

“Growing on Ethics”: From Portugal to Greece and even further

Following the European CSR Strategy (2011-2014), CSR HELLAS’ strategic plan for 2012-2015 foresaw -among others- the reinforcement of a more responsible entrepreneurship, through the cooperation of business world and academic society.

Towards this direction, CSR HELLAS continues the successful collaboration with business and educational entities, with which it has signed memoranda of collaboration and has already developed effective common action, with measurable results. In this frame and having conducted the 1st Student Contest for CSR, CSR HELLAS recorded the clear need for mapping the current situation and for respective development of training tools, towards the promotion of CSR principles and the maximization of the effectiveness of their implementation in Greece.

In October 2013, taking into account all the above and recognizing the successful implementation of the innovative Portuguese methodology of ACONTESER, CSR HELLAS was called to coordinate a group of partners for transferring the latter into more European countries. This pioneer training tool consists the core of ACEGE’s highly effective policy implementation towards the reinforcement of the responsible entrepreneurship, which directly contributes to financial crisis management and the way out of it.

Six partners, ACEGE and ISQ from Portugal, CSR HELLAS and KNOWL from Greece, INTERCOLLEGE from Cyprus and SEC-GENEVE from Switzerland, organizations of high respect and with reputable actions both in national and international level, consist the consortium of the co-funded by European Union project “Growing on Ethics”, whose -according to its name- purpose is the promotion of the business ethics and CSR principles, focusing mainly on three major aspects of ACONTESER: Responsible Leadership, Prompt Payments and Work-Life Balance.

After having recorded the current situation in the four countries, through a relevant extended research conducted by the partners, they continued exchanging experience and know-how among them and it was time for ACEGE to transfer the methodology to the rest. During an excellently organized workshop in Lisbon, appropriately qualified trainers of the Portuguese organization transferred the methodological approach and their expertise to representatives of the rest partners, in order for the latter to be able to act respectively in their countries. The training material was modified and adjusted according to the needs of each country, as they were depicted in the national research’s results. After this,, February-March 2015, the partners carried out pilot workshops in national level, following the transferred methodology and addressing to target groups provided in the project’s proposal.

During their last meeting, the partners shared results of the pilot workshops as they result from the participants’ evaluation. Mostly though, they shared their unique experience from the implementation of all those they processed in the project’s frame and now they take shape, further strengthening the confidence of the partners that this is an effective tool.

The aim of the project is to disseminate its results at European level and their valorization towards the promotion of a more responsible entrepreneurship, in view of the renewed European CSR Strategy for 2015-2020.

The coordinator of the project, CSR HELLAS, continues its involvement in the formation of this renewed Strategy and along with CSR Europe, is asserting a European Manifesto for social responsibility entitled for a common European future, with responsibility and respect to fundamental European Union's values. In Milan (June 2015), under the auspices of Latvian European Union's Presidency, for the first time the text of the Manifesto will be presented.

For CSR HELLAS the call for a European Manifesto to support and promote responsible entrepreneurship in the formation of the new European strategy is an important juncture since this year is the 15th anniversary since its foundation and the establishment of a United Nations Global Compact Network, which in Greece operates with the support of CSR HELLAS.

The challenge is for all the stakeholders to consider that corporate social responsibility means choices and actions that are voluntary-not compulsory; which must comply with or satisfy values, beliefs, policies, knowledge, goals and training programs of each company separately, for its employees, its people.

In order for corporate social responsibility to be generally accepted and for its principles' implementation to have impact, it has to be part of the total attitude and will of each company, not a forced obligation:

*Nothing is ever done more convincingly
than when we believe in it,
than when we do it not only as our duty
but with our heart and soul.*

Today more than ever, we have the need and obligation to rely on people, organizations and businesses that claim to restore the fundamental common social values to the fore. These shared values can only guarantee and synthesize a new vision for Europe, society and economy.

In this respect and under the project "Growing on Ethics", the European Manifesto and the new European CSR Strategy, CSR HELLAS, as coordinator, along with the rest partners of the project, invite all interested parties to a major conference on responsible entrepreneurship to be held on September 23rd, 2015, in Athens, where, among others, there will be presented the results of the implementation of the partners' cooperation.

Maria Alexiou

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