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## **Vilnius Conference on CSR Policies: Conference Conclusions**

Representatives of Governments and stakeholders of fifteen European countries\* who met under the auspices of the Lithuanian Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the participation of the European Commission, in Vilnius on 9-10 September 2008, to discuss public policy on corporate social responsibility (CSR) developments in the region, have:

*Acknowledged* the importance of CSR public policies as tools to enhance the contribution of the business sector to sustainable development, and *noted* that these policies encompassed a broad range of enabling, partnering, financing and mandating measures that were already part of national efforts in many countries, or were planned;

*Noted* that the main challenges in public policy development on CSR often related to a lack of leadership, low consumer awareness, weak civil society organisations, and the capacity of the governments, but *recognised* that it would now be important to move to implement fully the CSR agendas in place. Effective CSR policies could be invaluable in helping engage business and civil society in government efforts to improve economic competitiveness and participation in supply chains, attract foreign direct investment, drive innovation, and move towards sustainable development, as well as add value in the EU accession context;

*Noted* that among the priority areas for advancing public policies on CSR would be CSR education and advocacy, support to civil society organisations and capacity development of other local stakeholders, small and medium enterprise (SME) guidance, responsible public procurement, development of regional CSR reporting standards and impact monitoring systems;

*Recognised* the need for development of institutional capacities both at the national and regional levels to help coordinate CSR efforts, and to share experiences and good practices. In this context, they *welcomed* the added value of the Regional CSR Project in bringing countries together to network and create paths for cooperation;

*Invited* the European Commission and other European governments and bodies to continue supporting the efforts of countries in the region to implement public policies and exchange experiences, and to explore institutional options such as the establishment of a CSR knowledge hub in Lithuania and/or elsewhere in the region;

*Underlined* the value of the UNDP advisory role to the Governments in conceptualising, designing and implementing CSR public policies and its catalytic role in bringing stakeholders together, and *encouraged* interested stakeholders to use the UN Global Compact local networks platforms in the region to stimulate further developments;

*Agreed* to explore further proposals for cooperation on the establishment of a knowledge and expert sharing platform in the region, a database of good practices, a joint European masters programme on CSR, and to reconvene in a year's time to assess the progress of CSR policy development and first results.

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\* Countries and entities included: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo/UNMIK, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom.