



To the attention of:

**President José Manuel Barroso**

European Commission  
Secretariat General  
Unit D1  
2010

Brussels, 14 January

Dear President Barroso,

In response to your open consultation on the EU 2020 strategy, CSR Europe would like to emphasize the crucial role that European businesses can play in the achievement of the economic, social and environmental goals set out in your new programme.

In its 2008 “European Competitiveness Report”, the European Commission has recognised that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a short- and long-term strategy to build new opportunities towards sustainable growth, social cohesion and sustainable development both at micro and macro level. This means: it is key to the wellbeing of our society, and to the welfare of its citizens.

With around 70 global companies and through our 27 national partner organisations across Europe, our network reaches out to more than 2000 companies. These have been advancing and fostering CSR in the past 15 years, moving from awareness raising and risk management towards the focus of today’s CSR approaches: innovation. Our companies are committed to advancing CSR in their operations and strategy, with the goal of ensuring sustainable, long-term profitability and of making a positive contribution to society.

The economic, financial and social crisis has highlighted the need for innovation in manifold areas – change in organisations and in people as well as the focus on more sustainable products and services is key to our members’ “Enterprise 2020” initiative.

For this to happen, it requires the active involvement of all players in society, i.e. managers, investors, politicians, educators, and citizens, on European, national and regional level. We

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will only succeed, and provide sustainable benefits for all, if we work together, in close cooperation and joint responsibility, towards innovating and shaping a fair and sustainable society, in which our scarce resources are used in a more efficient way.

Priorities for business engagement include:

- Communicating CSR and its benefits to other parties (investors, customers, ESG disclosure etc)
- Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration
- Governance and Transparency
- Sustainable production and consumption (eco-efficiency, packaging, labelling etc.)
- Integrated Workplaces (diversity, wellbeing etc.)
- Human capital (skills, employability, demographic change etc.)
- International dimension of CSR (e.g. supply chain management)
- Innovative Business Models (e.g. social and financial inclusion)

Through our “Enterprise 2020” initiative, which we aim to launch on 28 October 2010 in Brussels, we invite stakeholders to engage in joint leadership with our companies on issues of crucial importance for our common future. Their joint, practical work on issues will have a direct impact on and support the EU 2020 strategy policy agenda, namely to its three main objectives which are:

- creating value through knowledge;
- empowering people in inclusive societies; and
- creating a competitive, connected and greener economy.

We challenge the new European Commission to accelerate companies' voluntary commitment to CSR , and their motivation to improve their performances in a sustainable way. Business is prepared and willing to make an active, practical and forward looking contribution and to become involved in the delivery of Europe's vision for a more cohesive, competitive and sustainable market economy.

We very much welcome the reference made to CSR and its role for sustainable competitiveness in the official program of the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian presidencies. A clear statement on CSR within the EU 2020 strategy would be an important signal of the European Union's leadership in this area towards the rest of the world, and of its intention

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to build a competitive society based on creativity, innovation and a responsible use of scarce resources within the next decade.

We would be delighted to be part of any future discussions with the Commission on how CSR can contribute to the concrete objectives of the EU 2020 strategy.

We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this initial consultation.

Sincerely

*Kerstin Born*

Executive Director

### CSR Europe

#### The European Business Network for Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR Europe is the leading European business network for corporate social responsibility (CSR), with over **70 multinational corporations** and **27 national partner organisations** across Europe as members.

Its mission is to provide a platform for exchange and support companies in integrating CSR into the way they do business.

The organisation was **founded in 1995** by senior European business leaders in response to an appeal by the European Commission President Jacques Delors.

For more information: [www.csreurope.org](http://www.csreurope.org)