

RICHARD HOWITT MEP EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RAPPORTEUR ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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WILL EUROPE CONTINUE TO MAKE BUSINESS RESPONSIBILITY A PRIORITY?

There can be no complacency that Europe will continue to address the challenges of sustainable and responsible business according to the European Parliament Rapporteur on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), with just two weeks left for responses in a public consultation on the future of EU CSR policy.

Richard Howitt MEP, who has recently been reappointed to the key Employment and Social Affairs Committee which enables him to continue in the role he has undertaken for more than ten years, is appealing for as many responses as possible to ensure support for CSR is integrated in EU policies and programmes.

A key achievement in the past year has been the requirement for large European companies to report on their social, environmental and human rights impact in their annual financial reports, but Rapporteur Howitt says it is crucial that companies have more achievements themselves on which to report.

Richard Howitt MEP said:

"We have had three European Commissioners willing to be active in promoting CSR, in a period which has seen public focus on business responsibility through the Trafigura case involving dumping of toxic waste, the mass deaths caused by the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh, as well as the continuing debate about business role in climate change talks.

"The European Union has a real opportunity to provide global leadership on CSR, but there should be no complacency that the new European Commission and European Parliament will give equal priority to the issue in the future.

"This public consultation must be used as both an early opportunity to shape future priorities, and to restate that CSR is integral to the future of business itself."

The consultation organised by the European Commission's Directorate General for Enterprise, suggests that future objectives of European CSR policy could include engagement in international initiatives, raising visibility of CSR, providing guidance to companies, further promoting corporate transparency, introducing market rewards for responsible business and better CSR education. Respondents have until 15 August 2014 to reply to the consultation, which can be undertaken by logging on to: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sustainable-business/corporate-social-responsibility/public-consultation/index_en.htm

Richard Howitt MEP also announced he will be speaking as CSR Rapporteur at the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Global Dialogue on 14 October in Geneva, and at the 'Innovation Forum' organised in conjunction with the Institute of Business and Human Rights on 10 November in London.

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Notes to Editors:

For more information and or to arrange an interview please contact Ben Nelmes in Richard Howitt MEP's office on (+44) (0)1223 240202.