes respecting trade unions rights appears to be a weaker point of enterprises with aspirations to be called “socially responsible”. Social reports and codes of conduct on the one hand – every day life on the other hand.

Furthermore, after a closer look into so called „good practices” in the field of CSR one may conclude that people in charge of CSR don't recognize a direct liaison between CSR activities and trade unions functioning within the company. So it is worth to pay attention to certain interrelation between trade unions and CSR, which in some cases may lead to questioning the idea of trade unions being a natural form of employees representation.

So can the companies create so good working conditions thanks to CSR policies that workers will not feel the need to form and join unions?

CSR IN POLAND AND CSR IN EUROPE

The concept of CSR isn't too popular in Poland – it is associated mostly with philanthropic commitment of business. It seems like thinking of CSR in terms of strategy or management is rare. Sometimes one may hear that “the economy hasn't matured to CSR yet”. Maybe it is worth to think about what is to be done in order to change it? Maybe inviting unionists - a strong social group – to the debate over the CSR in Poland may inspire a broader implementation of CSR standards? There is also a debate about the scope of CSR going on at the European Union level – this debate will soon reach Poland. So far the strongest voice which can be heard in this debate belongs to business – that's also why the subject of CSR can't be ignored by the trade unions.

AGENDA

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10.00 – 10.30 **Registration**

10.30 – 10.45 **Opening**

10.45 - 13.00 **Business Socially Responsible (CSR) and the work environment in Europe and in the World**

- Grzegorz Piskalski** (Foundation CentrumCSR.PL) - moderation
- Clemens Rode** (Friedrich Ebert Foundation – Warsaw Office)
Multinationals, you are being watched: Alliances of Trade Unions and Civil Society Groups in CSR
- Marco Cilento** (European Trade Union Confederation)
CSR, Europe and Excellence: ETUC in Favor of Balanced Support for Corporate Social Responsibility in Europe
- Eckhard Voss** (wmp-consult – Germany)
Regional approaches of Corporate Social Responsibility - CSR in the Baltic Sea Region: Issues, Challenges and Tasks.
- Karoly Gyorgy** (MSZOSZ – National Confederation of Hungarian Trade Unions)
Trade unions and CSR in Hungary and other countries undergoing transformation
- Carl Leinonen** (Union Network International)
CSR and trade unions from the global perspective.
- **Dwight Justice** (International Trade Union Confederation)
Remarks on social responsibilities of business

13.00-14.00 **Lunch**

14.00-16.00 **Business Socially Responsible (CSR) and the work environment in Poland**

- **Jacek Rybicki** – Secretary of the National Commission NSZZ „Solidarność” – moderation
 - **Janusz Śniadek** – President of NSZZ „Solidarność”
 - **Ks. dr Tomasz Biedrzycki** – GSD Gdańsk
 - **Prof. dr hab. Leszek Gilejko** – Warsaw School of Economics
 - **Dr Krystyna Kmieciak-Baran** – Gdańsk University
 - **N.N. representatives of employers**
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