

**President José Manuel Barroso**

European Commission  
Secretariat General  
Unit D1

**Dear President Barroso,**

In response to your open consultation on the EU 2020 strategy, as CEO of Business in the Community I want to add my voice and encourage you to include Corporate Responsibility in your programme for the new Commission as a key mechanism to involve business in delivering Europe's vision for a more responsible and sustainable market economy.

In its 2006 Communication by launching the Alliance, the European Commission recognised that corporate social responsibility practices can contribute to a number of public policy objectives, including investment in skills development, life-long learning and employability. These are needed for the EU to remain competitive in the global knowledge economy and to cope with an aging working population.

Business in the Community is one of the longest established organisations in the world that promotes corporate responsibility. We promote it as central to how a company creates a sustainable and competitive business - through its strategy and day-to-day operations. Business in the Community has always advocated that wealth creation is an essential element of being a responsible business - creating the right environment in which to do business obviously needs a sound regulatory framework but it also needs vision and commitment by business leaders on the role of business. I believe very strongly that the Commission has a vital role to play in promoting responsible business practices.

At Business in the Community we have identified a number of priority areas for business to engage on - Climate Change, Talent and Skills (under which we include Education and Youth), Enterprise, and Community Investment. We see the latter social aspects as adding to not only "quality of life" which was central to the Bruntland report definition of Sustainable Development but also to social cohesion – especially in times of economic hardship.

As an example, many businesses as stakeholders in the EU are supporting employee community engagement programmes that improve the skills for employability. Ensuring people with disadvantaged backgrounds enhance their basic skills – the skills essential to gaining and keeping a job – which will be key to developing and sustaining a thriving economy and cohesive society.

Like the rest of the European economies, the United Kingdom is facing significant economic, environmental and social challenges which are likely to get more challenging and we see mobilising business around corporate responsibility as critical to not only how we all come out of the recession but how business re-engages with society.

We have had 27 years of experience on Corporate Responsibility and we would be delighted to be part of any future discussions with the Commission

I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this initial consultation.

Yours faithfully,

Stephen Howard  
CEO  
Business in the Community

### **About Business in the Community:**

Business in the Community mobilises business for good. Our members commit to take action on the key issues of today, be they people or planet, and create a unique platform for collaborative action.

Business in the Community's approach to responsible business provides a clear framework to address new challenges, improve business performance and benefit society.

Our members recognise the relationship between responsible business practice, addressing social and environmental need and the role this plays in building confidence and creating wealth.

We work across four areas of expertise in the workplace, marketplace, environment and community. By sharing knowledge and experience, and developing innovative solutions, we are a catalyst for change and demonstrate the positive impact business can have on society.

With more than 800 companies in membership, we represent 1 in 5 of the UK private sector workforce and convene a network of global partners.

Maria Jose Subiela

Project Director  
BITC International  
Business in the Community  
137 Sheperdess Walk  
London N1 7RQ

Tel: 0044 207 566 6625/ Mobile: 0044 7734 990562

Email: [maria-jose.subiela@bitc.org.uk](mailto:maria-jose.subiela@bitc.org.uk)

Websites:

[www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk)

[www.ENGAGEyouremployees.org](http://www.ENGAGEyouremployees.org)

[www.csr360gpn.org](http://www.csr360gpn.org)

Business in the Community

Registered Office 137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ

Registered Charity No 297716

Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in England and Wales No 1619253

Please access the attached hyperlink for an important electronic communications disclaimer:

<http://www.bitc.org.uk/fulldisclaimer>