

5.5.3 REGION OF SOUTH DENMARK: 10 June 2004

Network Seminar on Corporate Social Responsibility in South Denmark

Objectives:

The purpose of the seminar was to strengthen the cross-regional co-operation between the networks and highlight the enterprises and organisations willingness to work seriously with social responsibility and come up with suggestion on how their work within the area can be made easier.

One of the invited speakers was from the Danish National Institute for Social Research, which publishes an annual report on the CSR situation within Danish enterprises – public as well as private. This presentation was followed by presentations of practical examples from the region and group discussions.

The objective of the day was to focus on key issues within CSR, which could be presented for the regional politicians, and which presented a concrete proposal for how enterprises feel they can obtain more and better support from the regional authorities – in terms of administrative support, easy understandable regulations and procedures - as to live up to the social responsibility that many of them actually would like to show. The seminar concentrated on how to get the enterprises – besides complying with laws and collective agreements - to take a social responsibility. The focus was on responsibilities of regional networks working with the issues on a regular basis, on how they could raise awareness and get the enterprises, voluntarily, to participate in retaining employees, integrating persons with some sort of reduced capacity to work and creating more sustainable work conditions both in social and environmental terms.

Speakers/Programme:

The EU and Corporate Social Responsibility. Presentation of the project, Vaderegio II. Trine Mørch, South Denmark European Office

Why it matters to be socially responsible. Presentation of the Danish National Institute of Social Research's annual analysis of Corporate Social Responsibility. Martin Sonnefeld Jørgensen, the Danish National Institute of Social Research

Presentation of different initiatives within corporate social responsibility in South Denmark focusing on the co-operation with local and regional authorities.

Market Place – Discussion of key issues and ideas for further co-operation on CSR in South Denmark with the local and regional authorities.

Participants:

The seminar was targeted at key actors in South Denmark – e.g. the counties’ departments for healthy work environment, regional social and enterprise’s networks, Green and Environmental networks, Adult educations centres, local co-ordinations committees and other organisations, which in their daily work assists enterprises in their commitment to act in a social responsible way and know the enterprises needs and difficulties in the area. Number of participants: 22

Outcome: Only a small proportion of enterprises were already implementing social responsibility. While enterprises’ attitudes towards taking increased social responsibility are positive, they still need to put these into practice.

There were different reasons for lack of action. Among the main challenges:

the social dilemma when everybody sees the rationale of enterprises taking an increased social responsibility, but thinks that it is the others who must do so; and seeing it as politically incorrect to answer that enterprises should not take more social responsibility.

There was evidence of local and regional politicians trying to influence enterprises to be more open and take on a greater social responsibility.

The activities connected to Vaderegio II and the seminar coincided with the announcement by the Danish minister for Employment and Labour Market of the beginning of a ‘road show’ on corporate social responsibility around the country, to gather good examples from the ‘real world’ to publish a catalogue which can be a guideline for policy development, and a source of inspiration for other actors to learn from. A press release has been send to the minister, to show him how the region are on the ‘leading edge of the future’ in South Denmark, and that the Vaderegio II has been a motivating factor to get that far. Furthermore, a press release was sent out in connection with the seminar and project, which was very well received by the regional press and published in the major regional newspaper – ‘JyskeVestkysten’.

In the long-term the seminar shall be seen as an initiator to cross-regional co-operation between the networks in South Denmark in creating increased awareness among the enterprises and organisations on corporate social responsibility.

Contact Details

Trine Morch	Winnie Abildgaard
EU-Consultant	Business Consultant
South Denmark European Office	EU Vest
Avenue Palmerston 3	Niels Bohrs Vej 6
B-1000 Bruxelles	DK-6700 Esbjerg
trine.morch@southdenmark.be	wab@euvest.dk