



European Think Tank
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Several CSR models in Europe and several ways of promoting diversity in businesses?

**Practical recommendations for businesses
according to the CSR model they have adopted**

**Final report of the European project supported by
the European Commission**

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Partners who participated in the project:

- Pour la Solidarité
www.pourlasolidarite.eu
- Diesis
www.diesis.coop
- Aris – Formazione e ricerca
www.arisformazione.it
- Civil Society Development Foundation (CSDF)
www.fdsc.ro
- Gilde
www.gildezentrum.de
- Face Lille Métropole
www.fondationface.org
- Confederacion Empresarial de Sociedades Laborales de España (Confesal)
www.confesal.es
- Responsible Business Forum (FOB)
www.odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl
- Région Wallonne
www.wallonie.be
- Région Ombrie
www.regione.umbria.it

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"Several CSR models in Europe and several ways of promoting diversity in businesses? Practical recommendations for businesses according to the CSR model they have adopted" was the theme of the 18 month long European project (01122008 to 31052010), led by *Pour la Solidarité*. This report presents the main findings of this project.

What were the aims of the project?

The overall aim of the project was to promote CSR in businesses, and more specifically, diversity in companies across the four areas of common intervention, namely the company's positioning on these issues, recruitment and selection processes, staff management, and communication and awareness-raising.

In particular, it aimed to verify several hypotheses, the first being that in Europe there are different CSR models, the development and implementation of which largely depend on the economic, social, cultural, historic and legal context of the country in which they are to be found.

The second aim was to verify that CSR could allow a firm to attract workers and ensure they remained loyal to it, as well as to facilitate the integration of workers on the fringes of the job market, such as young, poorly skilled immigrants.

What was the methodology used to verify these hypotheses?

The project underwent several stages. First of all, we needed to document the subject, and to take stock of the CSR situation in countries or regions relevant to the project, to gain a clear understanding of the perception that businesses have of it, to evaluate the tools that they have available for the implementation of CSR, to identify both the obstacles and the leverage along the path to development, as well as the needs and expectations of companies in moving down said path. In order to do this, the project partners carried out research and analysis on the ground, drawing on both existing studies and interviews carried out within firms. They were granted a broad margin for manoeuvre in terms of the choice of companies to examine (size, sector). It emerged that this was the best way of reflecting a variety of situations and contexts and of showing how companies of different size, sector and country adopt the concepts of CSR and diversity. However, and in order to avail of elements of comparison between these different analyses, they were carried out based on a common framework, aiming to highlight a certain number of points, such as the definition of CSR, the socio-economic context of the countries and regions, the legal framework into which the CSR and diversity-related activities slot, the role of the stakeholders and the impact of the crisis on these actions.

This preliminary analysis allowed the partners to identify good practices or tools in businesses aiming to ensure the loyalty of their staff, or to facilitate the integration of workers on the fringes of the job market, including poorly skilled young people, often immigrants. In order to capitalise on these good practices, the partners were able to draw on the interview model that the Walloon Region had used with companies that had a pro-diversity human resources management policy.

The second stage of the project involved organising four national technical seminars, which took place one after the other in Warsaw (Poland), Bucharest (Romania), Madrid (Spain), and Roubaix (France). They aimed to highlight the results of the analysis conducted by the partner hosting the

seminar, to present best practices, success factors and/or expectations and needs identified by companies, and to supplement this analysis with participants' reactions, opinions and recommendations. The participants included representatives from businesses, associations, local authorities, public administrations, the media, experts and others.

Lastly, the final conference, held on 28 April 2010 in Brussels, enabled comparison between CSR situations and good practices in countries and regions that were project partners, and set out not only the variety of approaches, but also the specific features arising from the different circumstances on the ground and the similarities between them. It was also a chance to question representatives of European businesses, on the one hand regarding their reasons for putting in place CSR and diversity-focused actions, the conditions for implementing them long-term, and on the other hand on the role that public authorities could play in raising greater awareness among companies, and SMEs in particular, to the benefit of CSR and diversity and to encourage them to move in this direction. Finally, the stakeholders present (social partners, associations, European Commission, Chamber of Commerce) were able to discuss their own approaches, clarifying their positions on the matter, identifying the obstacles to be removed so that everyone could fully play their role in the dialogue with businesses, and formulating a set of recommendations to move further along the path of CSR and diversity, while bearing in mind the specific national and/or regional features.

Several CSR models in Europe: what the national analyses tell us

In its 2002 Communication entitled "Corporate Social Responsibility: a business contribution to sustainable development", the European Commission defines CSR as "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis". While there is certain consensus on this definition in Europe, the analyses carried out by partners of the project in Poland, Romania, Italy, Germany, Spain, France and Belgium show that while CSR has indeed taken off to a certain extent in recent years in businesses, CSR nonetheless acquires distinctive identities and circumstances according to the national, socio-economic, historic and legal contexts surrounding it.

POLAND

A grasp of Polish history is required in order to understand the impact of current business practices in terms of CSR and diversity. As such, it is not easy to talk of diversity in Poland, while this issue remains linked to the wounds of history. Characterised by numerous minorities of all religions who lived in harmony before the war, the multi-cultural and multi-religious make-up of the Polish people was shattered by the many years of persecution and oppression which followed. This explains why today, the issue of diversity is approached with some suspicion and only applies to gender, worklife balance, disability and age, thus excluding the particularly sensitive issues linked to religion, sexual orientation, nationality and so on. Furthermore, the practices still often arise more from philanthropy than from a real strategy.

From a cultural perspective, the Polish do not like putting the cart before the horse and prefer to take their time when implementing the required changes. Thus, over the last twenty years, Polish companies have found it necessary to start by structuring the bases of their organisation and their management methods before committing to a CSR and diversity-related approach. Many companies interviewed did not yet feel ready for that. Even if it is as yet relatively rare to find companies developing real diversity management, a change of culture is nevertheless coming about, moving from the stage of actions promoting equal opportunities, to pro-diversity strategies. This need has arisen in part from globalisation and the expectations of foreign partner companies. Poland has seen widespread migration and a reversal in the job market trend in 2006 – which up until that point had been favourable to employers but was now turned on its head in favour of employees (more job offers than applications) – which were also determining factors in this realization, together with the need to use new pools of staff and diversified teams in order to work effectively.

Businesses then redoubled their efforts to retain their most talented employees, offering them working conditions which would increase their job satisfaction and professional commitment. Lastly, European and international funding such as the ESF and EQUAL have also greatly contributed to the development of diversity management, by supporting innovative projects, breaking with stereotypes and promoting a certain social awareness.

From a legal perspective, there is no text framing the implementation of diversity management. Only the labour code recognises the principle of equal treatment in employment (particularly among men and women), prohibiting direct or indirect discrimination in the workplace (gender, age, disability, race, religion, nationality, political view, membership of a trade union, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, full time or part time, etc.) and forces employers to take all necessary measures to combat discrimination. The labour code also introduces the burden of proof for the employer, who must prove, when the facts point to discrimination, that they have taken all the necessary steps to combat discrimination in their workplace and to ensure all employees are treated equally. It should be noted that despite these new mechanisms, a high level of discrimination persists in Polish companies; on the one hand because there is no system for evaluating the fight against discrimination in the workplace and on the other because employers and employees fundamentally lack information on these new rules.

Significant progress has been noted in terms of the government's involvement in CSR and diversity. The creation of a CSR team within the Ministry of Economy is proof of this will to change and the

Ministry of Economy is increasingly partnering projects linked to CSR. Likewise, the 2008 creation of a government department for equal treatment marks a decisive step in taking diversity into account in all its dimensions, this time with particular focus on issues relating to gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, political views, age, sexual orientation and family circumstances. The arrival in Poland of immigrants from East Asia (China, Viet Nam) and the prospect of increasing numbers in the years to come has undoubtedly played a part here.

Associations are also increasingly investing in the field of CSR and diversity, but their cooperation with businesses is, as yet, rarely over the long term. It would be extremely helpful to organise a series of debates at local level among companies, associations, local decision-makers, and the media, as this would allow stakeholders to develop mutual understanding of the role and responsibilities of each of the long-term partnership activities. By pinpointing and spreading good practices in CSR and diversity, our Polish partner, The Responsible Business Forum (FOB) plays an important role.

Entrepreneurship and employers are viewed in a fairly negative light in Poland, so it is essential for social partners to be more involved in dialogue with CSR and diversity stakeholders. The CSRdiversity action plan undertaken by the NSZZ Solidarność trade union, targeting SMEs in the provinces of Haute Silésie, Świętokrzyskie and Warmia as well as Mazury is a striking example of this.

Universities and the media are increasingly featuring the subject of CSR and diversity management in Poland. Courses and seminars are organised for students, and theses are published on the subject. Also worthy of note are interesting initiatives such as the one launched by the Polish branch of the international structure SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise) on “Socially responsible managers”.

Not forgetting consumers, who are becoming increasingly aware of companies’ social commitment and the origin of products.

As we have seen, awareness of CSR and diversity issues has been growing in Poland in recent years. Nevertheless, few companies are prepared to rise to the challenge of diversity management. They lack both theoretical and practical knowledge on what exactly it entails, and the conditions of its implementation and success. Moreover, they lack information on the potential benefits of a long-term diversity strategy.

Recommendations:

- Develop CSRDiversity audits before introducing any change in the company.
- Raise awareness of the benefits that businesses (both large and small) could gain from undertaking a CSRDiversity approach.
- Develop in-depth managerial training on diversity management.
- Involve the managerial committee in diversity management.
- Put in place a diversity management team in businesses.
- Communicate internally with all employees regarding definition of company objectives, expected results, success factors, and the difficulties encountered in diversity management.
- Encourage companies to move from rhetoriccommunication on CSR, as the large companies or subsidiaries of multinationals do, to specific achievement of projects in the social field.
- Promote specific exchange of experiences and good practices between companies.
- Enhance cooperation between companies in the same area.
- Become pro-actively involved in setting up a platform for dialogue around CSR and diversity management, bringing together companies, associations, the government and effectively promoting the concept of CSR and diversity management.

ROMANIA

While the situation in Romania may appear to be fairly similar to that of Poland, it is in fact quite different in many regards.

In recent years Romania has seen substantial development, in particular thanks to foreign investment which has mobilised a large part of the often poorly skilled workforce, but which at the same time has generated a significant shortage of manpower on local labour markets, leading to a sizeable foreign deficit which shows no signs of falling. The Romanian economy, 90% of which consists of businesses with under 10 employees, is also marked by significant regional disparities as well as by entrenched corruption, hampering its development.

The poverty which, up until a short time ago characterised Romania, is receding slightly, but nevertheless the country remains in the grip of wide-reaching social problems including unemployment, which is particularly high among young people (including the best qualified), and the Roma people, who experience terrible illiteracy, unemployment, severe poverty and social exclusion. Very many young people, and slightly older people as well, have chosen to emigrate to find work (more than two million Romanians live abroad) and this has had significant demographic and social consequences, leading to a loss of over one million inhabitants between 1992 and 2007.

The development of economic activities and the entry of multinationals into the Romanian market have indubitably contributed to the emergence of the concept of CSR and to the implementation of activities, seeking in particular to improve the image and reputation of Romanian companies with their European and international partners, as well as consumers, who are becoming increasingly aware of businesses' standing. But pressure has also come from the associations. Suffering from cuts in financial support from the large donors, they have put new strategies in place to find new sources of funding from companies in the public sector as well as from citizens.

However, the concept of CSR has been interpreted in many different ways and is still generally misunderstood. Consequently, CSR is still seen as a philanthropic practice and few companies understand the concept as a whole, or its multiple stakes. Surveys carried out among a number of companies show that they underestimate the real impact that CSR could have on them. Furthermore, only 17% of businesses with over ten employees have a clear strategy in this field. The reasons for this lie in the lack of information available to them, but also in the fact that for the moment, CSR is called for more as an element of communication with a view to meeting foreign expectations, than as a structural element of companies.

Aware of the changes that they must bring about in order to make good their responsible commitment to a number of stakeholders – consumers, investors, local communities, employees – businesses start by involving them in their processes and by being more transparent. They therefore easily communicate on the measures that they are taking voluntarily as regards the environment (prevention of pollution, eco-labels, etc), their loyal attitude on the markets, their fair prices, their choice of partners...Likewise, they value the training activities that they provide in the

local community and for disadvantaged young people.

On the other hand, companies provide little information on the internal aspect of CSR and many employees bemoan the lack of evaluation of their social commitment. For example, to date only 13 Romanian companies use the SA 8000 system (Social Accountability 8000), which evaluates the situation in terms of discrimination, youth employment, wages, hours of work, health and safety and so on. Many companies limit themselves to respecting laws on discrimination, harassment and the rights of vulnerable persons, but that does not mean that they shoulder their social responsibility towards people at risk, such as those who are excluded from the labour market. Few have a proactive approach towards their employees, or a long-term strategy in this field. However, it should be noted that some have undertaken training activities, to bridge the gap in qualified manpower which has arisen from the high levels of emigration. Lastly, employers and social partners do not play their role in terms of information, consultation and inclusion of employees in decision-making processes. In many cases, they are not informed of company strategies that are underway or forthcoming.

As a general rule, few companies evaluate their CSR policy or produce reports which include all the figures linked to the activities that they cover.

Despite the 2007 creation of a CSR department within the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, the government's actions appear to be entirely insufficient to give new impetus to CSR and diversity-based initiatives. Companies and associations, which are the main CSR actors, regret the lack of adequate long-term government policies on integration of marginalised peoples, including young people. Unlike other European Union countries, in Romania there is no financial support for the integration of unemployed young people, and the technical and vocational training on offer is not sufficient (particularly as regards the social sector) to adequately support marginalised groups. There is a great need for social innovation and only public-private partnerships between companies, local authorities and civil society will ensure it is met effectively (by helping local child protection services work together with the educational structures, employment services, support services for integration into work and vocational training). Lastly, the strategies put in place in certain Member States around multi-lateral partnerships (employers, business organisations, social partners, NGOs, universities, shareholders) could be extremely useful for CSR actors in Romania.

Recommendations:

- Develop awareness and information on strategic CSRdiversity issues within companies.
- Raise awareness of the benefits that businesses (both large and small) could gain from undertaking a CSRdiversity approach.
- Develop mutual understanding of the concept of CSR among all stakeholders, and encourage dialogue between these stakeholders.
- Encourage the exchange of information and practices among networks that are interested or involved in CSR.
- Develop CSR practices according to the country's characteristics.
- Encourage companies to get involved in a pro-active long-term CSRdiversity approach.
- Communicate both internally and externally on the strategic issues around CSRdiversity.
- Develop diagnostic tools to evaluate the policies put in place.
- Develop enhance public-private partnerships between businesses, local authorities and civil society, in order to better respond to social issues and to improve effectiveness.
- Create working groups on the involvement and contribution of companies to the local community.
- Develop vocational and technical training linked to the integration of marginalised peoples (with a social approach).

ITALY

Unlike in Romania, Italian social cooperatives are demonstrating their capacity to work in partnership to produce social innovation in different areas, to help those who are alienated from the workplace.

The origin of this movement dates back to the 1970s. Italy at the time was suffering from a social services deficit (both public and private) while the third (voluntary) sector and the social economy were still under-developed. At the same time, women were entering the job market, the number of elderly people was growing and new needs were emerging as regards taking care of people with difficulties, such as the mentally ill, the homeless, drug addicts, etc. This explosion in demand for traditional and new social services alike led to a package of experiments (the most spectacular being the demolition of mental health hospitals to make way for an alternative network of services at local level), permitting a response to the new economic challenges with social activities, together with the interests of democratic management. The development of social cooperatives was recognised by a law in 1991.

The objective of social cooperatives is to ensure the general wellbeing of the community, human advancement and social integration of citizens, through services linked to the social, healthcare and education sectors, as well as diverse activities in the fields of agriculture, environment, industry, etc. They should focus on the employment of people in difficulty.

Today there are 7363 social cooperatives in Italy, which are structured around three categories: type A cooperatives which offer services in healthcare, welfare and education; type B social cooperatives which foster integration through work and where 30% of the people they recruit must be in difficulty; type A+B cooperatives, which combine the characteristics of A and B cooperatives. Among the 244,000 people working in social cooperatives, 30,000 are people in difficulty.

CSR is an integral part of the way Italian social cooperatives work; on the one hand through the actions they carry out to promote the inclusion of disadvantaged groups into the job market, and on the other hand through their methods of governance and deliberate involvement of the public interest in their decision-making process.

Type B social cooperatives are models of integration of fragile or vulnerable people into the workplace, supporting both physically and mentally disabled people, drug addicts, people with psychiatric problems, prisoners and alcoholics. These people can become working members of cooperatives, that is, they can be included in the decisions like any other stakeholder (consumers, public procurers) and be part of the management committee. This is the case in at least a quarter of type B social cooperatives.

Social cooperatives are generally quite small and work within a limited area. They have flourished because of their position as a privileged partner of public authorities, and particularly of the local authorities, in the field of community and integration services. Today they are also open to private actors.

The law makes provision for tax benefits for Italian social cooperatives. Given that collective

interest is acknowledged as being part of integration activities, they can also access public markets (below the EU threshold) as a result of signing direct contracts with public administrations, without invitation to tender. Social clauses in public contracts which involve employing a percentage of people in difficulty are also useful for social cooperatives. Lastly, a more recent and innovative measure plans to promote the temporary integration of vulnerable people from type B cooperatives in traditional businesses and therefore to establish connections between private employers and cooperatives.

Despite this legislative framework, which is highly conducive to developing social cooperative activities, recent government budgetary decisions have stemmed the tide, with for example a cut of 25% at the end of 2009 in the budget earmarked for school cleaning. This is why, since January 2010, Italian social cooperatives have had to face up to job losses which directly affect the disadvantaged people they previously employed. If legislative and governmental action is not coordinated, it can lead to strange contradictions...

Lastly, with a view to transparency, social cooperatives use several types of tools, including a social report which takes note of their economic, social and environmental performance, as well as evaluating their role, a report on their financial responsibility, and a “stakeholder chart”, resulting in a clear understanding of the partnership relations between social cooperatives and stakeholders.

Recommendations:

- Develop tools, reporting mechanisms allowing for better evaluation of CSR approaches undertaken by social cooperatives, their governing methods, promote the culture of social responsibility among citizens to help them move towards responsible behaviour (purchasing...), raise awareness among public administrations of the need to support socially responsible companies, develop awareness within companies and inform them of the strategic issues surrounding CSR diversity.
- Improve the development of tools such as the “stakeholder chart”, to highlight the nature of partnerships with all stakeholders.

GERMANY

The driving forces behind German businesses' involvement in CSR and diversity strategies are of a different nature again to those previously mentioned.

The composition of the German population is extremely diverse, as it encompasses 15 million people of foreign origin. However, this diversity is far from being reflected in companies, which do not seem to be in a hurry to seize the matter in its entirety and which are somewhat lagging behind in this field, when compared to what is happening in other European countries. Thus, this issue is still often tabled under human resources and not as a true company strategy to be dealt with at the highest level of decision-making.

Unlike companies with over 20,000 employees who do have a diversity management strategy, firms across all sectors underline their difficulty in integrating the actual concept of CSR and diversity, of putting it in place given its complexity and the costs which it engenders, as well as the contradiction that they see with the business culture. In a report published in 2008 following a project on "Discrimination in everyday life – Perceptions of discrimination in our society and anti-discrimination policies", the German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency also underlined the critical attitude and reticence of the business world to commit to such approaches, in fact arguing that they run counter to their interests and require too much effort from small and medium-sized enterprises. Behind these arguments lie fears which can be explained by a lack of knowledge of the diversity issue, but also by a certain conservatism linked to the generation to which the majority of German company managers still belong. Lastly, the issue of the integration of people of foreign origin has never been a simple subject for German society.

It is clear that thus far, diversity has not featured high among companies' priorities and instead remained under the jurisdiction of multinationals. Nevertheless various factors have gradually led companies to take greater interest. In 2006, several large German firms such as Deutsche BP, Deutsche Bank, Deutsche Telekom and Daimler launched a Charter of Diversity, to which over 700 companies have signed up, to date. In doing so, they commit to a culture of tolerance, a working environment free from prejudice and discrimination, mutual respect and the inclusion of people with diverse talents within and outside of the active population in order to better respond to the different needs of clients. The Charter is an interesting tool, particularly for SMEs, but there is a lack of impact evaluation. Another important element: safeguarding the freedom of German firms and their refusal to bow to any pressure from the government regarding CSR and diversity management, pushing them to make efforts in this field voluntarily so as not to be bound by them.

We should also mention the development of diversity management courses in universities, which contribute to spreading knowledge on this subject, in addition to the various legal instruments (2001 law, constitutional law), which prohibit all discrimination based on gender, origin, race, country of origin, religion, political convictions. By means of the appointment of an "equal opportunities commissioner", large firms are obliged to take the necessary measures to ensure gender equality and a worklife balance. The stance taken by the German Federal Government Commissioner in charge of migration, refugees and integration is also helping boost understanding of diversity management. He focuses on the benefits for companies, employees and other stakeholders, and underlines its win-win outcome. Lastly, the challenges and threats of

globalisation for markets and labour are pushing firms to change their view of their employees and to take account of the fact that in addition to skills and professional experience, each person's own cultural knowledge is a tool. Diversity becomes a tool which contributes to the general success of an organisation, and in particular ensures staff loyalty, creates a better and innovative working atmosphere, meets the challenge of an ageing workforce and a lack of skills, improves competitiveness thanks to the opening of new international markets and adds value to the firm's image.

Moreover, companies are increasingly including diversity-related issues in their annual reports.

In 2010 the German government is set to launch a new plan of action called "CSR in Germany", to increase the international standing of a German economy based on high quality and responsible commitment on the part of firms. Whatever the outcome of this new plan, current CSR development is opening up prospects for better inclusion of diversity management across the board.

Recommendations:

- Dissipate fears through greater awareness-raising regarding the issues of diversity management (particularly useful for SMEs).
- Raise awareness among young people of the issues surrounding diversity management.
- Highlight good practices and demonstrate the positive impact on companies generated by a CSRdiversity management approach
- Ensure that firms' CSR Diversity actions are made more visible.
- Communicate on CSR Diversity in an educational, adapted and practical manner.
- Use teaching and vocational training to provide CSRdiversity training
- Develop CSR qualifications.
- Develop mutual understanding of the concept of CSR among all stakeholders, and encourage dialogue among them.
- Provide specific support to firms to ensure that their CSR activities are part of a real company strategy, in particular SMEs.
- Involve stakeholders in CSR Diversity approaches to a greater extent, both internally and externally.
- Encourage practice-sharing among companies.

SPAIN

Spain's recent widespread wave of immigration has forced companies to view their approach to CSR and diversity in a different light.

For some years now CSR in Spain has been blossoming. Strongly supported by the institutions – as proved by the 2006 Spanish Congress publication of a white paper, the creation of a national CSR council and many legal texts – CSR is also a hot topic for the media, universities and the economic sector. Of note is the fact that the trade unions UGT, CCOO, CEOE, CEPYME and the Spanish government have made it a feature of social dialogue, where each of these actors has an essential role to play.

Firms which take a CSR approach voluntarily commit to accepting certain economic, environmental and social values, aiming to ensure quality jobs, social wellbeing, territorial cohesion and sustainability. In addition to this aspect, they see it as a real company strategy which provides benefits in terms of competitiveness, economic growth, innovation, attracting clients and employees, as well as in terms of reputation and image. For some firms on the other hand, the costs generated by CSR have a negative impact on profitability. They also believe that it is not up to them to manage society's problems, and that CSR is not part of the business culture. This reticence notwithstanding, more and more large firms are developing long-term CSR strategies, which for them are a fundamental factor of their sustainability and their resistance to the crisis and outside pressures.

But what about SMEs? It should be noted that up until now, they have not been affected by this approach. However, they form the backbone of Spain's economy, 94% of which consists of firms with less than 10 employees. It is therefore urgent and essential to inform them of the benefits that CSR could have for them. Without this effort, it will not achieve its full potential.

Equal opportunities, flexibility of working hours, training and integration of migrants are the main social focuses of CSR policies in Spanish firms. Given the high levels of immigration over the past ten years, this sector of the population plays a unique role within companies. We should recall that Spain has the highest percentage of foreigners in the EU (4 million, or 10% of the population), thus placing it above countries with a long immigration tradition such as France, Germany or the United Kingdom. A fundamental question therefore arises for Spain, and also for all actors concerned (governments, political representatives, companies, social partners, citizens...); namely, how to integrate these people into employment and into society.

Viewed from the economic and social perspective, the issue is a considerable one. Regardless of its line of business, companies are the first place of integration for immigrants. But the lack of laws or legal obligations on the integration of immigrants into the workplace leads socially responsible companies to take a stance and offer them decent conditions. This is all the more important as the crisis has further weakened their position on the job market. Moreover, the difficulties which they often face should be remedied, in particular poorly skilled young people; temporary work contracts, lower salaries than those of Spaniards, accidents in the workplace, precariousness of place of residence, lack of measures to ensure workfamily life balance (especially for women). For example, companies are now thinking about how they can go about creating and offering quality employment, promoting recruitment models in the countries of origin, rationalizing the recruitment processes for skilled and unskilled workers, developing recognition of qualifications, ensuring professional stability which enables long-term value generation, developing alternative

vocational training, linguistic training, supporting people when buying or renting accommodation, supporting children's education, and ensuring families are kept together.

These different measures cannot be fully implemented without the support and collaboration of stakeholders, namely, the government, public administrations, social partners, business groups, associations, financial institutions and the media. It is up to the government and administrations to raise awareness among Spaniards of the causes of immigration and its positive effects, to control illegal entries, to ensure that immigration laws are applied, to make residence permit application procedures more effective, to put in place tax incentives for integration plans, and to punish fraud. It is up to social partners and business groups to raise awareness as well as including indicators on diversity management in their annual reports; the number of immigrants employed; the conditions of hire and labour. It is up to social welfare associations and organisations to negotiate agreements to promote the permanent employment of immigrants on the job market. It is up to the financial institutions to support firms' projects which include CSR and diversity management. Companies themselves must put in place strategies to promote this integration...Without forgetting the major issue of employee involvement, as for the moment they are not at all included in the dialogue.

Recommendations:

- Use good practices to raise awareness among SMEs and micro-companies, of the benefits of CSR, (employee loyalty and satisfaction, client loyalty, reputation, productivity, innovation), in order to push their managers to get involved in CSR management themselves.
- Develop knowledge of the concept of CSR and subsequently of the way it works.
- Train people, including human resources managers, about this concept.
- Situate and adapt these actions very specifically according to company activities.
- Exchange on practical cases of companies linked to CSR, and to the integration of migrant workers (training, social support...).
- Train migrant workers (technical and social aspects) in order to facilitate their integration, employability and bring added value to the company.
- Involve employees more in the CSRdiversity approach.

FRANCE (Nord-Pas-de-Calais)

In France there is a significant legal arsenal in terms of CSR, combating discrimination and diversity promotion. But companies demonstrate their own initiative in developing their CSR and diversity strategies.

Among the many initiatives which have been taken at national level, of note for example is the 2001 law on the new economic regulations (known as NRE law), which obliged companies listed on the stock market to provide information in their management report on the way in which they take into account the environmental and social impact of their activity. We should also mention the promotion of socially responsible investing (SRI), which includes social and environmental as well as financial criteria in its funds management. For its part, the overhaul of the Government Tendering legislation has enabled the adoption of various legal and regulatory instruments of active inclusion policies in contracting procedures. Regarding the fight against discrimination, common mechanisms relating to the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for all, regardless of race or ethnic origin, as well as mechanisms for equal treatment in terms of employment and labour, have been integrated into the Labour Code and the Criminal Code. In creating the Halde (Haute Autorité de Lutte contre les Discriminations et l'Egalité – High Authority for Anti-Discrimination and Equality) France also equipped itself with a tool allowing it, among other things, to open enquiries into or proceedings against businesses that do not respect the laws of equal treatment of their employees.

A survey of several firms in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region shows that they perceive diversity in a fairly positive light. Managers and employees agree on the fact that it represents an advantage rather than a disadvantage; that it brings wealth, openness, creativity and innovation. Lastly, they are fairly receptive to the idea of their firm getting involved in a pro-active diversity-based approach. However it should be noted that this approach rather reflects the position taken by large firms. That of SoHos (Small OfficeHome Office) and SMEs is a little different, because they do not generally have departments allowing them to undertake this type of project.

Among the tools which companies use to implement their strategy, the diversity charter plays a prominent role. It was launched in 2004 on the impetus of Yazid Sabeg, today the Prime Minister's Commissioner for diversity and equal opportunities. On signing it, companies commit to investing in and safeguarding diversity and respecting it among their staff members. They also commit to combating all forms of discrimination. The charter is structured around six axes: raising awareness and training; respecting and promoting application of the principle of non-discrimination; seeking to reflect the diversity of French society; communicating, drafting and implementing diversity policies and ensuring that diversity is a topic for debate with staff representatives; and including a chapter in the annual report describing the commitment to non-discrimination and diversity. Today, the diversity charter boasts 2618 signatory firms in France. In the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, 86 firms have signed it, including Auchan, Transpole, and La Redoute. Having been extensively publicised in the media, it is nonetheless very limited because in no way is it a binding tool for signatory companies, which are not investigated to ensure they are respecting their commitments.

More binding than the diversity charter, the Diversity label is a certification granted by AFNOR. It proves the organisation's commitment to combating discrimination and to promoting diversity and is only awarded to firms following evaluation of five areas: assessment of diversity in the company, the definition and implementation of the diversity policy, internal communication, awareness-

raising and training, taking diversity into account in the organisation's activities, evaluation and areas for improvement in the organisation. The label is re-evaluated every 18 months. For the moment, few companies use it as it is still new.

Many firms also draft, negotiate and sign internal agreements on diversity and anti-discrimination with social partners. This allows their commitment to be visible, but above all gives them real weight and involves all actors in their structure on the issue. In addition, this document is accessible to all and enforceable against the company; therefore often more tangible than mere statements of intent.

Whatever the level of commitment from businesses, they often need support in making their approach a reality. Face Lille Métropole, project partner, plays an essential role here, particularly through its diversity course. This course offers a framework for action but does not fence in the company or the area in a rigid approach, as individual details and circumstances must be taken into account. It is built around seven stages: informing, raising awareness, training, making the formal commitment a reality, diagnosing, transforming practices, evaluating, capitalising, evolving. Lastly, in the context of high unemployment and poverty in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, Face Lille Métropole plays a key role in bringing together companies and job-seekers, through initiatives such as the Job Academy, sponsorship, and sport.

Recommendations:

- Communicate on CSR/Diversity issues.
- Share diversity issues at all levels of the company.
- Train the management in diversity and the benefits generated for the company.
- Provide specific support to firms in implementing their CSR/Diversity strategy.
- Ensure these actions fall under the framework of a company project.
- Develop evaluation tools.
- Exchange with other companies.
- Go out and meet the disadvantaged people, create platforms for dialogue.

BELGIUM

CSR and diversity have been part of Belgian public policies for a long time. How do firms make it a concrete reality?

First of all, we should recall that interest in diversity developed in Belgium in the 1980s through the first initiatives taken with the aim of training and supporting long-term unemployed people who were of foreign origin or who had had a poor education. At the same time, the problem of inequalities within organisations also arose. Diversity is one of the pillars of the social aspect of CSR. It constitutes a major issue in the development of societal responsibility in Belgium, because the CSR movement took root in 1995 in the wake of the Trade and Industry Manifesto against Social Exclusion, signed by a group of company managers under the guidance of Jacques Delors, then President of the European Commission. It was a case of persuading companies that they had a role to play in ending exclusion from the job market experienced by long-term unemployed people of foreign origin who had had a poor education. And this would be done through continual improvement of their social practices (recruitment, training, development...).

Diversity as such took on particular importance, with the transposition into Belgian law of European directives on discrimination. Viewed as an opportunity and enshrined in a CSR framework of voluntary commitment, diversity became essential for organisations. To this end, today it goes beyond the context of CSR: even organisations which do not adhere to the CSR concept are obliged to be concerned with, if not diversity, at least with respect for anti-discrimination legislation.

Social partners and entrepreneurs alike are making greater commitments to diversity, as shown also by the collective agreements which were signed in 2008 at federal level. They are legally binding.

Belgium has included diversity in the workplace among its priorities, at both federal and regional level. At federal level, a label of diversity promotion on the job market, resulting from consultation with social partners, experts and companies, was launched in 2006, together with a barometer measuring discrimination in the workplace. The federal level also saw the conclusion of an important collective labour agreement (no. 38), which is legally binding within the National Labour Council, a place of federal consultation between managers and trade unionists. This agreement encompasses the principle of equal treatment during the recruitment and selection procedure.

In the 1990s, the Flanders Region for its part supported the implementation of numerous diversity plans, granting employers funding and assistance through the buffer of authorised consultants. In 2001, social partners and the Flemish government signed the Vilvoorde Pact, which led to the decree on proportional participation in the labour market, adopted on 24 April 2002. The principle of proportional participation implies that participation in the labour market should be proportional to the composition of the professional population and that proportional participation of groups at risk should be guaranteed. Other initiatives were taken, such as the platform of entrepreneurs for diversity. This structure informs and raises awareness of the added value generated by diversity.

The Brussels-Capital Region is not being outdone. Recent initiatives include the stance taken by the government on diversity plans and the diversity label. Likewise, an allowance of 10,000 euros maximum will be granted to the companies, organisations and institutions concerned, which have a diversity plan in place. It will be allocated as joint funding of half of the costs linked to development, for the implementation and follow-up of the diversity plan. The diversity label will

be attributed to the companies, organisations and institutions which have a diversity policy in place and which received a positive final evaluation from Actiris (Brussels employment office), after two years of the plan. The 2008 “Anti-discrimination and pro-diversity commitments made by representative trade unions in Brussels” should also be highlighted. The three trade unions are officially positioned to enhance pro-diversity efforts and to focus on the essential role of the trade union world, both internally and externally.

Finally, the Walloon region has also been active in this field. It set up a comprehensive diversity management and anti-discrimination policy in recruitment and in the workplace, which plans for measures to encourage and value diversity initiatives taken by businesses and organisations. There is a diversity charter, for companies which wish to join the fight against discrimination and undertake diversity management in human resources (almost one hundred firms have already ratified this charter, as well as two activity sectors: construction and green sectors); assistance for diversity management in human resources in active firms and organisations, which should allow companies to come through on their commitments taken through the charter for diversity in firms, self-diagnosis of their HR management from the diversity perspective, definition of a diversity management policy for their human resources, implementation and evaluation of this policy (seven companies and organisations to date benefit from this assistance and several other applications are currently being handled); the approval by the Walloon Region of diversity consultants to support the companies and organisations in their diversity approach. Last but not least there is also an annual Walloon prize for “Diversity and human resources in companies and organisations”, which aims to highlight and support an initiative or a particularly relevant practice carried out by an SMESoHo, a large company, a non-profit organisation or a public service (there were five winners in 2007, four in 2008 and four in 2009, in the following four categories: large companies, SMESoHo, non-profit and public services).

Recommendations

- Evaluate all actions put in place to date and draw conclusions from them, to continue to make progress
- Exchange ideas with other companies.
- Go out and meet the disadvantaged people, create platforms for dialogue.

Leading by example: what good practices teach us

Companies therefore have many sources of motivation. Some use their CSR and diversity strategy to facilitate the integration of people who are alienated from the workplace, others to ensure staff loyalty, others to save jobs, others to create them, others to ensure customer satisfaction or to promote values of solidarity, still others to make up for a lack of public policies. While they are very different, the good practices below all highlight the importance of partnership, of dialogue between the various stakeholders and the strength of the social innovation strategies put in place.

Integrating people who are alienated from the workplace

■ "La ville de Cluj a une âme" – Banca Transilvania (Romania)

This project, launched in 2007, is run by "*La ville de Cluj a une âme*", a corporate foundation set up by *Banca Transilvania* in partnership with a welfare foundation. It resulted in the creation of a day centre for young people from 14 to 18 years of age from disadvantaged backgrounds, often of foreign origin, in conflict with their parents, where they receive help with a personalised plan. They have access to information, to personal and vocational training programmes (education and mentoring programmes, professional training, welfare and pedagogical programmes). They can also stay in the centre for a certain period of time, until they manage to find a job and to live independently. These young people often find it difficult to get a job allowing them to cover their own needs.

Based on the observation that there was a significant lack of social and economic opportunities for young people from disadvantaged social groups in the Cluj region, Banca Transilvania set up a petition in the local community, in order to gauge the potential interest in such a structure. Thanks to the voluntary involvement of businesses, students and the local press in collecting signatures, Banca Transilvania managed to collect 65,000 signatures in record time. The eventual aim was to turn these signatures into financial contributions from the Cluj business community, to enable the creation of the foundation.

The success of this project is an interesting example. First of all it had a positive impact on young people. The majority of them who were threatening to leave the school system ended up staying; those who had left it have been reintegrated, while others managed to complete vocational training or find a job (either temporary or permanent). The key to the success of this project also lies in the public-private partnership and the vital support from the Child, Community, Family foundation in terms of social support. The work carried out to publicise the project in schools, healthcare centres, workplaces, and socially-oriented associations is also worthy of note. The project is the outcome of the bank's serious commitment to meet the needs of social inclusion and to bridge the gap in government policies in this area. This commitment is all the more remarkable given that this type of project is expensive and requires extensive human resources (professional, psychological advice, welfare, trainers...). Lastly, the project is the result of a real strategy, put in place following a needs assessment.

■ Ateliers sans Frontières (Workshops without borders) (Romania)

This project aims to promote the return to employment of people of all ages, who are alienated from the workplace or who have no real professional experience. These people are often homeless, suffering from various addictions, disability and social exclusion. People come to Workshops without Borders via local associations or social services. They repair and recycle computer or sports equipment, which is then sold on. Workshops without borders (an economically viable company) thus gives them the opportunity for a new start, by helping them to learn professional skills over one year, and to get back to a certain economic, financial, professional and social stability to then move on to other jobs. Workshops without Borders has on average space for 20 people. These people all benefit from training before starting work; they receive an employment contract and are paid just above the legal minimum wage. This is deliberate, as the aim is to push them to go on to find better-paid jobs. People are employed part-time, and the rest of the time is given over to vocational training and supporting them in finding lasting employment.

The project would not exist without strong partnership with a network of potential employers, and socially responsible companies which get involved in the activities of Ateliers sans frontières, either by providing computer equipment, by proposing places for the integration of these people, or by making experts available for skills transfer. Some also contribute to the funding of Workshops without Borders. Lastly, social services also play an important role.

■ Città e Salute (Italy)

Città e Salute is a type B Italian social cooperative, based in Milan, which works to integrate physically and mentally disabled people. Its activities revolve around sorting waste material, particularly clothes and shoes and making handicraft jewellery. The objective is to help disabled people to benefit from good training, to gain professional experience within the social cooperative, to then be able to be part of the traditional labour market. As well as helping enhance the professional skills of the disabled people, the cooperative also works on their social skills. This work is carried out in partnership with a psycho-social centre. Integration is carried out over several stages. Social services or local job centres hold discussions with the cooperative about the person to be integrated. Based on their skills, the type of work which best corresponds to them is identified and a personalised plan is decided on, between the social services, the cooperative and the person. The person then undergoes training – often financed by the region or another public administration – and is monitored by a tutor who evaluates their skills, and the skills needing to be improved in order for them to learn a specialisation.

Throughout this whole time, the tutor is in touch with the social service which originally referred the person. This monitoring allows Città e Salute to thoroughly understand the real capacities of the person and thus to assist private companies or public administrations in defining the job that would be most suited to the person. Their role is essential. When the training period is seen to have a positive outcome, the disabled person may be employed by the social cooperative, or even become a member thereof, or may find employment on the traditional labour market. In this case, Città e Salute will use different types of contracts, enabling them to manage the working relations

between social cooperatives (for example between type A and type B cooperatives). The type of contract will be chosen according to the person's needs: part time, etc.

Over recent years, Città e Salute has helped to integrate 60 people into the traditional labour market.

It is clear that the work of social cooperatives is part of a close-knit relationship with a range of actors on the ground.

■ COFIDIS (France)

COFIDIS is a company offering consumer loans online or over the phone, with 1600 employees. For some years now it has been working for diversity and non-discrimination and is supported in its endeavours by social partners. Its commitment has translated into signing a diversity charter, an internal agreement on equal opportunities (getting involved, raising awareness, training and communicating, making HR processes objective, recruiting and promoting, setting up social dialogue, guaranteeing its implementation, evaluating it and making it known), recruitment of a diversity reference person, training for all managers and the entire HR team in diversity management, activities throughout the year to encourage diversity, auditing the HR practices and mechanisms. Its commitment has also translated into outside involvement, carrying out various activities to promote the integration of people alienated from the workplace, such as FACENERGIE sport. This event, targeting job-seekers and young people primarily, aims to make it easier for job-seekers and company employees to meet at a sports event, and thus in an informal setting. Alongside the football and rugby matches which pit mixed teams against each other (comprising job-seekers and company employees), interview-simulation stands and company visits are set up.

This initiative helps to change young people's view of the company, to develop team spirit and to meet other people in a convivial environment where social barriers are no longer identifiable. It has also had an impact on the firm's project, as the employees feel valued by taking part. FACENERGIE Sport is the result of collaboration between many partners, particularly local authorities and missions. The importance of the role of the Face Lille Métropole in the project's success should also be pointed out.

■ Sita Nord (France)

Sita Nord is a subsidiary of Suez-environnement, which works in the field of waste: industrial and health waste management, local communities, sorting and evaluation. The company has set up a comprehensive anti-discrimination, pro-diversity policy, which translates to several specific actions. First of all, a group agreement in favour of the promotion of equal opportunities and diversity in the firm was signed with trade union organisations, then a comprehensive diagnosis of the group subsidiaries was undertaken and general and specific recommendations were made. Training based on common origin and specific approaches was then put in place in the group's subsidiaries, firstly for managers and HR staff on diversity management, then in the form of training activities for local managers, local HR staff and regional social partners. The executive committee has also been made aware of the fight against discrimination and the action to be undertaken in the company to put an end to it. An action plan was then drawn up. Among the actions taken, the Job Academy is one innovative step, as it proposes providing collective support over five weeks to people seeking jobs in the company.

Sita Nord involves its employees in this approach. Throughout the session they hold workshops aiming to specifically prepare jobseekers for finding work. This initiative is interesting as it allows people to discover the company in a different way, and to dispel any prejudices that the jobseekers may have. It also has a positive impact within the company, because employees feel valued as they contribute their skills, putting them at the service of the jobseekers.

■ TEC Hainaut (Belgium)

TEC Hainaut is the public transport company in the Hainaut province of Belgium. A social reintegration partnership has been set up, involving 18 to 25 year olds who are out of workschool and who have been on benefits for a long time. The initiative revolves around cleaning the inside of buses. The objectives are to participate in building a positive image of an institutional public service in the Walloon Region, which integrates more vulnerable people into a specific working team on the job market, as well as to create a new and real profession of staff specialised in cleaning buses, entitled "*Agent de Propreté Bus - Bus Cleaning Agent*" (APB). Following repeated acts of vandalism on public transport lines in Hainaut Province, where a high level of unemployment prevails, in 1996 TEC Hainaut decided to put in place a partnership with the people who were carrying out these acts, by making them clean the buses that returned to the depot at the end of the day. To do so, collaboration was set up with the Centre public d'aide sociale (CPAS) *Public welfare centre* of Mons, which selected the participants and used a local training-through-work venture (EFT), Cecos, in order to set up a social reintegration project. 76 people have participated in the project since 1996, some of whom were taken on by the TEC as assistants or as drivers.

The lasting nature of the partnership is ensured through the creation of a social integration company (Seconet) approved by the Walloon Region. It currently employs 12 people, nine of whom are on permanent contracts. Trained tutors and advisors (volunteer TEC employees) guide the young people on the ground to teach them the culture of work, to win their trust and to evaluate them. Three Cecos trainers also assisted in demonstrating professional cleaning techniques.

The success of the project lies in the effective partnership which has built up between the TEC Hainaut firm, the CPAS in Mons, and Cecos. This partnership has subsequently spread to other cleaning professions, as well as other depots such as La Louvière and Tournai, involving collaboration with other local CPAS. Communication has also played a significant role in the project's success, and is continual at all levels both internally and externally, via the company's internal news bulletin, where emphasis is placed on the link between the job and social reintegration, and via notes to the company's Board. It is however to be regretted that this project does not involve more female candidates. The bus cleaning work is still perceived to be harder than cleaning houses.

■ Carrefour Polska (Poland)

In 2008, the Carrefour branch in Poland signed an agreement with the Polish Union for the hearing-impaired, to enable these people to obtain cashier positions. To do so, the job of cashier was assessed, together with the particular characteristics and maximum adaptations that would need to be provided so that hearing-impaired people could get such jobs. The agreement ensured that disabled people would have the same jobs and the same level of pay as other Carrefour cashiers. The first test with six disabled people had been positively evaluated by the people themselves, the directors, employees and clients of Carrefour, and so it was decided to continue with the initiative and to expand it to other shops in Poland.

The support of the Union for the Hearing-impaired has been decisive in this partnership. It has published Carrefour vacancies across its network, and intervened during the test phase to evaluate the adaptations to the workstations that would be required. It also supported the implementation of training modules, aimed at preparing the hearing-impaired for the job of cashier, and helped to produce communication tools for Carrefour's customers and employees. This partnership was also essential in introducing change within Carrefour and in breaking down the barriers to employment for the hearing-impaired. The impact is positive, because firstly it allowed a high number of these people to be integrated, to reduce the company's staff turnover, and to improve its image with customers. Since then, new agreements have been signed and other companies such as Auchan are following this example.

Gaining staff loyalty by ensuring a worklife balance.

■ Serdomas Sistemas (Spain)

Serdomas Sistemas is a personal services company based in Madrid and has 14 employees. It offers domestic services for the elderly as well as cleaning, cooking and ironing for families, aiming to facilitate their everyday lives and to meet the need for a better worklife balance. The company's strategy is based on the integration of immigrants, who constitute almost 90% of the staff, as well as on the diversity of the team, made up of people from different cultures, languages and profiles. It offers its employees training in care and domestic services. It gives them flexible working hours, in order for them to attend to family and personal demands on their time. In addition, the company also negotiates for them with Caixa bank, pushing for preferential conditions in awarding micro-credits, credit cards, salary advances, etc. It undertakes family reunification procedures for them through its legal department. In order to safeguard the objective selection process, the group of people in charge of recruitment is a real mix. During the selection process, any questions not linked to the post to be filled are ruled out. Lastly, the company is structured around horizontal organisation, aiming to facilitate the sharing of responsibilities and maximum involvement of the staff association in decision making.

This strategy was put in place based on the outcome of a staff survey, carried out to identify their key needs, then the implementation of an action plan to ensure worklife balance, which went hand in hand with communication for staff. This work was carried out with a support structure. Women in particular viewed the programme in a favourable light, because it allowed them to

acquire professional skills and at the same time to fit their work in around their family obligations. It helped to increase staff satisfaction and motivation, to improve the atmosphere in the workplace and thus productivity. Lastly, this programme had a real impact on the image and reputation of the firm, both internally and externally.

■ Microsoft (Poland)

"Working parent" is a programme intended to help employees strike a worklife balance. It was launched by the Polish subsidiary of Microsoft in December 2007 and is a culmination of all the efforts it had previously undertaken in this field. It aims not only to present a set of good practices relating to the balance between private life and work, but also to improve effectiveness in the workplace by providing access to flexible hours and places of work. Particular attention is paid to the parents of children under 14 years of age as well as pregnant women. This programme was created based on the needs voiced by Microsoft employees (men and women).

It goes far beyond what is enshrined in Polish law in terms of protection for pregnant women, people on maternity or parental leave as well as people who have a child to look after. Thus Microsoft gives pregnant women and people with young children (under six years old) the option to work hours of their choice, to carry out certain tasks from home, to work six hours a day and to have less duties. Nonetheless they still have access to the company's services, such as a company car, a computer and mobile telephone, and access to the company's network. Parents with children under 14 years old can manage their own working hours. They also benefit from two days of sick leave in addition to those authorised by law, with no need of a doctor's note. Enjoyment of the afore-mentioned rights in no way affects remuneration.

Worklife balance is an important issue in Poland, both from an economic point of view and as regards the professional situation of women. Proof of this are the many campaigns over recent years in Poland attempting to mobilise people around the seriously precarious situations of pregnant women who lost their jobs due to their condition. The programme has proved successful, as it is used today by all employees of Microsoft Poland with children under 14. On the contrary, men benefit from it to a lesser extent. Since its launch, 16% of employees have become mothers, the proportion of women in the company has increased (currently 20%) together with the percentage of those occupying positions of authority (20% at the time of writing). The impact in terms of efficiency and innovation within the teams is huge. Furthermore, "Working parent" really contributes to improving the status of women on the labour market. The impact on the image of Microsoft Polska has also been noteworthy, as it now features among the "Best Employers in Poland".

Developing skills and offering quality jobs

■ Accenture (Poland)

In 2008, the company Accenture launched an action programme entitled "Female Accent" at the University of Economics in Krakow, directed at women. The particular objective was to motivate them and to equip them with skills allowing them to fully achieve their professional goals and to have greater belief in their own capacities. An advisory firm, Accenture had noted that few women were applying for consulting positions and also wanted to increase its numbers of female consultants. This programme was strongly supported by the company management and was set up

by the public relations, marketing and human resources departments. The courses were given by female experts from Accenture as well as by other female company managers. They underlined the importance of having women in the firm and the importance for women of having career development prospects.

The evaluation of this first session of courses assessed the levels of interest and significant needs in this area which exist in Poland. They answer the real question of professional equality and of women taking charge of companies. The consequences were important for Accenture's image, as it appeared to be a firm committed to equal opportunities, in its customer relationships as well. Lastly, some women felt motivated to take on consulting roles within the structure.

■ RE-Energie (Italy)

The Re-Energie initiative is being run by type B social cooperatives in Italy and aims to promote the use of renewable energy sources (RES) and to develop adaptation processes to meet demand from the public and private sectors and families. At the same time it aims to weave a fabric of new "environmental" companies, with a social purpose, to provide high quality job opportunities for disadvantaged people, who up until now have only worked in sectors with low added value. The target public is made up disadvantaged people, young people and immigrants in particular (63% of the people employed). The objectives are as follows: to develop new energy management methods across the country; to develop comprehensive action aiming to promote renewable energy sources in both public and private sectors and in families, in order to increase demand for renewable energy and to promote the creation and development of 'environmental' companies with a social purpose; to meet the emerging needs; to draft growth and innovation strategies for the social economy, while enhancing a series of tools guaranteeing the recruitment of people threatened with exclusion from the labour market and to build a solid partnership between the different stakeholders. Local authorities have a role to play in the promotion of renewable energy sources and in the implementation of local energy plans to stimulate the installation of solar power systems (for example), and 'environmental' companies with a social purpose have a role to play in training and helping people gain new qualifications. Finally, the project's technical partners contribute their expertise.

To date, the project has resulted in the creation of four new social cooperatives specialising in the installation of photovoltaic solar panels for electricity generation. They have 90 posts, 30% of which are held by people from difficult backgrounds. Added to this, a consortium has been created, to internationalise cooperatives in the field of energy and the environment.

This project is innovative at many levels; the creation of new 'environmental' companies with a social purpose and the prospect of offering jobs with high added value to people in difficulty as well as tackling the challenge of social exclusion, the economic opportunities it offers, and innovative partnership. In addition, it can be reproduced and transferred.

■ Corporación Euromanser, S.A.L (Spain)

This company offers cleaning services, floor treatment, gardening, decorating, disinfection, bricklaying, painting, electrics, carpentry, locksmith work and plumbing for individuals and

companies. It employs 24 people. The Corporación Euromanser strategy is based on the quality of its staff and the training activities that it undertakes to ensure their continual improvement. In doing so, it remains competitive on the market. After having diagnosed the staff training needs, the management team set up a continual training programme, which is included in the company's strategy and which is subject to regular evaluation. This plan aims to help employees to carry out increasingly complex tasks which entail greater responsibilities, to adapt their skills to the changes in technology and to make the work a source of learning and constant satisfaction. Thus every year employees receive training which is organised by outside companies. They can request distance-training or onsite training in computers, graphics software, risk prevention, management, negotiation, sales techniques, and also in the English language. This strategy gives the employees great satisfaction, and the impact of this is felt in terms of productivity. With this differentiation, the company is also ensuring customer satisfaction and a sterling image.

Saving jobs

■ Policolor (Romania)

With over 40 years of experience, Policolor is currently Romania's leading company in the manufacture of varnishes, paints and resins. In 2008, the company boasted 586 employees. It pays particular attention to the health and safety of its employees in the workplace as well as to the environment. Its systems have been certified in accordance with the SR EN ISO 14001:1997 and OHSAS 18001:1999 standards.

In order to deal with the high levels of emigration among the qualified workforce, Policolor decided to set up a long-term proactive vocational training policy, for students at secondary vocational training schools specialising in construction and/or poorly qualified workers. Launched in 2005 by the leaders of the new Romanian brand in the Deko Professional group, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, this project entitled "*the professionals of tomorrow*" aims to train them and to offer them a professional qualification in the latest techniques and methods on the market. Almost 2000 students have already participated in this programme (700 students in 2006/2007 and 1200 in 2007/2008 across 29 vocational schools), as well as a similar proportion of non-qualified workers.

This is a forward-thinking human resources strategy, "an intelligent solution to the growing shortage of manpower, which is essential for the future of industry", stated the President of the Romanian Association of Entrepreneurs in Construction (ARACO). Industry representatives and employers' associations were involved in early analysis. The programme receives support from Employees of Industry and Construction, as all companies in this sector are facing labour shortages. It also benefits from assistance from local and central public authorities. DEKO Professional is supporting the project by providing equipment and educational supplies to all, trainers and learners alike, as well as the tools, protection equipment and construction material required for quality training. Various modules have been organised around the following specialised areas: decorative plaster; mortar and adhesives; insulation; heat insulation of buildings; epoxy flooring; indoor paint systems. Each module is coordinated by an expert at Policolor.

This project provides a response to the sensitive issue of manpower shortages across whole sectors. It has come into its own through the partnership which has made it all possible.

Creating jobs

■ GENERA (Spain)

GENERA is a Spanish programme supporting the development of self-employment initiatives. The main objective of this programme (financed by the European Social Fund) is the social and professional integration of migrants. The target group is made up of migrants who are particularly vulnerable, socially speaking, and who meet the following criteria; under-qualified women with families and immigrants working in unstable conditions; political asylum seekers and other people under international protection. These people must be authorised to work or must possess at least a residence permit for Spain, which means that their situation in Spain is legitimate.

Specifically speaking, the programme is divided into two stages. The first aims to select the agents who will be tasked with choosing the beneficiaries of the programme. The second aims at working around entrepreneurial skills: pre-feasibility; business plan; financial support for new projects; follow-up of the process of creating the new company. This initiative falls under the framework of the Spanish law of 18 July 2007 relating to the integration of migrants, political asylum seekers and other people under the protection of the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and in the framework of the resolution of 3 July 2009 of the Spanish Department responsible for the integration of migrants.

This project provides a response to the professional and social integration of migrants, political asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, persons under agreement of temporary protection or those benefiting from another status of protection. It is entirely adapted to people who often demonstrate personal and professional capacities to tackle something new. The information imparted regarding the procedures to follow is particularly useful for them. Most jobs created by migrants are in the areas of services, with local reach.

Ensuring customer satisfaction

■ Teckentrup GmbH & Co KG (Germany)

This company produces doors and gates, industrial gates and garage doors, and is one of the biggest manufacturers in this field in Europe. Among its 800 employees, 25% are of foreign origin. Teckentrup GmbH & Co KG was the first company in the Lippe region (Westphalia) to sign the diversity charter, which highlights equal opportunities as regards age, gender, ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual preference, etc. The company places its employees' expertise at the heart of its strategy and in its international development, values its employees' linguistic skills and capacity to adapt. It recruits workers of foreign origin through word of mouth among groups of migrants and their leaders. Diversity management is dealt with at the highest level of decision-making in the company, considering that it is essential to make managerial staff aware of these issues to then be able to effectively implement it throughout the structure and to rally the staff to the cause.

In order to establish its strategy, Teckentrup GmbH & Co KG use multicultural teams, in which each person acquires a culture of diversity. It organises workshops on specific themes and events which allow diversity to be part of everyday life. Thus once a year it organises a "carnival of cultures",

where each group of migrants presents their typical dishes and drinks and provides information on their culture and characteristics. This event allows employees to meet each other and to become familiar with the different cultures. The company publishes information on the different religions and practices arising from them (for example Ramadan). To do so, it relies on people from the different groups of migrants. It makes greetings cards which are adapted to the beliefs of its staff, and organises multicultural football teams.

This strategy has borne fruit. The evaluation questionnaire sent to staff reveals their satisfaction, the improvement in the working atmosphere, and better perception of the issues of diversity. The company's image among the different stakeholders has also improved. It should however be noted that Teckentrup GmbH & Co KG does not wish to use its commitment to diversity to sell its products. Rather, it prefers to harness this commitment internally. Lastly, the company speaks about diversity issues at conferences, within business networks and at universities. It is also part of a network which has just been set up in Lippe region (Westphalia) and which aims to encourage the exchange of experiences in CSR and diversity.

■ Innodämm GmbH (Germany)

This company specialises in insulating buildings. It employs 31 people, half of whom are of foreign origin. The company also employs people who have been alienated from the job market (older people, single mothers, disabled people). The company's stance has always been to choose the most suitable person for the position, and it would appear that this choice often involves immigrants, who generally have great capacity for adaptation, reactivity and ingenuity on the building site. The many nationalities within the company constitute an advantage in establishing contact with customers and developing at international level. Diversity is an integral part of company life. Everybody who comes to Innodämm GmbH benefits from support in terms of qualifications, as well as language training for people from abroad.

Insofar as it can, the company takes account of the individual circumstances of its employees, for example by giving single mothers the chance to work at home, or by making provision for the fact that a person of foreign origin may need to absent themselves for longer periods of times due to family reasons (mourning, etc).

The diversity management policy of Innodämm GmbH has had very positive results; staff motivation, loyalty and pride in the company, and a strong feeling of identification with the firm. It has also had an impact in economic terms, as clients feel secure when they place their orders, especially when they can place their orders with people from the same place as them, as well as in terms of reputation. This diversity approach, in conjunction with that of technical competence means that Innodämm GmbH is recognised for its unique know-how and for differentiating itself from other companies in the sector of building insulation. Given the significant prospects for job creation in Europe in the field of heat insulation, particularly for less qualified people, this experience is particularly interesting. Moreover, Innodämm GmbH also publicises its work extensively, and has participated in several CSR and diversity competitions. It also plans to exchange experiences with other companies, and to develop its own training courses for insulation installers, in partnership with the chamber of commerce.

Meeting the local market and internationalisation needs

■ Phöenix Contact GmbH&Co KG (Germany)

An electronics manufacturer, Phoenix Contact GmbH & Co. KG employs 10,000 people, half of whom are in Germany. The firm has been practising CSR for many years. Its assets include the creation of an internal health centre and training on diversity for staff, among other things. Within the group (in Blomberg in particular), around 10% of the staff are immigrants (from Turkey, the Netherlands, Portugal, Croatia, China and Eastern European countries). The company esteems that the expertise of its foreign employees in terms of migration is particularly valuable. Mastery of several languages, cultural mentalities and references are all extremely useful tools in a professional international environment. This is particularly true for technical and management positions in Phoenix Contact. The company is also investing in basic vocational qualifications for young foreigners. It thus plays an exemplary role in the job market in the Lippe region (Westphalia) by supporting youngsters in the early stages of their career. Everyone who enters Phoenix Contact benefits from an integration programme, where focus is placed, among other things, on the positive aspect of diversity. The department managers who work with employees of foreign origin receive training on multicultural understanding, and language training is also offered in order to remove communication difficulties.

Evaluation of this policy serves to highlight its effectiveness; low staff turnover and company loyalty among poorly qualified staff. Internal communication is also an important element in raising awareness of diversity. The staff magazine, together, with the firm's internal newsletter, includes accounts from employees of foreign origin. Externally, Phoenix Contact's publicity policy is more neutral. In fact it does not use its diversity policy as a commercial or recruitment tool, considering instead that its selection policy must be based on skills and not on quota applications. On the contrary, Phoenix Contact wants to work more with schools, etc, on the need to open up to multicultural understanding and diversity, which it considers to be essential success factors for the coming years.

Continuing to make progress

This project has enabled us to demonstrate that in Europe, there are various CSR models in place, adopted according to the economic, social, cultural, historic and legal context of the country in which they are to be found. It has also allowed us to highlight the diversity of activities which European companies are undertaking in order to meet the needs of society and to overcome the economic, social (and environmental) challenges which are currently emerging. Whatever their distinctive identities, the strategies and practices put in place converge on many points and constitute real advantages for businesses.

Nevertheless, there is still much to be done to ensure that CSR and diversity policies reach their full potential. Among the steps to be taken, first of all it is important to clarify the very definition of the concepts of CSR and diversity, to raise awareness, informing and communicating on their multiple issues and on the advantages that they represent, both for companies and their various constituent parts, and for consumers and society as a whole. It is essential that SMEs be made aware that they can also benefit from taking such measures and to promote similar good practices which bear successful fruit. To this end, the exchange of experiences and meetings between companies is very useful. Training and support for businesses is a second important stake. They must enable a positive view of diversity to develop (for management and employees alike) and encourage a move from CSR and diversity objectives towards the implementation of a real policy, resulting in specific actions.

In order to give these policies a chance of success, it is important to frame them in a long-term company project, as well as to have resource persons within the company. Firms also need tools to check and evaluate the results of their actions in CSR and diversity. Without indicators, they cannot develop strategies to bring about change. The issue of the involvement of stakeholders (both internal and external) constitutes another important issue. They should be allowed to deepen their understanding of CSR and diversity, to better define their roles and responsibilities, in order to find new forms of dialogue and cooperation between them and the companies, in addition to new synergies between them. To do so, companies must demonstrate greater transparency and include more information on their social commitment in the annual reports that they produce. They also need to think about the way in which they harmonise their practices in this field, in order to ensure the information is usable, to avail of shared performance indicators and to allow stakeholders to really be able to compare firms' commitment. The question also arises as to whether continued development of CSR on a merely voluntary basis should still be encouraged, or whether on the contrary, a binding legal framework should be put in place to push companies further along this path. The debate is open and the European Commission will be publishing a new communication in 2011 on the matter. In any case, the public authorities have a vital role to play in promoting CSR and diversity, spreading examples of good practices in the area, creating platforms for dialogue.

In the current crisis CSR, more so than ever, appears to be a tool for social cohesion. And, as the partners of this project pointed out, it also appears to be a solution to the crisis as well as a vital element for business sustainability.