

Compendium 2014 - National Public Policies in the European Union on CSR

Friday the 31st of October, the European Commission launched its 2014 Compendium on national public policies in the European Union on corporate social responsibility.

The Compendium is partly the result of seven peer reviews on corporate social responsibility that took place in 2013 between EU Member State ministries. It provides an update on the actions taken by EU Member States since the publication of the 2011 Communication on CSR. Some of the most common approaches as well as good practices are highlighted in a series of thematic sections, relating to different parts of CSR policy.

In the compendium, a wide range of government-led CSR initiatives can be identified. From 'softer' initiatives such as awareness-raising and promotional activities, to 'harder', legislative actions. Despite CSR being considered 'the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society', due to the breadth of issues covered under the CSR umbrella, legislation plays a role to varying degrees at Member State level.

With regard to basic human rights and rights of workers, many countries refer to the importance of international standards and how these are enshrined in national legislation. Some Member States have also decided to enact firmer measures with regard to company reporting on CSR issues. This has led to a certain blurring of the lines between a more 'voluntary' concept of CSR and governments setting guidelines for social responsibility activities undertaken by companies.

In order to obtain an overview of the key initiatives taken at national level, the Compendium contains an Annex providing information on measures taken or planned by each country with links to more information (where available).