

Greece firmly believes in the necessity to stress and render effective the linkage between Business and Human Rights. Indeed, Business plays a key part in the life of a country, and has a major role to play regarding the way Human Rights are promoted and protected.

Human rights are, of course, firmly entrenched at the highest level of the Greek legal system, which provides for the necessary means of recourse. However, we believe that the best way to include business in the promotion and protection of Human Rights is to help the business community address human rights, by providing a framework and building the necessary synergies where applicable in order to help it assume its responsibilities in society, both in our country and wherever they may work.

In order to achieve this important goal, Greece is currently in the process of enacting a **National Action Plan regarding corporate social responsibility**, which was drafted under the General Secretariat Commerce and Consumer Protection.

This National Action Plan addresses four key elements, namely the company, the environment, society and the market, guiding their interactions in order to allow for a maximization of both material and ethical gain. In doing so, this plan stresses the importance of the respect of Human Rights in business practices, both within companies and in their relationship with other actors. Sustainability is therefore an essential focus, as it is one of the essential pillars of the protection of health and preservation of the environment. The National Action Plan therefore incentivizes companies to opt for sustainable practices, both in the use and production of goods and services.

The plan also focuses on employees' quality of life, thus promoting and protecting their social rights. Key elements include the promotion of dialogue with employees' unions, of co-decision procedures, as well working towards increasing the number of extra-judicial settling of conflicts between employers and employees, the latter element also contributing to a swifter access to remedy.

The national action plan for corporate social responsibility also seeks to open the business community to the global market by providing incentives to actively seek the best global practices and implement them, in Greece and abroad, in order to make them aware of the concrete financial benefits that may accrue from applying and promoting a human-rights

based approach to their production, allowing them to establish a privileged relation with consumers, as we all are increasingly aware and conscious in the way we consume. We believe that this will lead to the establishment of a **partnership of confidence** between the economic agents of production and the consumers.

The effect that an increased linkage between Business and Human Rights has on the market is not just a matter of wishful conviction; it is a reality that is gaining traction internationally. Steering the business community towards more Human Rights-conscious practices is indeed planning for the future, both regarding sustainability and growth. Greece strives for the betterment of its business sector in this department, where our National Action Plan, once enacted, will give us an important edge. Aiming for the promotion and protection of Human rights through the synergy of the state and the business sector is – we are convinced of it – the way of the future.