

THE FUTURE FOR EUROPE WE NEED

Working together for a more inclusive and sustainable society

There is a pressing need for a transformative, innovative and systemic change in Europe for the years to come.

Unemployment rates have remained too high for too long and too many people are excluded. Furthermore, climate issues and resource depletion, financial disruption and demographic changes require a collaborative approach.

Building on its values, Europe can and must play an innovative and leading role in the implementation of the inclusive and sustainable economy that will enhance its competitiveness and safeguard its social model.

Connectivity of big data, the internet of things and smart manufacturing, new collaborative models, circular thinking and the emergence of portfolio employment are some of the key transformative trends that represent unique opportunities for business, governments and other stakeholders to stimulate an entrepreneurial Europe that cares and creates shared value for all.

Reaping these opportunities will not only save on natural resources used but will also create additional employment and business opportunities.

The time to act is now, together. This is the core of being or becoming a true leader of sustainable growth.

The power of collaboration

The urgency of the current challenges requires all companies, governments, civil society, investors and other stakeholders to step up their **individual and collective efforts**. Only practical and structural collaboration will accelerate the pace of change toward an inclusive and sustainable society. This Manifesto emphasises the key role business and governments have to play.

The Purpose of Business

As the driving force behind job creation, economic growth and improving wellbeing, business is uniquely positioned to help establish a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable society. Many business champions have already developed new, more circular, business models leading to new opportunities, enhanced reputation and market leadership. However, a transformative, systemic change in Europe requires all companies, small and big, to further integrate environmental, social and governance concerns into their strategies and to innovate and collaborate more.

Over the past 20 years **CSR Europe and its 41 National Partner Organisations** have been able to drastically enhance the importance of sustainability as a business issue, and to support its more than 10,000 company members integrating sustainability into their strategy and processes. This practical approach will be drastically reinforced over the coming five years and geared toward more impactful innovative collaborative efforts.

Converting our words into action

In order to achieve a European and global transformation toward a more inclusive and sustainable society, we will inspire, challenge, support and engage our more than 10.000 members to be at the forefront of this transformative change and:

1. **Make employability and inclusion a priority across boards, management and value chains.** How? Through increasing structural public-private partnerships in the world of work and education, workplace innovation and entrepreneurship support. The direction is to enhance employability drastically through formal and non-formal learning, on both hard and soft skills. Thereby, we will contribute to make Europe the best place for work.
2. **Position our companies as committed partners for communities, cities and regions to develop and implement new patterns of sustainable production, consumption and livelihoods.** How? Through innovation of products, services and business models and a systematic engagement with mayors and community stakeholders.

3. **Put transparency and respect for human rights at the heart of business conduct.** How? Through superior reporting, stakeholder engagement and integrated thinking in boards, improved management systems and an integrated and innovative management of the entire value chain.

We call for all companies and governments to join us and take up this challenge ...

Business

We call on companies, small, medium and large, to contribute to this movement and be the agents of change by:

- a. Leading and engaging in collaborative platforms with all stakeholders toward transformative impact and enhanced employability.
- b. Accelerating the adoption of new technologies, competencies and processes to foster inclusive and sustainable business models and to engage all their affiliates on the local agenda of the countries and regions they operate in.
- c. Aiming to strive for the smallest possible ecological footprint and the largest possible societal benefits within a mid- and long term business perspective.
- d. Embracing transparency and respect of human rights as standard company practice.

Governments

We call for European, national and sub-national policies to support these ambitions with the strongest possible policies and measures and by doing so to empower and facilitate forward looking companies who are prepared to take their own responsibility in this area. Three policy areas are considered as key priorities:

- a. Embed structural collaboration between business and formal/non-formal education through a set of ambitious targets and KPIs.
- b. Foster innovation and competitiveness that makes Europe the world hub of sustainable communities through:
 - a. Supporting the development and impact of collaborative platforms
 - b. Leading by example through integration of environmental; social and governance aspects in policy development .
- c. Create a policy framework that favours mid- and long-term approaches over short-term actions to govern labour, industrial and financial markets. The framework should include a.o. support for effective flexicurity approaches, fiscal policies that support sustainable growth, and industrial policies that stimulate the transformation to a circular economy.