

Ulysses Kyriacopoulos - the value of a voluntary approach to CSR

Ulysses Kyriacopoulos is chairman of the board of directors of **Silver & Baryte Ores Mining Co. S.A.**, and a leading figure in Greek business. At the launch of the CSR Marathon in Athens this November, he gave some insights into Greek attitudes to CSR, as well as into his own company's embedded social values.

Ulysses Kyriacopoulos is currently chairman of The Federation of Greek Industries, of ALBA (Athens Laboratory of Business Administration) and Motodynamics S.A. He is Vice President of the Federation of Industries of Northern Greece, and member of the Board of Air Liquide Hellas S.A., Delta Holdings S.A.

He received his M.B.A. at the European Institute of Business Administration (INSEAD) in Fontainebleau, France. He is now a member of the advisory board of both INSEAD and Athens College.

What position does CSR have in Greece?

- **UK:** Historically Greek Business has been very much involved in supporting social and cultural endeavours. This involvement emerges from the cultural her-

itage of Greek Business. Companies have a long tradition of supporting the arts, museums, universities, sports, etc. As a result of these activities a strong connection has developed between the business world and the civil society.

Have businesses gone beyond supporting good causes and charities?

- **UK:** The terms as well as concepts of Corporate Social Responsibility and corporate citizenship are new to the country. Greek companies are modest about presenting their activities. There is not yet a culture of reporting good citizenship activities and meaningfully integrating them in their core business practices.

I believe it can be a win-win situation for companies to really integrate CSR in their core business practices. However, I

strongly believe that such initiatives ought to be formulated on a **voluntary basis**. I do not think that CSR and relevant reporting should be legally binding. This way CSR could evolve into a **competitive advantage** for companies adhering to it.



Ulysses Kyriacopoulos

As a chairman of the Federation of Greek Industries, how have you responded to CSR?

- **UK:** I try to disseminate the concept of CSR as much as possible. I try to encourage companies to develop mission statements that include CSR concepts. Don't forget that most of Greek businesses are SMEs. So we still have to raise awareness among them that CSR can also be beneficial to them. I

products, systems or services. 'Design for all' encourages designers to ensure that their products are accessible for people with as broad a range of abilities as possible. There were 80 submissions, 30 of which were nominated for the award. 1200 votes were collected online nominating the lift system as the overall winner.

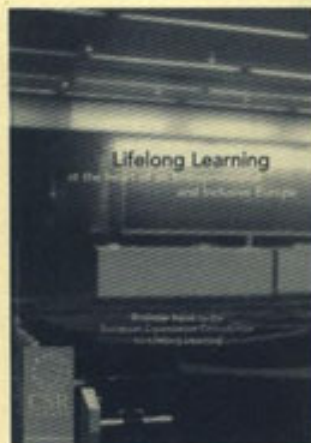
"It is heartening to see that design for all principles are in many cases already firmly embedded in the policies and indeed in the day-to-day organisation of so many companies across Europe," said Anna Diamantopoulou, European Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner.

The award was developed in partnership with the European Institute of Design and Disability, ANEC, the European consumer voice in standardisation, and CSR Europe.

For more information, visit <http://www.eddp.org>

■ Business gives its input on lifelong learning

Earlier this year, the European Commission issued a **Memorandum on Lifelong Learning** inviting civil society, business and government bodies to provide input for a European Action Plan on lifelong learning



To answer this invitation, CSR Europe linked up with six key European organisations active in the field of education and vocational training. Together they organised a **high-level conference** "Making lifelong learning a reality - consultation of civil society" in

Brussels, on 10 September; and subsequently issued a **joint report**.

Building on this, CSR Europe has published "Lifelong Learning at the heart of an entrepreneurial and inclusive Europe - business input to the European Commission consultation on lifelong learning". In addition to giving proposals for action, the report outlines the results of a **wide consultation** among CSR Europe members and National Partner Organisations.

The consultation highlighted the rich diversity of **practices and partnership models** of business involvement in education and training. CSR Europe members stressed the importance of issues such as building a knowledge society for all, developing a culture of communication and learning, expanding leadership competencies and investing in partnerships.

The initiative forms part of the CSR Europe programme on Education and Lifelong Learning.

For more information, contact Elena Bonfiglioli, eb@csreurope.org

■ CSR Europe partners launch diversity initiative in South Africa

South African government policy is placing new demands on the corporate sector to deal with the legacies of apartheid, while also facing global and regional uncertainty.

In response, the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) and the Centre for Diversity and Business (CDB), along with South African partners, are launching a new **International Diversity Leadership group**. The leadership group will be launched in early 2002 and will build on the work of both organisations.

IBLF has been working in South Africa for a number of years to promote socially responsible business practice and assist cross-sector dialogue and partnerships. During 2000 it ran projects around gender equality and HIV/AIDS, both of which highlighted the need for sustained corporate commitment. CDB recently co-ordinated the successful **Diversity Benchmarking project** for CSR Europe members.

As Leda Stott, Africa Manager for IBLF explains, the project aims to "facilitate work at **practitioner level** within organisations."

Graham Shaw of CDB agrees: "getting through the rhetoric and helping solve day-to-day operational issues can be where we find diversity management strategies such a useful tool. At the same time building international links between and within companies means that we can all learn from good practice."

■ Human Rights training for suppliers in Eastern Europe

Human rights compliance within the supply chain was the focus of a special workshop co-organised by CSR Europe and Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) in Athens, on 29 November. Bringing together suppliers and their buyers' companies operating in various industry sectors in different **Eastern European** countries, the aim was to provide training and offer guidance on different issues related to human rights; including labour rights, health and safety, wages and working hours, and bribery and corruption.



The workshop provided a unique platform for confidential dialogue about

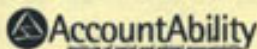
- Why compliance is important
- How businesses are implementing systems to build good business practice consistent with labour standards
- Addressing stakeholder concerns
- Coping with the impact of multiple standards, codes and monitoring schemes

Participants benefited from case studies and group exercises in each session and were able to bring their own experiences into the discussion.

For more information, contact Elena Bonfiglioli, eb@csreurope.org, or Matt Jeschke, mjeschke@bsr.org



■ Reflections on Corporate Accountability - after 11 September



A panel of key figures in the CSR field gathered on 3 December at the London offices of Cable & Wireless to tackle the 'medium and long-term implications of the events associated with and following **11 September** in regard to CSR'.

The meeting was organised by the **Institute of Social and Ethical AccountAbility**. AccountAbility's chairman, Simon Zadek, reflected that CSR was at a critical point where it could be seen either as irrelevant in a world of extremes, or as absolutely essential where continued poverty and inequality creates and underpins the case for violent change.

Speakers included Bob Dunn (BSR), John Elkington (SustainAbility), Ed Mayo (NEF), David Logan (Corporate Citizenship Company), Alan Christie (Levi Strauss, CSR Europe), and Robert Davies and Jane Nelson (IBLF).

Contributions focused on how government, business and CSR practitioners internationally have reacted to September 11. The meeting concluded with a sense that the ongoing role of CSR will only be understood through continued critical reflection on its effectiveness in addressing social and environmental challenges.

AccountAbility will produce a briefing paper on the outcomes of the event in January 2002.

For more information, contact secretariat@accountability.org.uk.

■ Companies design for all

A lift control system, a city toilet and a transport website were the winners of this year's "**Breaking Barriers Award**" announced on the European day of disabled people, 3 December 2001.

The award, in its third year, honoured companies across Europe who had adopted a design for all approach when creating their



Congratulations to the winners!

Winner in the category 'Toilet & WC' is
→ **Wall** - Strömlinje City Toilet

Winner in the category 'Transport' is
→ **Translink** - Translink Website

Winner in the category 'Lift & Escalator' is
→ **Schindler** - Lift control system

Winner in the category 'Lift control system' is
→ **Schindler** - Lift control system

hope this convention¹ and the **European CSR marathon** that was launched in Athens can be a starting point for raising awareness – creating an understanding and an exchange of best practices.

Yes, what do you hope comes out of this first marathon in Greece as a kick-off to the rest of Europe?

UK: I do hope that an increased awareness about CSR will be the most important accomplishment, which further on will stimulate business people to exchange best practices. In addition, as I mentioned before, I don't think that CSR can or should be put into a uniform framework. I hope that this conference will stress the **voluntary character** of CSR.

I was very pleased to see that the Green Paper initiated by Mrs Diamantopoulou, underlines the voluntary approach to CSR. I hope that this Campaign² at European level will accelerate these activities and place them in the mainstream.

As a chairman of Silver & Baryte Ores Mining Co, what activities are you involved in?

UK: Silver & Baryte Ores Mining Co. S.A. is a family controlled company, with a strong tradition of supporting worthwhile social, cultural and environmental causes. We support the health care system by providing aid to health care institutions. We support edu-

cation and vocational training offering among other things the possibility for interested students to gain practical experience in our group of companies.

I myself encourage my managers to promote management training by delivering seminars to young managers. And we are very much involved in supporting our cultural heritage and tending to local community needs.

Examples of S&B's social contributions can be seen in the island of Milos, a strategic location for the company. S&B has created and operates the **Milos Mining**



Museum and the Milos Conference Centre, promoting the island's history and cultural influence. Along with

this, S&B has sponsored the **Milos Festival**, an annual cultural and musical series of events, for eight consecutive years.

One of the upcoming highlights of the **European Business Campaign on CSR** is a **European CSR Academy**, a joint initiative with **INSEAD** to expand research and teaching in this field.

INSEAD
Executive Education

As a member of the **Advisory Board of INSEAD**, what are your thoughts on this initiative?

UK: I think this is great. Today's business students should be educated on CSR, the faculty too, so that more research will be carried out to strengthen the business case for CSR. In order to make the link with important Business Schools in Europe, it is crucial to bring the topic of CSR to centre stage.

This link will be significant in fostering mutual understanding and **providing credibility** through facts and figures about CSR. I hope that someday we can also have a CSR chair at universities here in Greece.

What are your hopes for the business world 15 years from now with regard to CSR?

UK: I would like to see people get the training they want and need, to do the job they are good at. I hope that in the future people will get the opportunities to develop their own skills. Ultimately, I hope to see **more flexibility** in business, and to see business doing well and society sharing in the resulting prosperity.

Let us not prosper alone - let us **share prosperity** with society.



Milos

¹ PanEuropean Conference, Corporate Social Responsibility - the contribution of enterprises in the new era. Organised by the Hellenic Network for Corporate Social Responsibility, as part of the European CSR Business Marathon in the framework of the European Business Campaign on Corporate Social Responsibility.

² The European Business Campaign for Corporate Social Responsibility, www.csrcampaign.org

For more information, email Graham Shaw, graham.shaw@diversityandbusiness.com, or Leda Stott lstott@ctv.es

■ New guide for young consumers

Recognising that young people need reliable, clear and yet entertaining information on sustainable consumption, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have joined forces to launch the **YouthXchange training kit on responsible consumption – towards sustainable lifestyles.**

The toolkit is made up of a guide and a website, www.youthxchange.net, which is set to be launched in 2002.

The focus of the training kit is to empower young people by fostering what they are best at: **communication and exchange of ideas** and practices. By providing material, information, role games and links, it encourages young consumers to use their power of choice to push companies and governments to make access to sustainable lifestyles a reality.

Among other things, YouthXchange

- 'brands' the idea of a more sustainable lifestyle as 'cool' rather than needed, 'smart' rather than 'responsible'
- offers tools to assess companies' sustainability policies and easily recognise and choose products that are already sustainable
- promotes the idea of networking and communication as a means for becoming a global citizen, and making the voice of youth a strong **market driver**.

The guide can be ordered online at www.earthprint.com

For more information contact sc@unep.fr or j.heiss@unesco.org

■ European Day on Entrepreneurship

On 21 September, entrepreneurs from around Europe joined big business, policymakers and other stakeholders at a one-day conference in Brussels. Their aim was to raise awareness and exchange experiences, while at the same time look at new ways forward to support **Entrepreneurship in Europe.**

CSR Europe, Business & Society Belgium, and Swedish Jobs & Society co-organised the event within the **European Business Campaign on Corporate Social Responsibility.**

The focus of the European Day was on how larger companies can support start-ups and SMEs through access to credit, regeneration of poor areas, and **education for self-employment** both for youngsters, at risk groups, and redundant employees.

The conference provided the occasion to

- exchange good practices and innovative solutions
- raise awareness and foster collaboration between small and bigger companies
- promote the transfer of success models across Europe
- energise business-to-government dialogue on Entrepreneurship

The meeting featured a presentation on **"Being an entrepreneur in today's Europe"** by the winner of the European Entrepreneurship Award 2000, and a roundtable discussion on the different phases of the entrepreneurship lifecycle.

In addition, CSR Europe published **"Entrepreneurship: A must for Europe"** a collection of business best practices for an entrepreneurial and sustainable Europe.

youthXchange

