



**Some Initiatives for Corporate Social Responsibility in
the European Parliament and other European States
as of January 2003¹**

Country ²	Date	Initiative
European Commission	July 2001	Commission issues Green Paper on “Promoting a European Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility”
	January 2002	Commission launches consultations with EU-level employers’ and trade union organizations about how to manage and anticipate the social effects of corporate restructuring.
	April 2002	Employment and Social Affairs Directorate launches European Multi-Stakeholder Forum on CSR
	July 2002	Commission issues communication concerning “Corporate social responsibility: A business contribution to sustainable development,” which establishes a permanent EU Multi-stakeholder Forum on CSR with its first meeting in October 2002
	July 2002	UNICE signs a joint letter with the ETUC to the European Commission to announce the organization of a seminar on socially responsible restructuring in October 2002. This event seeks to identify best practice examples of socially responsible restructuring.
European Parliament	January 2000	Parliament adopts resolution on a “Code of conduct for European enterprises operating in developing countries,” which calls for a model European code of conduct, combining environmental, social and economic standards.
	May 2002	Parliament passes resolution with recommendations to the Commission on corporate social responsibility

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² This information was gathered from the website of the United States Council for International Business
<<http://www.uscib.org/docs/EUCSRMatrix.pdf>>

Belgium	November 2001	Belgian Parliament adopts law to promote development of a voluntary social label. The label requires enterprises to observe labor standards drawn from file ILO fundamental conventions. It will be available to all enterprises, Belgian and foreign, that sell products in Belgium. The law provides for technical assistance to allow enterprises from developing countries to respect the criteria for the label.
	November 2001	Belgium government organizes “Conference of the Belgian Presidency: Corporate Social Responsibility on the European Social Policy Agenda,” which was held in Brussels on November 27-28, 2001, to showcase European efforts to promote corporate responsibility and ascertain how governments at the national and international level could encourage global adoption of CSR strategies.
	2001	Belgian Council of Ministers approves pension fund disclosure regulation requiring pension funds to report how and whether they weigh the ethical, environmental and social performance of the stocks in which they invest
France	February 2002	French Parliament publishes the requirements of their “new economic regulations” law, which passed in 2001. It mandates all French corporations to report on the sustainability of their social and environmental performance. The new law divides social reporting in human resources, community, labor standards and environmental issues.
	May 2002	Roselyn Bachelot appointed as France’s first Minister on Sustainable Development in the new government. Ms. Bachelot had previously been in charge of equal employment initiatives in the French National Assembly.
Germany	May 2001	German government passes legislation requiring pension plans to declare whether and how they integrate social and environmental factors into their investment decisions.
Germany (cont’d)	February 2002	German government publishes a set of voluntary guidelines for publicly traded companies on the management and transparency of their business. The Guidelines contain no sanctions for non-compliance, but a new law that entered into force in July 2002 requires all companies to declare whether or not they abide by the code.
	May 2002	German government, together with the Confederation of

	2002	<p>German Employers' Associations (BDA), the Federation of German Industries (BDI), the German trade Union Federation (DGB) and NGOs sign a Joint Declaration on International Protection of Human Rights and Economic Activity. Reference is made to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Global Compact, OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.</p> <p>German government is considering a statutory code of conduct for German companies operating in China.</p>
Norway	1999	Under the 1999 Accounting Act, all companies must include environmental information in their annual financial reports from 1999 onward. The Norwegian Environmental Department develops a standard for environmental reporting.
Netherlands	1998	Over 300 companies are covered by legislation on mandatory environmental reporting beginning in 1999.
	March 2001	Dutch government issues a position paper on CSR. In addition to CSR in the national context, the paper outlines CSR in the international context. It underlines the importance that the Dutch government attaches to the proper behavior of Dutch firms abroad. The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises are seen as the proper framework within which firms are expected to operate. Particular importance is attached to respect for the ILO fundamental labor rights.
	June 2001	Dutch Parliament proposes corporate responsibility conditionalities for companies receiving Dutch export credits, subsidies and insurance. The conditionalities include companies signing a declaration of intent to observe the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.
	April 2002	The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the international sustainability reporting institution that was formally inaugurated at a United Nations ceremony on April 4, 2002, announces that its permanent Secretariat headquarters will be opened later this year in Amsterdam.
Netherlands (cont'd)		
Sweden	1998	Swedish Annual Accounts Act of 1999 requires mandatory environmental reporting in annual financial reports starting in 1999.
	March 2002	Three Swedish Cabinet Ministers send a letter to Swedish

	June 2002	<p>companies which calls for a Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility. The letter states that the Government's basic expectations of Swedish companies' action in the global market particularly in developing countries, are expressed in the OECD Guidelines and the UN Global Compact. It asks companies to express public support for the Guidelines and proposes that companies report once a year on measures they have taken or lessons they have learned relating to the OECD Guidelines and the UN Global Compact.</p> <p>Swedish government pension fund, AP7, awards mandates to two hedge funds on the condition that they not invest in companies that have broken certain United Nations conventions.</p>
United Kingdom	September 1998	British government develops Ethical Training Initiative, a corporate partnership between government, business, labor and NGOs to improve labor standards in factories in the developing world.
	March 2000	British government creates a new ministerial post for corporate social responsibility to help make the business case for CSR and coordinate CSR policies across the government.
	July 2000	British Parliament became the first legislative body in the world to require reporting in socially responsible investing. The Pension Disclosure Regulation amended the 1995 Pensions Act to require all U.K. occupational pension funds to disclose the degree to which they take into account ethical, social and environmental considerations.
	November 2000	U.K. Minister for CSR forms intergovernmental network with counterparts in Ireland, Netherlands and Denmark on CSR issues and best practices.
	December 2000	British government, together with the U.S. government, launch "Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights", which serve as a voluntary guide for companies in the extractive and energy sectors to maintain the safety and security of their operations within an operating framework that ensures respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
United Kingdom (cont'd)	March 2001	U.K. Minister for CSR publishes first government report on CSR, "Business and society: Developing corporate social responsibility in the UK." It sets out the business case and outlines government plans, including work to develop the

		<p>business case for CSR internationally; and improving coordination across government.</p>
	October 2001	<p>British government issues guidelines on corporate environmental reporting, following Prime Minister Tony Blair's call for all top firms to start issuing environmental reports.</p>
	2002	<p>British government establishes interdepartmental group to examine how labeling schemes might be made more consistent and coherent.</p>