

Preface

Europe has contributed immensely to developments in the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as we know it today. One cannot forget the many activities of the 8th President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, in the field of CSR in the 1990s and those EU Presidents who came after him. As a result, these editors believe that a book which provides up-to-date information on the current state of CSR in individual European countries at this stage of the twenty-first century using the expertise of scholars working in the field of corporate social responsibility in these countries is desirable. The book has focused attention on different EU and non-EU states within the continent of Europe with the hope that it would provide a balanced view of how CSR continues to evolve and add to people's understanding of how CSR has continued to develop and transform economies in these countries. Needless to say, these countries in Europe are at different economic, political and cultural settings; consequently, it should be expected that the way they perceive and practise the field of corporate social responsibility should also be different. Not only that, not all European countries are members of the EU, but some of those that are members in fact do things differently in many respects; for instance, not all of them use the euro as their currency. It therefore became important for us to include both the EU and non-EU member states since CSR is now a global business concept used worldwide. Besides, a book on CSR Europe cannot only be about CSR in the EU countries. Interestingly, many former communist states which are now members of the EU are proactively ensuring that businesses within their borders are socially responsible as defined by those activities stemming from the triple bottom line and those issues they understand to fall under the CSR umbrella; chapters in the book from these countries should hopefully testify to that.

We believe that as our world continues to become more globalised, so too would businesses operating in a globalised world become more proficient in terms of their CSR activities and other ethical issues that are socially acceptable to our world. Multinational corporations of this era operating in both advanced and emerging economies have a lot to contend with in terms of what modern capitalism expects from them. Some countries are still shying away from signing international agreements and codes on labour and human rights, reducing the adverse effects of their

carbon footprints, etc., “because they are unwilling to offend governments of other countries they trade with” or “because they believe that some of the actions required of them are bad for business and detrimental to their economies”, etc.; these countries would need to reassess their stance on these issues and voluntarily do the right things.

Governments, corporate entities and individual citizens in Europe, we believe, are better placed to lead the crusade on social, environmental and economic responsibilities, in order to ensure that countries around the world are protected from reoccurrences of avoidable global financial and economic crises; the 25 chapters of this book which have explored how corporate social responsibility is shaping up around Europe are probably good evidence of that.

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