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Corporate social responsibility:
between compliance, values, and ethics

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Corporate social responsibility: between compliance, values, and ethics

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University of National and World Economy (UNWE), Sofia
& ISM-IAE, Laboratoire LAREQUOI,
University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines

Panel 1 — From Voluntary Commitments to Regulated Responsibility: Standards, Political CSR and European Governance

Chair/Discutant: Stela Raytcheva and Hervé Chomienne

This panel examines the ongoing transformation of CSR, which is shifting from a largely voluntary framework of organizational commitment to a more institutionalized and regulated form of accountability. The presentations explore the evolving role of European regulation, political CSR, transnational standards, and non-state initiatives in shaping corporate behavior and accountability. The panel also aims to explore the interplay between compliance, legitimacy, competitiveness, and the measurement of commitments. Overall, these presentations examine how responsibility is defined, governed, and assessed within increasingly complex regulatory frameworks.

1. Europe as a Brand Between Compliance and Dream: CSR Regulation as an Implicit Theory of the Firm and a Persuasion Problem

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Abstract
European CSR regulation has undergone a profound transformation. The successive adoption of the French duty of care law (2017), the PACTE Act (2019), the CSRD (2023), and the EU AI Act (2024) has turned what was once a voluntary ethical commitment into a binding architecture of sustainability governance. This paper, at the crossroads of governance and marketing scholarship, offers a dual reading of this shift.

First, from a governance perspective, we argue that European regulation carries an implicit theory of the firm. Dominant legal approaches remain anchored in a contractual conception inherited from agency theory, in which compliance is a form of legal risk management. Yet research shows the limits of this framing: most firms conform to obligations at a minimum level, producing «metric fixation» effects and compliance without conviction (Denis & Fabbe-Costes, 2025; Fabbe-Costes, 2026), while emblematic cases such as Dieselgate or France Télécom reveal that formal compliance is blind to normalised organisational deviance (Aggeri & Saussois, 2017; Laufer & Muller-Lagarde, 2017). European regulation, paradoxically, presupposes a different entity: a knowledge-bearing organisation (Denis, 2009) whose responsibility extends to collective dynamics, extended value chains, and prospective harms, calling for projective rather than retrospective responsibility (Aggeri, 2023, 2026).
Second, from a marketing and persuasion perspective, we suggest that European regulation should also be analysed as a communication of public interest. Research on the persuasive power of public service communications based on fear appeals (Lavoisier, 2000) has established that negative emotions can persuade, but through contrasted mechanisms, and that influencing risky behaviours requires a delicate hybridisation of coercion and persuasion (Chomienne & Lavoisier, 2010). This lens proves revealing at the European scale. The European project itself was historically built on a fear appeal, the fear of war returning, and its regulatory architecture extends this register: fear of climate disruption, of human rights violations across value chains, of uncontrolled artificial intelligence. Yet without a perceived capacity to act and a desirable horizon, threat-based messages generate avoidance rather than adherence. Minimum-level compliance may thus be read as a classic avoidance response to a fear appeal lacking a promise. Herein lies the tension the paper places at the centre of the discussion: dreams are made of hope, not of constraint. The strength of the American Dream, even stalled (Rifkin, 2004),

was to make a model desirable before making it mandatory.
The paper concludes that the effectiveness of European CSR regulation depends on articulating these two dimensions: an organisational conception of the firm capable of giving compliance real depth, and a persuasive register capable of complementing fear with hope, making the European model desirable, not merely enforceable.

Keywords. CSR, compliance, corporate governance, projective responsibility, fear appeals, public service communication, European Dream

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2. European Corporate Responsibility Between Accountability and Competitiveness. The Regulatory Ambivalence of the European Union

Gilles Rouet, LAREQUOI, ISM-IAE, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines

Abstract

European corporate social responsibility has changed its institutional meaning. What the European Commission presented in 2001 as a voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns was progressively recast as corporate accountability for impacts, first through non-financial disclosure and then through sustainability reporting, taxonomy and due diligence. This article examines that change without treating it as a linear passage from voluntarism to constraint. The European Union governs corporate responsibility through a distinctive combination of legal obligation, privately produced evidence and market-mediated use. The CSRD, the ESRS and the CSDDD strengthened this architecture, but the 2025 and 2026 simplification measures substantially narrowed its scope and restored competitiveness as an explicit criterion of regulatory design. The article develops an analytical framework based on three linked dimensions: constraint, evidence and use. It argues that European CSR becomes effective only when legal duties generate credible information that a sufficiently broad range of actors can mobilize. Its ambivalence is therefore structural: firms are made answerable for their impacts while remaining central to the production, interpretation and revision of the rules through which accountability is organized.

Keywords. Corporate Social Responsibility – RSE – European Union – CSRD – ESRS – CSDDD – Sustainability Reporting – Due Diligence – Competitiveness – Responsible Lobbying.

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3 Corporate Political Activities and CSR Commitments: Exploring the Tensions and Compatibility

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Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Corporate Political Activity (CPA) are usually studied as separate dimensions of firms' nonmarket strategies, yet their coexistence raises a growing ethical and strategic question: companies publicly committed to environmental protection, public health, or sustainability sometimes simultaneously lobby to delay or weaken the very regulations meant to advance these objectives. In 2022, InfluenceMap showed that 58% of S&P 500 firms with ambitious climate pledges also funded lobbying against environmental regulation; Volkswagen's celebrated CSR communication, alongside its opposition to stricter anti-pollution standards, offers a similar illustration. This paper asks under what conditions CPA and CSR commitments are compatible, and when they generate a significant "CSR–CPA gap" (Walker & Rea, 2014).

Two theoretical traditions are confronted. The instrumental perspective treats CPA — lobbying, campaign finance, political advocacy, litigation, regulatory participation — as a legitimate nonmarket strategy that protects firm resources and reduces regulatory uncertainty (Baron, 1995; Hillman & Hitt, 1999; Hillman, Keim, & Schuler, 2004). The institutional and political-CSR perspective instead frames firms as political actors whose influence-seeking raises issues of legitimacy, transparency, and democratic accountability (Oliver, 1991; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, 2011), generating tensions whenever political behavior contradicts declared CSR commitments (den Hond, Rehbein, de Bakker, & van Lankveld, 2014).

These tensions are illustrated through the European debate on nutrition labelling, where major agri-food companies mobilized extensive lobbying, coalition-building, and communication campaigns to promote a voluntary labelling system against the mandatory alternative supported by public-health organizations — exposing a clear misalignment between CSR discourse and CPA practice.

This gap persists partly through organizational decoupling: CSR addresses long-term, systemic expectations, while CPA responds to short-term regulatory threats, the two being managed by distinct organizational subsystems with different logics and metrics (Mellahi, Frynas, Sun, & Siegel, 2016). Yet CPA and CSR are not inherently incompatible: their compatibility depends on the governance of political activity — disclosure of lobbying spending, consistency between political positions and CSR commitments, stakeholder scrutiny, and more deliberative engagement with policymakers (Lock & Seele, 2016). Political

coherence should thus be treated as a dimension of corporate responsibility in its own right.

Keywords. Corporate Political Activity (CPA); Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); Political CSR; CSR–CPA gap; Lobbying governance.

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4. Standards for a Sustainable Future: A National Initiative of NGO's Coalition in Bulgaria

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Elka Vasileva, University of National and World Economy (UNWE),
Sofia Veselin Panayotov & Anton Peychev, Association of Environmental Management Professionals, Sofia**

Abstract
International standards build a comprehensive ecosystem of self-regulatory tools that operate in parallel with regulatory policies for sustainability at the global and local levels. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) sustainability standards have the potential to be effective voluntary initiatives that engage economic actors in the implementation of specific voluntary measures to achieve sustainable development. There is a need for active joint action to overcome the challenges of enforcing international sustainability standards.
Three Bulgarian organizations have joined forces to address the challenges and barriers to the development and implementation of sustainability standards in our country. These are experts with a broad profile of competencies from the Association of Sustainability Specialists, the Association of Environmental Management Specialists and the Club 9000 Association. The coalition of the three organizations was the organizer of the First International Conference "Standards for a sustainable future", which was held on 5.11.2025 in Aula Magna of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria.
This led to the development of a National Roadmap for the Implementation of International Sustainability Standards (2025 – 2035). It is based on the discussion held among stakeholders in the creation and implementation of sustainability standards in the country. An original methodology for thematic and expert analysis of the results of the discussion was applied in the specially organized panel in November 2025. 43 people representing six categories of stakeholders participated. To achieve the goals set in the National Roadmap for the Implementation of International Sustainability Standards, our coalition will focus on three main priorities: Priority 1: To demonstrate the benefits of sustainability standards; Priority 2: Effective implementation of sustainability standards - challenges and opportunities; Priority 3: To increase the efficiency in the development of sustainability standards. For each priority, specific measures, activities and indicators have been developed, distributed over the ten-year period 2025-2035. This will assist stakeholders in sustainability standards in our country, both at the stages of creation and at the stages of application of international sustainability standards.
The Coalition is launching a National Call and a National Campaign at the end of 2026 to unite businesses, institutions, academia, professional organizations,

consultants and civil society around the need for wider implementation of internationally recognized sustainability standards in Bulgaria.
Through these initiatives, the Coalition is moving towards coordinated national efforts to build a culture of sustainability based on knowledge, partnership, transparency and shared responsibility.

Keywords. Sustainable Development, Sustainability standards, ISO, National NGO's Coalition, National Roadmap for the Implementation of International Sustainability Standards; Bulgaria.

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5. From Commitment to Measurement: A Decade of the UN Global Compact's Ten Principles in a Public University

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Member of the Council for Social Responsibility

Abstract
European corporate social responsibility has shifted from voluntary ethical commitment towards legally institutionalised sustainability governance. Public universities occupy a distinctive position in this transition. Largely outside the scope of the CSRD and the CSDDD, they are nonetheless expected to act exemplarily, to account publicly for their societal impact, and to train the professionals who will implement the new regulatory architecture. This paper examines what a decade of voluntary commitment produces in such an organisation, and what the experience suggests about the relationship between self-regulation and the emerging standardised reporting frameworks. Recent comparative research offers a useful point of departure (Dubcova et al., 2026). A study of one hundred European universities holding active UN Global Compact membership evaluates ESG conduct across seven criteria, and finds considerable variation among institutions, with the quality of sustainability reporting and the verification of ESG institutionalisation emerging as the criteria on which universities generally score lowest. This raises a question worth examining from the inside: how far do instruments calibrated on quantified disclosure capture commitments that are documented in narrative form? The paper approaches this not as a matter of relative ranking, but as a question about the visibility of institutional practice.
The case is examined through a longitudinal qualitative content analysis of the four Communications on Engagement published by the University of National and World Economy between 2016 and 2025, together with the associated institutional documents: the designation of Global Compact focal points, the Council for Social Responsibility established in 2019 and renewed in 2024, the Academic Network for Social Responsibility, and the Centre for Sustainable Development. Reported items are coded along two axes — the ten principles, and the nature of the evidence offered, whether declaration, organisational structure, activity, or measured outcome. The corpus is then read against the logic of the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, in particular double materiality, quantified indicators and value-chain responsibility.
Three observations are discussed: Coverage across the four thematic areas: human rights and labour are richly documented through collective agreements, anti-discrimination partnerships, career services and accessibility measures, while environmental and anti-corruption commitments are expressed in more general terms. Reporting is predominantly narrative and activity-based, describing inputs and outputs more readily than outcomes, which means that

continuity and depth of engagement are more easily conveyed to a reader than to an instrument. Institutionalisation has produced genuine continuity over a decade, though the literature also cautions that internal governance bodies which both implement and report on commitments face a well-documented challenge of independent verification.
The paper proposes a maturity reading of organisational social responsibility in higher education, moving from declaration to structure and from structure to measurement, and suggests that the widely discussed paradox of tightening norms alongside weakening demonstrable impact is partly a question of measurement design. It concludes on the implications for the professionalisation of sustainability management and for comparative research.

Keywords. Organisational Social Responsibility; UN Global Compact; Communication on Engagement; Higher Education; Sustainability Reporting; Self-Regulation; ESRS; Bulgaria.

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Panel 2 — Responsible Management in Practice: Public Value, Organizational Change and Sectoral Transformations

Chair/Discutant: Elka Vasileva and Christina Nikolova

This panel focuses on the organizational and managerial implementation of responsible management in public, professional, and sector-specific contexts. The presentations address public value, sustainability reporting, responsible change, new forms of work organization, sustainable production models, and new professional roles. Rather than viewing CSR solely as a normative or regulatory framework, the aim is to examine how responsibility is interpreted and implemented through concrete practices, organizational structures, and sector-specific processes, in order to highlight how responsible management is reshaping institutions, professions, and modes of coordination.

6. Corporate Social Responsibility and Public Management: Emerging Debates on Public Value, Sustainability Reporting and Responsible Integrated Management

Annie Bartoli , ISM-IAE, Larequoi Research Center, UVSQ / Paris-Saclay University

Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), initially developed within the private sector, has progressively expanded to encompass all types of organizations, including public ones, through the broader concept of Organizational Social Responsibility (OSR). In a context characterized by ecological transitions, increasing transparency requirements, and growing stakeholder expectations, the responsibility of public organizations has become a major theoretical and practical concern.

This paper builds on previous reflections on responsible public action. Although public organizations are traditionally expected to pursue the public interest, their responsibility can no longer be taken for granted. The transformation of public systems, the hybridization of governance arrangements, the growing number of actors involved in public action, and the increasing attention paid to policy outcomes call for renewed reflection on the foundations, mechanisms, and consequences of public responsibility.

Drawing on stakeholder theory, public value theory, Public Service Logic, and recent work on sustainability governance, the paper identifies three emerging debates currently shaping research on CSR/OSR in public organizations.

The first debate concerns the creation and co-creation of public value. Beyond traditional objectives of efficiency and performance, public organizations are increasingly assessed according to their ability to generate socially desirable outcomes and to involve stakeholders in the design and delivery of public services.

The second debate focuses on sustainability reporting and impact measurement. Inspired by recent developments in the private sector, public organizations are progressively expected to report on their environmental, social, and governance performance while adapting these frameworks to their specific public-interest missions.

The third debate relates to the emergence of integrated approaches to responsible management. In response to the fragmentation of public policies and accountability mechanisms, these approaches seek to combine economic, social, environmental, ethical, and democratic dimensions within a systemic management perspective.

The paper argues that these developments reflect the gradual emergence of a new public management paradigm based on public value creation, impact-oriented accountability, and the integration of multiple forms of responsibility within public organizations.

Keywords. Organizational Social Responsibility; Public Management; Public Value; Sustainability Reporting; Responsible and Integrated Management.

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7. Sustainable Production Models in Theater through the Prism of Corporate Social Responsibility: Interaction between the Public and Independent Sectors

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Abstract

Sustainability in the context of the cultural and creative industries is a multidimensional process encompassing economic, institutional, social, and environmental dimensions. The specific characteristics of the performing arts, including their intensive reliance on human resources, infrastructure requirements, and high degree of organizational dependence on the external environment, raise the need for adaptive and sustainable producing models. In this context, the Bulgarian theatre sector is examined as a specific field of interaction between public theatre organizations and independent producers, with sustainability being considered through the complementary analytical framework of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Responsible Business Conduct (RBC).

The main objective of the study is to examine the extent to which practices associated with sustainable theatre producing — such as diversification of funding, partnerships, resource sharing, organizational adaptability, audience development, widening access to culture, and the implementation of educational and community initiatives — can be understood as manifestations of socially responsible management. In this regard, CSR is not equated with sustainability itself, but is conceptualized as a complementary managerial and interpretative framework through which the relationships of theatre organizations with their employees, partners, audiences, communities, and the wider social environment can be analyzed.

The study is based on a theoretical analysis of sustainability concepts in the cultural and creative industries and on the role of the producer in developing sustainable management models, complemented by a pilot empirical study among managers of state and municipal theatre organizations in Bulgaria. Particular attention is given to the theatre organization as an open and adaptive system whose sustainability depends on its capacity to respond to economic, social, technological, and institutional changes. The experience of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the different degrees of vulnerability of public and independent structures and highlights the need for new mechanisms of interaction and resource sharing.

On this basis, the study argues that a sustainable producing model in theatre cannot be reduced to a single organizational or financial scheme. Rather, it represents a dynamic system of interconnected management practices encompassing economic viability, institutional adaptability, social engagement,

audience development, partnerships, and innovation. Interaction between the public and independent theatre sectors is considered a potential resource for building a more sustainable performing arts ecosystem in which economic objectives are combined with the public function of cultural organizations. Within this framework, the producer emerges not only as an organizer of the production process but also as a mediator between artistic objectives, resources, audiences, and the wider social environment.

Keywords. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Responsible Business Conduct (RBC), sustainable theatre producing, theatre sector, public–independent sector interaction, audience development

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8. The Wheel of Affects as an Indicator of Perceived Organizational Justice: Toward Responsible Change Management in Healthcare Organizations

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Abstract

Context and Theoretical Framework. Contemporary organizations are facing an unprecedented acceleration of economic, technological, environmental, and societal transformations. Long perceived as a series of one-off initiatives aimed at improving performance, organizational transformation is now becoming a permanent state of functioning (Accard & Soudry, 2015; Perret, 2003; Stensaker et al., 2002). Both public and private organizations now operate within continuous change, driven by digital, ecological, demographic, and health transitions, as well as by the growing pressure of stakeholder expectations regarding social responsibility (Chomienne & Raytcheva, 2025).

This development is profoundly reshaping the discourse on management. Recent research no longer questions only the effectiveness of change management but also its social legitimacy. From this perspective, CSR can no longer be reduced to an environmental or philanthropic policy; it is becoming a genuine governance framework for organizational transformation, based on the principles of ethics, responsibility, stakeholder dialogue and the creation of sustainable value. This paper is about responsible management of organizational transformations, which holds that the success of a change is no longer measured solely by the achievement of organizational objectives but also by its ethical legitimacy, perceived fairness, and social sustainability - particularly in public organizations (Rouet, Raytcheva & Côme, 2024). Public organizations today face a dual challenge: innovating while preserving the values of justice, trust, and accountability that underpin their legitimacy. The ethics of innovation are now a prerequisite for the success of organizational transformations, particularly in sectors heavily involved in public service missions, such as healthcare. Furthermore, these developments are profoundly transforming professional identities, organizational balances, and relationships among stakeholders; they do not merely constitute an administrative restructuring, but rather a complex process of reshaping organizational and territorial identities, which is likely to generate tensions and resistance, but also new forms of collective appropriation (Raytcheva & Courie Lemeur, 2025). Furthermore, an organization's social responsibility is also measured by its ability to protect its human resources, maintain the quality of working relationships, and ensure that decision-making processes are perceived as fair (Ventolini, Philip De Saint Julien, & Gosse, 2024; Aguinis & Glavas, 2019; Gond et al., 2023). From this perspective, the success of a transformation no longer depends solely on achieving strategic objectives, but also on how employees

perceive the fairness and equity of the decisions made and the quality of the dialogue established.

In this context, organizational justice emerges as a central concept for understanding the acceptability of change. The researches of Greenberg (1987), Colquitt et al. (2023), and Cropanzano and Ambrose (2015) show that individuals constantly evaluate the fairness of change across three complementary dimensions: distributive justice, which relates to the outcomes of change; procedural justice, concerning decision-making processes; and interactional justice, which refers to respect, the quality of communication, and the recognition given to individuals. These evaluations influence trust in the organization, commitment, cooperative behaviors, and the psychological well-being of employees.

However, these perceptions of justice remain difficult to grasp directly. That is why we propose to address this issue through the "wheel of affects" in connection with the "circomplex model of affects" (Russell, 1980; Barrett & Russell, 1998; Oreg et al., 2018), which we use to analyze the feelings expressed by healthcare professionals. We view emotions as primary - and subsequently secondary -evaluation mechanisms for organizational situations (Lazarus, 1991; Barsade and Gibson, 2007; Plutchik, 2001). They do not merely reflect individual affective reactions; they also reveal how actors interpret managerial practices, evaluate their fairness, and construct meaning when faced with change. The "wheel of affects" could therefore serve as a tool for analyzing perceptions of organizational justice. Each emotion can be interpreted as reflecting a judgment about the transformation: anger may reflect a sense of procedural injustice, fear a lack of information or a loss of control, sadness the loss of professional reference points, while trust or joy may reveal a positive perception of recognition, fairness, and management. The "wheel of affects" could thus become a valuable framework for understanding the mechanisms that legitimize organizational transformations.

Research Question. Our research thus proposes to shift focus: rather than viewing emotions as a consequence of change, we consider them as indicators of perceptions of organizational justice and, more broadly, of the societal responsibility of managerial practices.

The research question addressed in this paper is: How do the affects expressed by healthcare stakeholders during organizational change reveal their perceptions of organizational justice?

This paper does not merely seek to study affects during organizational change, but aims to enrich the literature on responsible change management, where

the "wheel of affects" serves as a tool for analyzing perceived organizational justice during organizational transformations in healthcare.

Case Study and Methodology. The hospital sector is a particularly telling example of these tensions. Successive reforms of healthcare organizations – Regional Hospital Groups (GHTs), the development of regional partnerships, digital transformations, and new models of coordination between community-based care and hospitals – aim to improve effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the quality and continuity of care pathways. These transformations are accompanied by tensions, emotions, and diverse perceptions of organizational justice, which ultimately impact the achievement of these objectives.

Since the 2000s, the concept of the "healthcare pathway" has increasingly become a new patient-centered paradigm around which successive initiatives to improve the healthcare system and public policies have been structured. In this context, in 2016, the Healthcare System Modernization Act introduced some 50 structural measures, including the "Regional Hospital Group" (GHT) structure, to improve the efficiency, fluidity, and continuity of care through a cross-disciplinary approach to patient care.

A GHT governs cooperation among several public healthcare facilities within the same region, committing them to defining a common, tiered patient care strategy based on a shared medical plan, with the goal of ensuring equal access to safe, high-quality care. It also aims to bring together public healthcare facilities within the same region and to pool certain cross-functional resources (information systems, procurement, training programs, etc.).

We have chosen a GHT in metropolitan France as a case study. It consists of three hospitals from three territories, each with its own historical characteristics. It was created in 2016 and, as of January 2026, comprises 201 different professions, 40 care pathways, and 6,700 professionals.

Regarding the research methodology, in 2024 we conducted a qualitative survey on the progress of the GHT project. The research tool used was semi-structured interview, based on an interview guide. Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted among a panel of medical directors from the three hospitals within this GHT.

Keywords. Emotions, Affects, Organizational Justice, Healthcare

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9. Flexibility: new socially responsible model

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Abstract
In an economic context marked by uncertainty and volatility, firms are increasingly intensifying cost-optimization strategies, particularly in the field of human resource management. The use of temporary agency work has emerged as a strategic lever for enhancing organizational flexibility and reducing labour costs, especially in emerging economies. However, this practice places multinational corporations committed to corporate social responsibility (CSR) in a structural tension between the imperatives of economic performance and ethical and humanistic principles. While the French regulatory framework has contributed to the institutionalization of temporary agency work—sometimes making it a deliberate career choice—its rising cost has encouraged some firms to relocate activities outside Europe. By contrast, in emerging economies, temporary agency work remains weakly regulated and is characterized by an imbalance in bargaining power, reinforcing labour market dualism and the precariousness of agency workers. This study examines the extent to which the social dimensions of CSR can help mitigate these tensions by promoting fairer working conditions for temporary agency workers. Drawing on a single case study of a CAC 40 multinational operating in an emerging economy, this research highlights the mechanisms through which a humanistic approach to CSR can contribute to the recognition and protection of a structurally marginalized temporary workforce.

Keywords Temporary agency work; Corporate social responsibility (CSR); CAC 40 firms; Emerging economies; Flexibility.

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10. Community Development Manager – An Erasmus+ Project Presented by Catro Bulgaria

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Abstract
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability are key priorities for companies in Europe, driven by social requirements and regulatory frameworks such as the 2023 Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) lack CSR experts or appropriate training programmes. The current CSR practices often fall short in promoting direct engagement with local communities, which are essential for a company's acceptance and success. The CDM (Community Development Manager) project addresses this gap by introducing a comprehensive training programme focused on linking CSR to community development. To achieve this goal, the project emphasises the creation of a Community Development Manager (CDM) role to ensure CSR initiatives are aligned with business strategies, while promoting stronger links with local communities. Participants in the CDM programme include university graduates, junior professionals, SME managers, CSR coordinators, and aspiring changemakers.

In the first phase of the training, learners complete a 40-hour asynchronous online course, containing modules on the foundations of CSR & community development, ESG principles & reporting, project design & strategic CSR planning, stakeholder engagement & community partnerships, communication & employee Involvement, and impact measurement & evaluation. Each module is anchored in key European competence frameworks: ENTRECOMP (entrepreneurship), GREENCOMP (sustainability), and DIGICOMP (digital competence). The modules integrate theoretical knowledge with applied learning through case studies, stakeholder engagement activities, local hackathons, and impact-driven project design. Participants completing the VET Online course get the qualification of Community Development Technician.

In the second phase, participants engage in co-design activities in the form of local hackathons - intensive, collaborative and solution-oriented events in which small groups work on a concrete challenge to be solved in a certain period time. The format is used to generate project proposals with a social impact, rooted in the needs of the local area. Selected participants take part in a European CDM School where they can exchange methods and experience. In the third phase, learners implement CD Solutions with SMEs and community actors and present outputs for assessment, leading to potential recognition as Community Development Managers. During the conference CATRO Bulgaria will present the selected 2 CD solutions: CreAutiVism - Creating a Social

Enterprise for Branded Products by Association “Autism” and The Golden Heart - Promoting the social inclusion of children with oncohematological diseases as the main outcomes of the project.

Keywords. Community Development Manager; European Competence Frameworks; CSR Training programme; Qualification of Community Development Technician; Bulgaria.

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