

Integrating Corporate Social Responsibility into everyday business

FoodDrinkEurope's Contribution and Commitments



Introduction

In 2011, the European Commission launched its EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility¹. In this strategy, the Commission identifies CSR as a key area of responsibility for European businesses and defines CSR as “the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society”². More specifically, it encourages companies to have a process in place to integrate four key priority areas into their business operations and core strategy, in close collaboration with their stakeholders: social; environmental; ethical; and, human rights and consumer concerns.

Current business practice is already showing that CSR is an increasingly important driver for companies’ competitiveness, by bringing benefits in terms of risk management, cost savings, access to capital, customer relationships, human resource management and innovation capacity. The results of the public consultation conducted by the Commission from May to August 2014 confirm this. When asked about the larger economic context, stakeholders clearly reaffirmed that CSR plays a critical role for the medium-/long-term competitiveness (79%) as well as for the sustainability (81%) of the EU economy. Stakeholders also regard CSR as a key driver for job creation, skills development and the reduction of inequalities.

Another highlight in recent EU CSR policy developments is the entering into force, in December 2014, of a Directive (2014/95/EU) which, as of 2017, will mandate large companies to improve their disclosure of non-financial information by preparing a non-financial statement with information on environmental, social, employee-related, anti-corruption and bribery matters, respect for human rights and diversity.

FoodDrinkEurope and its commitment to CSR

It is FoodDrinkEurope’s and its members’ strong conviction that CSR will help the EU deliver its Europe 2020 strategy, encouraging smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in crucial areas such as employment, innovation and poverty reduction³. CSR will also play a role in delivering the EU’s renewed industrial strategy and initiatives moving towards a circular economy and green employment initiative⁴.



¹ COM (2011)

² “A renewed EU strategy 2011- 2014 for Corporate Social Responsibility” <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0582:FIN:EN:PDF>

³ Europe 2020 Strategy: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

⁴ For a European Industrial Renaissance <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0014&from=EN>

Moving towards a circular economy http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:50edd1fd-01ec-11e4-831f01aa75ed71a1.0001.01/DOC_1&format=PDF
Green employment initiative <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0446&from=EN>

Considering the above-described EU CSR policy developments, FoodDrinkEurope is pleased to share its vision on CSR, the contribution it wishes to make, and the guiding principles for doing so, as summarised in the following statement:

‘Integrating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into everyday business’

The mission of FoodDrinkEurope, the organisation representing the interests of Europe’s food and drink industry, is to promote and facilitate the development of an environment in which all European food and drink companies, whatever their size, can meet society’s needs and consumer requirements, while moving towards sustainable growth.

In achieving this mission, FoodDrinkEurope strives to contribute to the development of an appropriate framework in which issues such as competitiveness, affordability of quality food, consumer trust in food safety and quality, informed consumer choice, responsible marketing and the environment, are dealt with in a holistic manner, underpinned by sound science, robust data management and effective communication.

Europe’s food and drink industry believes that CSR plays a key guiding role in achieving its mission. CSR improves capacity to manage and reduce negative social and environmental impacts within organisations and in value chains and to develop employment opportunities, while at the same time bringing benefits to consumers.

In addition, CSR helps to build long-term employee, consumer and citizens’ trust. CSR can also bring important cost savings, access to capital, and resource management capacity. For Europe’s food and drink manufacturers, CSR is about taking actions beyond legal obligations towards society and its environment, and providing the basis for a sustainable business model fostering innovation and growth within the sector.

In delivering its mission, FoodDrinkEurope’s members are committed to continuing the journey they have already started to help deliver on the triple bottom line: people, planet and profit. This involves further promoting and participating in both company and multi-stakeholder CSR initiatives, global principles and guidelines, and importantly, integrating these into their business strategy and daily operations and in their value chains.

FoodDrinkEurope further agrees that internationally recognised principles and guidelines provide a key reference for organisations seeking a formal approach to CSR. These principles and guidelines include the OECD guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (MNE), the United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the 10 principles of the United Nations (UN) Global Compact, the ISO 26000 Guidance Standard on Social Responsibility and the ILO Tri-partite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.

In order to deliver and move forward on the CSR agenda, FoodDrinkEurope believes that it is crucial to work in partnerships, along the food supply chain and with relevant stakeholders⁵. This commitment is consistent with the sector’s longstanding and active participation in the Commission’s High Level Forum for a better functioning food supply chain established in 2010⁶, and with its prominent role in establishing, and driving results in the Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption, amongst others.

In line with this, and as part of its commitment to CSR, FoodDrinkEurope strongly encourages its members to not only raise awareness on CSR among their employees, agents, subcontractors, and suppliers but also to urge them to respect the guiding principles that have been identified for the sector.

Based on the above considerations, FoodDrinkEurope has identified a number of specific guiding principles for a variety of key CSR areas. Through these, FoodDrinkEurope aims to promote its commitment to implementing CSR in the food and drink sector.

⁵ See annex

⁶ See annex

We, the members of FoodDrinkEurope, are committed to be guided in our business models by the principles of: Human Rights, Health and Safety at Work, Society, Environment, Consumers, and Responsible Business Conduct. Using these principles as a basis, we will further raise awareness of sharing and scaling up best practices that will be beneficial for both large organisations and SMEs.



Human Rights

Human rights in our business activities

The European food and drink industry aims to provide an example of good human rights and labour practices in all of its business activities throughout the value chain. The industry supports the UN framework and guiding principles on Business and Human Rights, as well as the Global Compact principles on human rights, and is committed to their implementation⁷.

Equality of opportunity and fair treatment

The European food and drink industry firmly stands by the principle of equality of opportunity and fair treatment in employment with no tolerance for any form of discrimination with respect to race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, nationality or social origin in accordance with the OECD Guidelines for MNE and the UN Global Compact 10 principles⁸.

The industry encourages its employees to treat each other with respect and dignity and to promote a sense of personal responsibility. The industry recruits competent and motivated people who respect these principles while offering equal opportunities for career advancement and privacy protection.



Health and Safety at Work

The industry is committed to preventing accidents, injuries and illnesses related to working conditions as well as protecting its employees, contractors and other actors along the food value chain by acknowledging the ILO fundamental principles of occupational health and safety⁹ and its conventions, including specifically Convention 182 on child labour¹⁰ and Convention 29 on prison and forced labour¹¹.

FoodDrinkEurope encourages its member companies, their suppliers and other relevant actors to develop and maintain socially acceptable practices in the workplace as outlined in certification standard SA 8000 from Social Accountability International (SAI)¹².

⁷ UN guiding principles on Business and Human Rights http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf
Global Compact principles on Human Rights <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/aboutthegc/thetenprinciples/principle10.html>

⁸ OECD Guidelines for MNE Principle V (Employment and Industrial Relations) & UN Global Compact Principle 6 (The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation)

⁹ International Labour Organisation ILO Fundamental principles of occupational health and safety http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_093550.pdf

¹⁰ ILO convention 182 outlining the worst forms of Child and Labour: <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/ILOconventionsonchildlabour/lang-en/index.htm>

¹¹ ILO prison and forced labour convention 29 <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C029>

¹² SA8000 Standard <http://www.sa-intl.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&PageID=937>



Society

Communities and partnerships

The industry is committed to working with local communities to enable them to grow and maximise their full potential. FoodDrinkEurope's members will actively support, and partner with local organisations to develop projects and programmes that tackle social inequalities such as food poverty.

Furthermore, the industry is convinced of the value of employee volunteering schemes in building stronger links and better understanding between companies and communities. Such schemes prove to be invaluable investments, bringing mutual benefit to employers, employees and society in general and are an outward expression of a company's CSR values and policies.

Given that agricultural raw materials are such an important source for the industry's products, members of FoodDrinkEurope specifically support and encourage operating practices, farming practices and agricultural production systems that are sustainable and improve farmers' working conditions and their families' livelihoods.

The industry is committed to ensuring sourcing of its raw materials on the basis of excellence in quality and respect for human rights, while at the same protecting and improving the natural environment.

Education and training

The European food and drink industry is committed to reducing unemployment and promoting employment opportunities. In particular, the industry encourages educational programmes and apprenticeships as well as employee volunteering schemes that contribute to improving the employability of young people, in addition to maintaining an ageing workforce¹³.

More specifically, members are encouraged to contribute to the joint pledge of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships¹⁴ aiming to facilitate the uptake of high quality apprenticeship and traineeship positions in food manufacturing companies across the EU, with a particular focus on small and medium sized businesses, initiated by FoodDrinkEurope and the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT).

FoodDrinkEurope's members are committed to the creation of decent jobs for an appropriately qualified labour force that will preserve social cohesion and promote prosperity.

¹³ Started in 2012, this EU Sectoral Social Dialogue is expected to consolidate in the forthcoming years

¹⁴ European Alliance for apprenticeships (FoodDrinkEurope – EFFAT Pledge)

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/alliance/fooddrink-europe-effat-pledge_en.pdf



Environment

Environmental sustainability

Members of FoodDrinkEurope strive to carry out their business in a sustainable way and to continuously improve the positive and minimise the negative impact of their business on the environment. At all stages of the product life cycle, they aim to use natural resources efficiently to address key priorities including deforestation, climate change and food waste, and to promote and favour the use of sustainably-managed renewable resources. Where possible, they also encourage all other members of the food chain to follow the same principles.

FoodDrinkEurope members have been, and will continue to be active supporters of working in partnership to develop uniform, science-based methodologies to assess a food or drink product's environmental impact. For example, FoodDrinkEurope is a founding member of the Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Round Table (SCP RT) which brings together key stakeholders along the food chain.

FoodDrinkEurope's key priorities for environmental sustainability include:

1. Addressing sustainable consumption and production
2. Protecting biodiversity
3. Tackling climate change
4. Increasing energy efficiency
5. Preventing food wastage, and
6. Working in partnership and across the food supply chain¹⁵.



Consumers

Nutrition, Health and Wellbeing

The European food and drink industry is committed to improving public health, namely by promoting balanced diets and healthy lifestyles. The industry strives to provide consumers with a wide range of product choices that can fit a balanced diet and a healthy, active lifestyle.

Furthermore, the industry continues to increase product awareness and champion the use of clear information on food and drink products through a variety of portion sizes and enhanced product composition labelling. The industry's work around promoting healthier lifestyles is ongoing and many manufacturers have a long and successful history of collaboration with public authorities, public health professionals and other stakeholders in programmes aimed at promoting physical activity and nutrition education.

Moreover, European food and drink manufacturers are engaged in, and will continue to actively promote, global initiatives to tackle under-nutrition, particularly in low-income, developing countries.

Excellence in quality and responsible consumer communication

Throughout the world, the European food and drink industry is fully committed to providing consumers with safe, high quality food products that meet all applicable standards. Moreover, it is engaged in providing reliable and responsible consumer communication leading to well informed food and drink choices.

¹⁵ For a more detailed description of FoodDrinkEurope's work in this area: <http://www.fooddrinkeurope.eu/priorities/detail/environmental-sustainability/>



Responsible Business Conduct

Promoting fair commercial relations throughout the supply chain

The industry will remain vigilant that suppliers, agents, subcontractors and employees will constantly demonstrate professional integrity and fair business behaviour. FoodDrinkEurope aims to further enhance fair commercial relations along the entire food supply chain according to a set of Principles of Good Practice it adopted in 2011¹⁶, and as proposed by the stakeholders of the Supply Chain Initiative in the vertical relationships in the food supply chain.

Science and technology

The food and drink industry is committed to ensuring that its activities are guided by sound science and technology advancement. The development of potential innovative capabilities should be pursued to expand business opportunities, thus contributing to higher living standards.

Reporting

FoodDrinkEurope members are encouraged to communicate on the progress they make on their sustainability journeys, and to consider adopting reporting practices that are in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative guidelines (GRI) and/or relevant practices included in the ISO 26000:2010, the UN Global Compact 10 principles (Communication on Progress) or the OECD Guidelines for MNE¹⁷.

FoodDrinkEurope further encourages its members to disclose, where applicable, information on environmental, social and human rights matters, in accordance with the Commission's Directive on non-financial reporting¹⁸ which entered into force in December of 2014.

¹⁶ See Annex: The Supply Chain Initiative - Together for good trading practices

¹⁷ Principle III (Disclosure) of the OECD Guidelines for MNE

¹⁸ Directive of the EP and of the Council amending Directive 2013/34/EU as regards disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large undertakings and groups <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=PE%2047%202014%20INIT>

Annex

FoodDrinkEurope has contributed to driving CSR practices within its membership through the following initiatives:

- Food Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Roundtable
- 'Every Crumb Counts' food wastage joint declaration
- Food wastage toolkit
- Preventing food wastage in the food and drink sector: food wastage progress report
- High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain
- 'The Supply Chain Initiative: Together for good trading practices'
- Stakeholder dialogue on the 'Sustainability of Food Systems'
- Collaboration with social partners focusing on youth employment and ageing workforce