

Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	2002/2069(COS)	Procedure completed
Undertakings: corporate social responsibility, integration of social and environment. Green Paper		
Subject		
3.45 Enterprise policy, inter-company cooperation		
3.70 Environmental policy		
4 Economic, social and territorial cohesion		
5.05 Economic growth		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		Appointed
			12/09/2001
			PSE HOWITT Richard
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion
	LIBE Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs		Appointed
	ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
			26/03/2002
			PSE WESTENDORP Y CABEZA Carlos
	ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
Council of the European Union	DEVE Development and Cooperation		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	FEMM Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities		22/01/2002
			PPE-DE KRATSA-TSAGARPOULOU Rodi
European Commission	Council configuration		Meeting
	Energy		2394
	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs		04/12/2001
European Commission			03/12/2001
	Commission DG		Commissioner
	Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion		

Key events			
18/07/2001	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2001)0366	Summary
03/12/2001	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		

04/12/2001	Debate in Council	2394	
11/04/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
23/04/2002	Vote in committee		Summary
23/04/2002	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0159/2002	
30/05/2002	Debate in Parliament		
30/05/2002	Decision by Parliament	T5-0278/2002	Summary
30/05/2002	End of procedure in Parliament		
07/08/2003	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2002/2069(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142; Rules of Procedure EP 050
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/5/16114

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2001)0366	18/07/2001	EC	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0345/2001 OJ C 192 12.08.2002, p. 0001	13/03/2002	CofR	
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0355/2002 OJ C 125 27.05.2002, p. 0044	20/03/2002	ESC	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0159/2002	23/04/2002	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0278/2002 OJ C 187 07.08.2003, p. 0025-0180 E	30/05/2002	EP	Summary
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2002)0347	02/07/2002	EC	Summary

Undertakings: corporate social responsibility, integration of social and environment. Green Paper

PURPOSE: To launch a debate on the promotion of corporate social responsibility within the EU. **CONTENT:** Regulations relating to social protection and health and safety at work are well established within EU legislation. This Green Paper, however, seeks to examine how the promotion of corporate social responsibility can be encouraged at a voluntary level without resorting to further regulations. It examines this not only at a European level but also at an international level. Further, it seeks to make the most of existing practices, to encourage the development of innovative practices, to introduce greater transparency and to offer greater credibility to evaluation and validation. Corporate social responsibility can be defined as a concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and cleaner environment. Initiatives in this area include, for example, improved recruiting policies (non-discrimination), better opportunities for racial minorities, greater involvement with local communities and offering support on changes at work. Other activities include a greater awareness of human rights and working condition abroad. Factors driving the move towards corporate social responsibility include: - new concerns and expectations from citizens, consumers, public authorities and investors in the context of globalisation and large scale industrial change; - social criteria influencing the investment decisions of individuals and institutions both as consumers and as investors; - increased concern about the damage caused by economic activity to the environment; - transparency of business activities brought about by the media. Bearing this in mind, the Green Paper suggests that the EU approach should be to provide an overall European framework to corporate social responsibility through the adoption of broad principles and promoting best practice. In addition, the EU could support best practice approaches to cost-effective evaluation and independent verification of corporate social responsibility practices. Such a departure could improve not only the

effectiveness but also the credibility of voluntary activities relating to corporate social responsibility. Ultimately the Commission is hoping this initiative will offer a new European framework for the promotion of corporate social responsibility. The Green Paper is being given a wide circulation and it is hoped that it will be discussed at local, national and European level.?

Undertakings: corporate social responsibility, integration of social and environment. Green Paper

The committee adopted the report by Richard HOWITT (PES, UK) welcoming the Commission's Green Paper. The report focused on certain priorities for corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the Community context: social and environmental reports, the creation of a European platform for CSR, the role of stakeholders and the mainstreaming of CSR issues in the Union's internal and external policies. MEPs were in favour of a voluntary approach, but nevertheless emphasised the need to have some binding rules. The committee said that each area of CSR required its own approach: for example, the environmental practices of European companies should be subject to rules comparable to those on competition. In addition, the annual reports on social and environmental impacts should be independently verified and include all levels of a company, its supply chain and business partners. The committee proposed the creation of an EU multi-stakeholder CSR platform made up of representatives of business, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, public authorities and representatives of non-EU countries. This body could register voluntary codes of conduct in order to verify them in the light of international standards and devise guidelines for wider stakeholder dialogue. In addition, the committee said that companies should be required to supply information on the social and environmental impact of their operations. ?

Undertakings: corporate social responsibility, integration of social and environment. Green Paper

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Richard HOWITT (PES, UK) on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and called for social and environmental reporting to be included alongside financial reporting requirements. (Please refer to the document dated 24/04/02.) Annual social and environmental impact assessment reports should be independently verified and include all levels of the company, and its supply chain and business partners, where appropriate. The Commission should put forward a proposal on social labelling, which should be based on criteria such as compliance with human and trade union rights, the work environment, training and development of employees, equal treatment, social and ethical consideration for employees and citizens in the surrounding community. The Commission should also consider whether it is appropriate to introduce common social and environmental labelling. On stakeholding, the EU CSR Forum is called upon to devise guidelines for wider stakeholder dialogue, drawing from the experience of companies, NGOs, trade unions, academics and governmental authorities. The resolution calls for the mainstreaming of CSR in all areas of EU competence, in particular regional and social funding where companies could play a stronger role in supporting training for socially responsible restructuring. Finally, the Commission is called upon to investigate the possibility of creating a European Ombudsman for European enterprises operating in developing countries with respect to CSR.?