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Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

2006/2133(INI)

29.11.2006

OPINION

of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on corporate social responsibility: a new partnership
(2006/2133(INI))

Draftsman: Gunnar Hökmark

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in contributing to sustainable development and the Lisbon Strategy as regards matters such as the more rational use of natural resources, better results from innovation, poverty reduction and greater respect for human rights;
2. Supports the initiative taken by the Commission to create a forum for dialogue with stakeholders between and across Member States that facilitates the exchange of best practice and raises awareness of CSR at European level; emphasises, nevertheless, that the Commission must not undertake initiatives to establish yet another redundant regulatory framework that brings rules that do not exist in the Member States into play;
3. Stresses that the involvement of companies in CSR activities should always be voluntary and should take into account the current state of development of the market in all of the Member States, as well as their business culture, compliance with the social partnership principle and political aspects; stresses also that CSR activities can not be a substitute for public sector activities where such measures are properly called for and must be independent of regulatory frameworks that apply to actors in the public sector;
4. Points out that CSR should tackle new areas such as lifelong learning, the organisation of work, equal opportunities, social inclusion, sustainable development and ethics, so as to act as an additional instrument for managing industrial change and restructuring;
5. Encourages companies to individually decide on benchmarks for CSR solutions; believes that CSR activities that do not emanate from within companies but are imposed from outside could have adverse effects on the willingness of companies to invest in and trade with other countries, particularly developing countries, and could thereby reduce the chances of economic development and efforts to eradicate poverty;
6. Highlights the importance of building trust and consensus and support for internationally accepted principles such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, in view of the fact that there is no universally agreed measurement system for CSR activities;
7. Welcomes a dialogue that encourages companies to create a reasonable balance between ethical considerations, profit-making and competitiveness; rejects the notion that efforts to increase profits are inconsistent with ethical behaviour and acknowledges the benefits to welfare and sustainability derived from open and competitive markets; stresses the ethical and commercial responsibility never to violate basic human rights or freedoms, which all European businesses in their activities in third countries should bear; also recalls the positive effects European companies can have on local working conditions and the environment and the importance of the transfer of know-how and technology that follows foreign investments and business operations in host countries; also stresses the responsibility of companies involved as employers or concerned parties in third countries never to take advantage of the existing oppression of citizens; shares the view that consumers have an important role to play in the economy;

8. Believes that the international dimension of CSR should be a stimulus for guidelines to be drawn up promoting the development of policies of this kind throughout the world.

PROCEDURE

Title	Corporate social responsibility: a new partnership
Procedure number	2006/2133(INI)
Committee responsible	EMPL
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	ITRE 15.6.2006
Enhanced cooperation – date announced in plenary	
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Gunnar Hökmark 20.6.2006
Previous drafts(wo)man	
Discussed in committee	10.10.2006 28.11.2006
Date adopted	28.11.2006
Result of final vote	+: 27 –: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Jan Březina, Jerzy Buzek, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Giles Chichester, Den Dover, Adam Gierek, Norbert Glante, Umberto Guidoni, Fiona Hall, Rebecca Harms, Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Romana Jordan Cizelj, Werner Langen, Eugenijus Maldeikis, Reino Paasilinna, Miloslav Ransdorf, Vladimír Remek, Teresa Riera Madurell, Mechtild Rothe, Paul Rübig, Andres Tarand, Catherine Trautmann, Nikolaos Vakalis, Alejo Vidal-Quadras, Dominique Vlasto
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Pilar Ayuso, Gunnar Hökmark, Lambert van Nistelrooij
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	
Comments (available in one language only)	