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Article

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY – OPPORTUNITY FOR RECONCILIATION BETWEEN ECONOMICAL INTERESTS AND SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an extremely generous concept that has started to shape the world we live in. Current society is focused both on the companies' financial results as well as on the way they carry on their business.

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility is a means for companies to integrate voluntarily social and environmental responsibility within their business operations and within their relationship with stakeholders. Having social responsibility doesn't denote only following regulations, but also moving forward and investing further in human and environmental capital and in the relationship with stakeholders. By means of CSR, companies go beyond minimum legal duty, in order to get involved in answering social needs. Companies of all sizes along with stakeholders can help harmonize economical interests with social and environmental interests.

At global level, CSR has already become a part of day-to-day business. Internationally renowned companies invest a large amount of their turnover in this type of programmes. The budgets assigned by organisations for the development of community programmes reach figures that at first glance may seem stunning. However, the persons managing these organisations see these figures as a long-term investment with significant results for their business.

Corporate Social Responsibility does not mean charity, nor study for the public relations department, but a smart investment, bringing benefits not only for the company, but for the entire community as well, as it contributes towards: improving the relationship with the community (clients, suppliers, authorities); influencing targeted audience, key leaders, press, etc.; positioning the company on a higher level in the society; a better image and therefore better visibility for the company; higher customer loyalty for the company and its products; employees motivation as well as building excellence for the company, furnishing a real competitive edge.

As governments and international institutions realise that the adoption of social responsibility principles by companies serves for the objectives of durable development, the need for international standards had emerged, in order to define the concept of "desirable corporate behaviour". Therefore, November 1st 2010 marked the launch of one of the most awaited ISO standards of the past years, namely the **ISO 26000 Standard, Guidelines for social responsibility**, providing a the guidelines for social responsibility for private sector enterprises and public sector organisations. This standard creates a truly international consensus regarding the definition of social responsibility and the main issues we have to take into account for its implementation. ISO 26000 will add value to existing activities regarding social responsibility and will extend its understanding and implementing by presenting an international consensus for social responsibility and the issues the organisation must refer to, providing guidelines for the transformation of principles in actual actions and contains the best practices already in effect.

ISO 26000 will offer organisations in developed, developing or in transition countries, both in private and public sector, a new paradigm that will help them operate in a socially

responsible manner, the way current society is expecting. Also, the standard will help them achieve long term economical benefits, with low social costs and minimum harmful environmental impact. The European Union is also interested in the CSR, regarding it as a way of achieving the objective set at the 2000 Lisbon European Council, that of “becoming the most competitive and dynamic economical system in the world, capable of sustaining economical developments with better and more jobs and better social cohesion”. Considering this objective, there is a clear intention from the Commission to submit in the coming period a legislation **imposing CSR reporting**. Companies’ CSR strategies could be improved with extra research, analysis and communication. Therefore, the magazine’s academic community was invited to analyse the challenges presented by the enforcement of social responsibility principles for small and large enterprises, for regulating and public policy institutions and the education system as well.

This issue of the journal, with the topic of “**Corporate Social Responsibility**”, brings forth a number of approaches reflecting the concern of researchers in this field. Therefore, the journal contains a number of articles reflecting the issue of social responsibility at corporate level as well as SMEs, such as: A Corporate Model of Similitude for SMEs Reunion into a Corporation, Viewed from the Angle of Physical Thought, and Its Complex Economic and Social Impact; Social Responsibility Concerns of SMEs in Romania, from the Perspective of the Requirements of the EFQM European Excellence Model; The Social Responsibility of the Top 100 Romanian Companies. An Analysis of Corporate Websites; Corporate Social Responsibility and the Sustainable Competitive Advantage; Social Responsibility of Multinational Corporations to Train their Personnel. An Evaluation of Explanatory Variables for a Telecommunications Company; Social Responsibility Practices Regarding Facilities Granted to Employees and Consumer Protection in Selected European Companies; Corporate Social Responsibility: The Challenge for Medium Sized Enterprises in the Bamberg-Forcheim Region, Germany; Corporate Social Responsibility in the Context of Financial Crisis: A Comparison between Romania and Lithuania; The Implications of Corporate Social Responsibility on the Accounting Profession: the Case of Romania. Also, there are several articles regarding the methods of evaluating and CSR reporting, and regarding social responsibility perception and marketing, as part of social responsibility: Business Ontology For Evaluating Corporate Social Responsibility; Research on Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting; An Investigation Regarding the Disclosure of Corporate Social Responsibility Information for Listed Companies from Romania; Corporate Social Responsibility in Romanian Companies – Between Perceptions and Reality; Students’ Perceptions on Corporate Social Responsibility at the Academic Level. Case Study: The Faculty of Administration and Business, University of Bucharest; Cause-Related Marketing, Part of Corporate Social Responsibility and its Influence upon Consumers’ Attitude; Partnership in Social Marketing Programs. Socially Responsible Companies and Non-Profit Organizations’ Engagement in Solving Society’s Problems.

Social responsibility is essential for long-term prosperity of companies and brings forth the human side of business, being a vital connection to society in general and in particular with the community where the business is situated.

**Editor-in-chief,
Vasile Dinu**