



Position Summary

July 2014

Overview of EUROCHAMBRES' response to the public consultation on the strategy on Corporate Social Responsibility 2011-2014: achievements, shortcomings and future challenges

A business-driven approach to policies on CSR, corresponding closely to the structures and dynamics of companies, will facilitate its effective delivery and help rather than hinder competitiveness. This is why EUROCHAMBRES advocates a CSR policy based on voluntary measures and the principle of subsidiarity.

Enhanced visibility and more thinking small first, but indirect effects still likely to burden SMEs

EUROCHAMBRES welcomes the Commission's recent activities in the visibility of CSR, such as the CSR awards. Similarly, the publication of guidance material for SME advisors will prove useful for those working on CSR with SMEs. Furthermore, **the Commission has been effective in thinking small first** on related issues, such as the revision of the Public Procurement Directive, which generally took into account the special requirements of small businesses.

Before considering any further EU level policy measures in the field of CSR, particularly legislative, EUROCHAMBRES recommends a **thorough evaluation of the impact of existing measures**. In particular, the Directive on Disclosure of Non-Financial and Diversity Information requires detailed examination, with **attention to the trickle-down effect in the supply chain**. Regardless of the de facto exemption of SMEs from this directive, the disclosure requirements are likely to prove burdensome to small businesses, as many of them are subcontractors to larger businesses.

Keeping flexibility and training in the spotlight

It will be increasingly important to maintain a **CSR policy that steers clear of a one-size-fits-all approach** and that leaves room for sector-specific CSR requirements. For certain businesses and sectors, environmental aspects of CSR are more significant, while for others the social aspects are the main focus.

The direction of CSR policy should also reflect the importance of **raising awareness and capacity among businesses through strengthening and broadening training and peer-to-peer learning activities**. Chambers of Commerce & Industry across Europe already play a very active role in promoting, advising and training on CSR for businesses, and policies should capitalize on the ability of the Chamber network to reach and support even the smallest businesses.

Further information: Mr. Ben Butters, Tel +32 2 282 08 71, butters@eurochambres.eu

Press contact: Ms. Guendalina Cominotti, Tel +32 2 282 08 66, cominotti@eurochambres.eu

All of our position papers can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=145

EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 20 million enterprises in Europe – 98% of which are SMEs – through members in 43 countries and a European network of 1700 regional and local Chambers.

ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Chamber House, Avenue des Arts, 19 A/D • B - 1000 Brussels • Belgium

• Tel +32 2 282 08 50 • Fax +32 2 230 00 38 • eurochambres@eurochambres.eu • www.eurochambres.eu