



**The European Confederation of Young
Entrepreneurs**

**The Young Entrepreneurs' view on the
European Alliance for corporate social
responsibility**

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YES for Europe welcomes the Communication from the Commission establishing a European Alliance for corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The vast majority of European companies integrates social and environmental considerations in their activities, in several cases going well beyond minimum legal requirements and obligations.

In particular, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) act in a socially responsible way more on the basis of the entrepreneur's ethical values and strong connection with the local community, rather than with reference to the opportunistic motivations that move multinational enterprises (MNEs). Nonetheless, in several occasions SMEs encounter difficulties in recognising their actual CSR policies and, even more, to communicate their efforts to the external world.

For this reason YES for Europe welcomes the acknowledgement by the Commission of the need to give greater recognition to what SMEs already do in the field of CSR using an informal and intuitive approach.

YES for Europe also supports the idea of raising awareness and of fostering the exchange of best practices making reference to a strengthened partnership with business and all the relevant stakeholders. The sharing of experiences between companies stimulates more operators to identify possible actions in the field of CSR and improve their understanding of the long-term advantages deriving from a socially responsible entrepreneurship, with the deriving multiplier effect.

YES for Europe also agrees with the need of addressing the transparency and communication challenge encountered by SMEs, and favours the cooperation of SME intermediary organisations and support providers for the exchange of best practice on how to help small businesses to “capitalise” on CSR.

YES for Europe welcomes the recognition by the Commission of enterprises as the primary actors in CSR: each business adapts its social or environmental activities according to its specific characteristics and circumstances, and varies them with the evolving of the surrounding conditions. For this reason it is important to let companies free to judge which are the best options for their specific case, and not trying to impose a “one-fits-all” solution. To the same extent, YES for Europe particularly appreciates the Commission approach of considering CSR as a voluntary choice for businesses: elaborating a parallel legislative framework would uselessly complicate the business environment, going against the principle of simplification adopted by the Commission in recent years.

Recognising that CSR is a company-driven process does not and should never imply a shift of public responsibilities to the business community. National governments and European institutions remain the sole responsible for creating the conditions favouring sustainable growth and occupation; companies can simply contribute for their implementation.

Within this framework, the Commission invitation of integrating CSR and sustainable development related topics in the education of future managers and entrepreneurs is particularly valuable, so as to develop the right knowledge and skills allowing them to turn CSR into an effective business practice.

Most of all, the European Young Entrepreneurs appreciate the Commission commitment for “ensuring an enabling environment for CSR” and particularly its recognition of a “business-friendly environment in which entrepreneurs and enterprises can flourish and grow” as a fundamental element of it.

YES for Europe believes that betting on a European Alliance with the business community is a good choice for a responsible and shared implementation of the Growth and Jobs Strategy.

YES for Europe, the European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs, is the main association of young entrepreneurs through Europe (representing around 35.000 young entrepreneurs) and aims at improving the economic and social performance of European entrepreneurship. Its members (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, the Netherlands and Ukraine) include the major national associations of young entrepreneurs in the fields of industry, trade and services.