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CSR – A FASHION OR REAL COMMITMENT? THE CASE OF POLISH LISTED COMPANIES

Abstract. This article, without claiming to be the ultimate reference, aims at assessing the social commitment of the large and solid financially, listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange (WSE), Polish companies, on the eve of the implementation of the EU directive on disclosure of non-financial and diversity information (2014/95/EU). The selected companies seem perfect to form a vanguard of CSR in Poland, but the results of the analysis indicate that despite the existing efforts for CSR standardization and better implementation, the situation in Poland is not so optimistic. The limited attention paid to CSR norms as well as CSR reporting under Polish law means also that foreign companies seeking access to Polish capital market generally will not face serious constraints in terms of regulations regarding sustainable development. The EU directive will certainly change this situation but there is a visible need for continuing education of companies in this field.

Keywords: CSR, sustainability, listed companies, Poland

CSR – MODA CZY RZECZYWISTE ZAANGAŻOWANIE? PRZYPADEK POLSKICH PRZEDSIĘBIORSTW NOTOWANYCH NA GIEŁDZIE

Streszczenie. Artykuł ten, nie będąc ostatecznym punktem odniesienia, ma na celu ocenę zaangażowania społecznego dużych i solidnych pod względem finansowym, notowanych na Giełdzie Papierów Wartościowych w Warszawie polskich przedsiębiorstw w przeddzień wdrożenia unijnej dyrektywy odnośnie do ujawniania informacji niefinansowych i informacji dotyczących różnorodności (2014/95/UE). Wybrane przedsiębiorstwa wydają się idealne, aby stać się pionierami CSR w Polsce, jednak wyniki analizy wskazują, że mimo starań wielu instytucji o ujednoczenie zasad CSR i popularyzację tego podejścia sytuacja w Polsce nie jest zbyt optymistyczna. Ograniczona uwaga poświęcona normom oraz sprawozdawczości CSR w polskim prawie oznacza również, że zagraniczne firmy poszukujące dostępu do polskiego rynku kapitałowego generalnie nie będą

zmagały się z poważnymi ograniczeniami wynikającymi z przepisów dotyczących zrównoważonego rozwoju. Dyrektywa UE z pewnością zmieni tę sytuację, istnieje jednak widoczna potrzeba kontynuowania edukacji przedsiębiorstw w tej materii.

Słowa kluczowe: CSR, zrównoważony rozwój, spółki giełdowe, Polska.

1. Introduction

The Corporate Social Responsibility is not completely new concept, because under different names, like “philanthropy”, “social solidarity”, “industrial democracy” or even “town company”, this approach deals with the way firms and entrepreneurs interact with the surrounding social actors, including first of all the workers and the community at large, and the environment¹. The problem of the responsibility of business owners is almost as old as the company itself. From the beginning of the company's existence, entrepreneurs were expected to take care of their workers and be responsible for the impact their companies have on the world. However for a long time, they have not been legally obliged, nor really forced by society to conduct their business ethically. Meanwhile, in recent times CSR became a kaleidoscopic and to some extent institutionalized tool permitting to appreciate and evaluate the perception of the company and its role in the society, and for implementing and monitoring business sustainability. With its definition that has changed over the years, and with its expansion into new issues, CSR has always been focused on the concern for human rights, the well-being of our society and respect for the environment².

Recent studies based on empirical evidence show that market oriented economies (the best example is Great Britain) tend to get CSR earlier, and more of it, than social coordinated market economies (Germany), confirming also from this point of view the wide variety of European capitalism models³. The transition to a market economy in Central Eastern Europe during the past 25 years requires some more specific approach to the CSR, since in that area some institutionalized (authoritarian) social solidarity were embedded with the ideological aspects of the planned economies⁴. At glance, it appears clear that in the former socialist countries there is still a certain reluctance to an uncritical implementation of CSR, both in SMEs and LE. Foreign direct investment – and particularly those coming from Germany –

¹ Gjørberg M.: The Origin of Corporate Social Responsibility: Global Forces or National Legacies? “Socio-Economic Review”, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2009, p. 605-637.

² Bowen H.R.: Social responsibilities of the businessman. Harper & Brothers, New York 1953.

³ Jackson G., Apostolakou A.: Corporate social responsibility in Western Europe: an institutional mirror or substitute? “Journal of Business Ethics”, Vol. 94(3), 2010, p. 371-394; Kinderman D.P.: Why Do Some Countries Get CSR Sooner, and in Greater Quantity, than Others? The Political Economy of Corporate Responsibility and the Rise of Market Liberalism Across the OECD, 2011.

⁴ Elms H.: Corporate (and stakeholder) responsibility in Central and Eastern Europe. “International Journal of Emerging Markets”, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2006, p. 203-211.

can be considered at origins of both the introduction of CG and CSR codes and concrete practices in Central Eastern Europe⁵. This could lead to conclude that the path dependence of centralized economies has a successful influence on the adoption of the Western style institutionalized social solidarity, and not of the model adopted earlier in liberal market economies.

The idea of CSR in Poland began its scope and influence on aboriginal businesses only after 1989. At the beginning of the political transformation in the 1990s, the idea of business ethics was not very popular. First publications on this subject began to appear in the late 20th century. It is also a time when Polish entrepreneurs have become more interested in the idea of CSR⁶. However, a true popularity of CSR with Polish companies is the history of the last ten years⁷. This period is marked by the numerous publications, conferences and seminars bringing together not only researchers but also managers of large companies and small and medium-sized entrepreneurs. According to numerous studies, the number of Polish companies implementing CSR in their everyday practice grows every year⁸.

Until now, the implementation of CSR principles has been voluntary for companies around the world. This situation is right now changing with the directive 2014/95/EU, on disclosure of non-financial and diversity information. As from 1.01.2017, the directive started to oblige large EU companies to disclose information on the implementation of CSR policies. The document is applicable to publicly traded companies as well as to other public interest entities with more than 500 employees and whose total assets exceed € 20 million or whose revenues exceed € 40 million. Final shape of the regulation was weakened in the last stages of its formation, mainly as a result of lobbying conducted by major companies, that the document would consider. Poland, as the only EU country was lobbying in the favor of shrinking list of companies the directive would apply to, was suggesting to encourage, rather than force, firms to report their CSR activities. As a result of negotiations between the European Council and European Parliament, the new law applies to 30% less companies than it was primarily planned by the European Commission that, among others, wanted the employees limit to be 250⁹. The list of companies covers institutions that are to be considered as public interest entities and being of major importance for society due to the nature of their activity or its size. At the EU level the directive will apply to approximately 6000 entities. On a Polish scale, it includes between 250-300 companies.

⁵ Bechert S., Gorynia-Pfeffer N.: Polsko-niemieckie przedsiębiorstwa oraz wymagania ich Stakeholder. Rekomendacje na temat społecznej odpowiedzialności biznesu. RKW Kompetenzzentrum, Klarman Druck, Kelkheim 2008.

⁶ Rok B.: Odpowiedzialny Biznes w nieodpowiedzialnym świecie. Akademia Rozwoju Filantropii w Polsce Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu, Warszawa 2004.

⁷ Kitzmueller M., Shimshack J.: Economic Perspectives on Corporate Social Responsibility. "Journal of Economic Literature", Vol. 50, No. 1, 2012, p. 51-84.

⁸ Popowska M.: CSR in Polish SMEs – from perception to infatuation. Examples of socially engaged firms from the Pomeranian Region. Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Poznańskiej, nr 68, 2016, s. 147-156.

⁹ Krukowska M.: CSR obowiązkowy (tylko) w raportach. Forbes Poland, 2014.

In general, the popularity and knowledge of the CSR concept among Polish societies seems to be lower than in the countries of Western Europe. At the same time research on how Polish companies are actually adjusting to CSR standards is still very limited. The author therefore decided to try to analyze and measure the real CSR activities developed by the largest and most performant Polish companies. It aims, with a number of precise evaluation criteria, to create a qualitative study of the actions not only declared but also undertaken by the Polish companies and possibly to be in a position to specify the areas of CSR that still need to be improved. The author hopes that this research, still imperfect, will make it possible to highlight certain elements of this important subject, still fresh and unexplored.

2. International CSR initiatives in Poland

In November 2002, in Warsaw, took place a “Sustainable Development Management. Agenda 21 – 10 years after Rio” conference, during which the representatives of Polish local governments have discussed the implementations of the 1992 Rio Conference and Agenda 21. Reports from the conference brought to light that since 1998 more than 80 local governments have created documents enabling the realization of the sustainable development strategy based on Agenda 21 and have started its implementation¹⁰. During the conference there have also been signed a “Polish Cities Network Declaration in Sustainable Development”. Creation of the Network was to enable the coordination of local governments in the sustainable development and cooperation with the European networks¹¹.

As a milestone in history of CSR in Poland is considered year 2000, when Responsible Business Forum (RBF) was created. Initiated by three companies, RBF was a first and the biggest Polish non-profit organization that works for enhancing the business ethics awareness in Polish corporate world. In 2002, RBF became an official partner of CSR Europe – the biggest CSR organization, working under the European Union. RBF cooperates with a number of international and Polish organizations, such as World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Global Reporting Initiative, Business in the Community, and CSR 360 Global Partner Network. RBF is an exclusive coordinator of the Diversity Chart in Poland. The Chart is an international initiative promoting diversity and non-discrimination in the workplace, implemented in many EU countries. It is promoted by European Commission, and in Poland held under auspices of Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, the Human Rights Defender and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Polish edition of the Diversity Chart was launched in February 2012 with 14 signatories, and have grown to over

¹⁰ See also: 2050: The New Agenda for Business in Poland, Executive Summary, 2012.

¹¹ Responsible Business Forum, 2015.

100 signatories in 2015. The Chart was implemented by 14 European countries with around 7000 signatories.

Since 2002, every year the RBF publishes a report entitled “Responsible business in Poland Good Practices” – the largest CSR overview in Poland. Within the publication one can find most significant CSR practices undertaken by companies and organizations operating on Polish market in the previous year. Next to giving the overview of CSR activities, the report also presents expert ideas, media analysis and a calendar of finished and upcoming events. That creates a unique and detailed picture of Polish CSR, that may as well be a source of information as inspiration to every person interested in that matter or planning to start responsible practices. In 2004, the RBF, together with 3 academic research centers from University of Lodz, Wroclaw University of Economics and University of Gdansk, have created an educational program called Responsible Business League. The league was built in order to train and shape new top managers, entrepreneurs, and leaders for socially responsible and cautious people.

The Responsible Business League (RBL) consists of a group of students, called Ambassadors of CSR, that, together with many student organizations, are working on different educational and social projects, spreading the idea of responsible business on local and national level. RBL working groups are building dialogue between entrepreneurs, administration, academia, NGOs, and media, by initiating local activities, promoting good examples, and shaping responsible attitudes. It is an important partner for as well micro as medium or large enterprises, in creating a good environment for responsibility.

In the years 2009-2013, the RBF has actively collaborated with the Ministry of Economy in order to create a working platform for cooperation for sustainable development in Poland. As a result the Panel on Corporate Social Responsibility was created, in which RBF, together with the representative of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education has co-chaired the Working Group for Education and CSR Promotion and took active part in working groups for responsible investments and for sustainable consumption.

In 2015, a year of 15th anniversary of RBF, “People who changed business” award has been established. The award is a first such prize devoted fully to appreciating people involved in development and promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility, addressed as well to companies’ representatives as persons working in the business environment¹².

One of the most significant projects of RBF is current collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Deloitte Sustainability Consulting Central Europe on the “Polish Vision 2050”, an initiative developed in response to, created by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development – “Vision 2050. The new agenda for sustainable development”. The document describes main challenges in sustainable development creation and gives instructions on achieving it. Vision 2050 was created in order to help in integration of Polish companies

¹² <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/regulamin-pryznawania-nagrody-ludzie-ktorzy-zmieniaja-biznes/>.

around the idea of sustainable development, identify the challenges of responsible business, and instruct them on how to conduct an effective dialogue with the administration and the society. All that to realize one main purpose – strong, sustainable development of Polish economy.

An important actor on the CSR stage in Poland is also the created between 1995 and 1998 – Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland. As an independent NGO, its mission is to improve the life and activation of local communities, creating a forum for various solutions for life enhancement, encouragement of local corporations to be more financially engaged in the socially useful causes, as well as popularization and support of goodwill and philanthropy. For the companies looking for help and advice in implementing CSR in their day to day business, the Academy have created a special handbook available on their website, with the important information and advice on how to develop an independent social responsibility strategy. It offers individual consultations, various multimedia presentations and an independent base of around 90 publications in the field of CSR. Academy for the Development of Philanthropy is also organizing an annual competition for a “Benefactor of the Year”, by rewarding the businesses which are practicing charity, they aim to popularize the effective forms of CSR and socially responsible cooperation between corporations, different organizations, programs, volunteer work and social initiatives.

Foreign investors are aware of the fact, that CSR actions and ethical, responsible business can significantly improve business efficiency, especially in terms of developed anti-corruption mechanisms, risk management systems and investments in new technologies, that would reduce the production costs. Therefore while making important business decisions they take into the account whether their future business partner conducts a responsible business. A slightly different opinion about those issues have Polish corporations. This has been proven by a 2014 survey conducted by Martis Consulting on 65 WSE listed companies. They have been asked about their perception of the socially responsible companies by investors and impact of CSR orientation on their purchasing decisions. Companies taking part in the survey were asked to assess the importance of CSR for the investors on the scale from 1 to 5 (fig. 1).

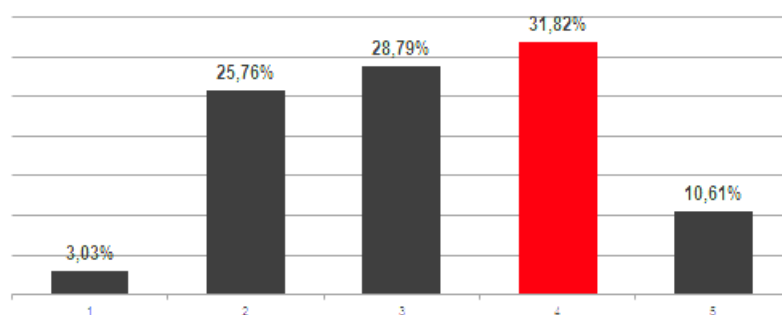


Fig. 1. Importance of CSR for Polish investors
Source: Martis Consulting, CSR Report, 2014.

As it turned out 70% of Polish brokerage houses, mutual funds and consulting firms claim that the RI is essential or somewhat important for the market. On the other hand almost 80% of them admits that they, themselves do not take it into account by making business decisions and choosing business partners. The study shows that the CSR activity of the listed companies is appreciated mostly by the institutional investors, who in their decision making are putting a strong emphasis on corporate governance, respect for the environment and consumer relations. Individual investors are statistically less interested in CSR actions of the companies, for them most important is the quality of product and services, than business ethics and anti-corruption politics. According to the study, 68% of institutional investors are analyzing CSR data in their business partners, whereas only 23% of individual clients are interested in it. Only 3% of companies surveyed think that investing in the companies that are implementing CSR to a big extend would reduce their investment risk.

In November 2009, the Warsaw Stock Exchange (WSE) has for the first time published the Respect Index (RI) – the index of socially responsible companies that are operating on polish market. As a first Central- and Eastern-European CSR index, it grouped the companies that were working to the highest standards of business ethics and aimed to promote responsible business across the country. Today, the RI, in addition to identifying the most socially responsible companies, is also putting a strong emphasis on their investment attractiveness, showing their high information governance, good reporting quality or high level of investor relations, and consequently being a eligible reference for professional investors. The number of companies included in the RI is bigger every year. That proofs that Polish enterprises are paying more and more attention to idea of CSR, by applying its principles in their daily operations and also by reporting it to the public. The RI can be considered as a good way to enhance the sustainability practices and surely, in the future, will be a significant factor of change, taken into account during the decision making process.

For the last 10 years, the RBF has partnered with Deloitte in the organization of the CSR Reports Competition, aiming at popularizing non-financial reporting and showing good corporate practices. Every year, the jury selects companies which engage in a dialogue with stakeholders and clearly, transparently and credibly present their accomplishments in the reports they publish.

Despite the growing number of RBF, other NGOs and government initiatives aiming at increasing the awareness of sustainable business importance among Polish companies, the popularity of CSR approach seems smaller than in other developed countries. There is still a shortage of reports and research on how companies working on Polish market actually adjust to CSR standards. CSR is considered a way to strengthen firms image instead of building a strong trustworthy company. Still not many entrepreneurs understand its core purpose and tools, reducing it only to sharing the profit with needy to strengthen the PR actions.

3. Research methodology

The author of this research, decided to work on a sample of the largest and financially solid Polish companies. As a result, this sample was extracted from companies listed on the WSE in the second half of 2015. Three lists of the most profitable companies were used on the WSE: WIG20, WIG30, mWIG40. There was an additional criterion – the public treasury had to hold a significant percentage of shares and/or at least 50% of the capital had to be Polish. Finally, a list of 39 companies was obtained, classified into 10 different sectors: raw materials industry, energy suppliers, chemical and pharmaceutical industry, finance, IT and telecommunications, oil industry, transport, textile, postal services and electronic production. The number of companies in various sectors ranging from 1 (textile, postal services, electronic production) to 8 (raw materials industry).

In order to conduct a comprehensive and detailed research on implementation of CSR in Polish listed companies, it was necessary to ensure to cover all the areas of responsible business. Therefore, within the assessment criteria included those that specified the existence of clear policy and reporting in the area of CSR. It was also necessary to find a place for the three pillars of CSR, namely: corporate governance, respect for the environment and respect for human rights and the society. Additionally, we have assumed that a socially responsible company should participate in well-known CSR initiatives and be recorded in the reports summarizing its possible commitment to CSR, the domestic ones as well as international.

In this way, a list of 14 assessment criteria has been developed: 1. Listing in the Respect Index of the WSE; 2. Recording of best practices in the most recent RBF report; 3. Implementation of the ISO 26000 standard; 4. Participation in the Global Compact initiative¹³; 5. The policy in the field of CSR explicitly announced on the site of the company; 6. Existence of CSR reporting; 7. Explicit and visible corporate governance on the website; 8. The code of conduct published on the website; 9. Disclosure of the ethical code; 10. Work practices, including workplace safety and benefits for employees; 11. The announcement of non-discrimination and diversity in workplace policy; 12. Particular attention to consumer issues; 13. Formal environmental policy and sustainable development of the company; 14. Participation in the development of the local community.

In order to evaluate each company according to all the criteria a special table has been created. The number "1" means that the company met the criterion in question and "0" a contrary situation. The score for each firm and an average score for each industry and the score for each separate criterion are shown in the left column and the lowest row in the table in the appendix to this paper.

¹³ <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles>.

4. Results of the analysis of Polish listed companies CSR commitment

As a first study, the author decided to conduct an examination of a general, perceptible approach of Polish listed companies to CSR. Therefore, the selected assessment criteria were aggregated in four groups, depending on how many of them a company has managed to fulfill (fig. 2).

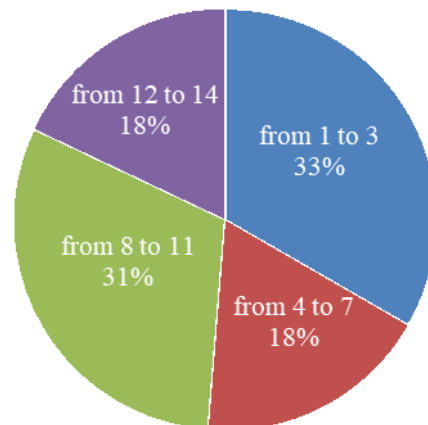


Fig. 2. General approach of Polish listed companies to CSR
Source: Own research and calculations.

The results of the research are not optimistic and show that Polish companies are still struggling with a full and equitable implementation of CSR. Only one company was able to fulfill all criteria (PKN Orlen). Only seven companies that were examined demonstrate a complete spectrum of CSR activities, but at the same time, in the sample, there are still companies that do nothing and their number is almost twice as large as the group of companies that fully integrate CSR.

The company that have had reported the biggest number of CSR actions was PKN Orlen. It is present in most categories, with 16 different actions and activities. The second largest number of initiatives – 11, were reported by PGE. The actions reported by all the societies studied were mainly classified as participation in the life of the local community and the development of organizational governance. Actions within the reported group have ranged from ethical codes creation and CSR reporting, to work safety ensuring, training, environmental programs, education, consumer aids, or charitable efforts.

The criterion that most companies have met is the existence of corporate governance (fig. 3). The least popular was participation in the Global Compact initiative. We can only assume, that companies were hardly aware of such initiative existence.

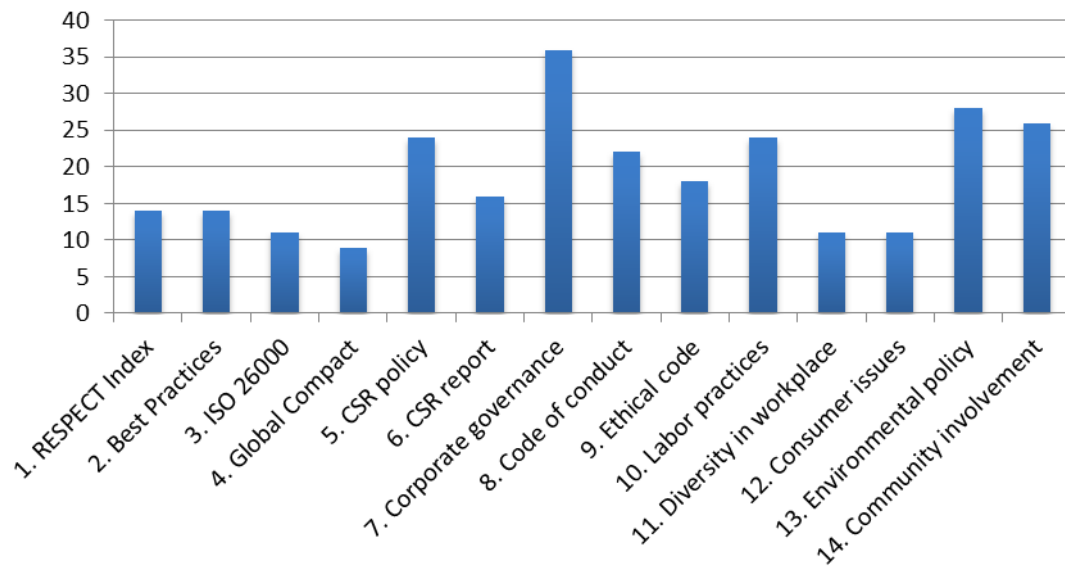


Fig. 3. Criteria fulfilment

Source: Own research and calculations.

The number of companies that ended up in the recent RESPECT Index is not impressive. Only 14 out of the 39 companies studied were registered. The reason is perhaps that the criteria of the index are quite strict and the Polish companies are not in a position to fully satisfy them. This demonstrates that their approach to CSR is still residual. The same number of companies examined (14) have found their place in the recent report of the Forum of Responsible Businesses "Responsible Business in Poland 2014. Good practices". In the group of companies that decided to report about their good practices, 3 were in the raw materials industry, 2 were energy suppliers, 2 were in the chemical and pharmaceutical industry, 3 were financial institutions and in every other industry (oil industry, transport, telecommunications and textiles) there was one representative.

Global Compact (GC), the largest international initiative to promote responsible business, was the least popular in the group of companies studied. Only nine companies met the criteria for this initiative. All these companies are also the ones most involved in CSR in general, according to all the evaluation criteria taken into account. This confirms the assumption that companies engaged in GC actions are those that show an exceptional concern to become a responsible company.

The introduction of the ISO 26000 standard to gain the reputation of a socially responsible company can have many advantages. This standard can help the company gain competitive advantage, attracts customers, consumers, partners and investors, raises the motivation and productivity of employees and makes the business more reliable and sustainable in the eyes of the authorities. Unfortunately, not many companies studied have taken this into consideration. Only 11 of the surveyed companies reported using it in their organization. Although most companies have ISO certifications in other organizational areas, ISO 26000 is often overlooked.

Regarding the existence of a sustainable policy within the companies in the sample, although the majority of firms have informed the public on their CSR policy sufficiently, there have been firms that did not live up to the expectations. Since CSR is not regulated by legislation that would impose a standardized approach to addressing this problem, this criterion has been particularly difficult to assess. Even though there were companies that did not mention CSR on their website, almost all of the studied enterprises disclosed at least some information on this subject. Yet, in many cases, published information was only a vague recognition of CSR, limited to the definition of the concept and a couple of meaningless paragraphs did not constitute real value. Consequently, in examining this criterion, the author had to refer to his personal judgment, which was then relatively subjective, in the process of separation between the existence of a genuine policy and superficial recognition by society.

Generally, companies that have had an official document about their CSR policy have also published, either in the same paper or as a separate issue, reports on their CSR activities. 16 out of 39 companies have managed to do so. Since there is no specific law on how these reports should be structured, the forms of CSR reporting vary from one company to another. Some companies presented their activities as a separate annual or biannual report. Other companies have incorporated an excerpt on their responsible practices in their annual activity reports. Regardless of form, all companies that have decided to report on their CSR initiatives have done so in a clear and comprehensive manner, adjusting it to the scale of their business.

When exploring the corporate governance, code of conduct and the ethical code in Polish listed companies one first have to mention WSE's rules in that matter. In order to strengthen the transparency of listed companies and improve the company-investor communication, in 2002, WSE has issued a first set of corporate governance principles called "Best Practices in Public Companies 2002". The document was elaborated by a number of financial specialists, in the cooperation with Best Practice Committee and Gdansk Institute for Market Economics for promotion and propagation of corporate governance principles and its practical application among companies listed on the WSE. Since then there have been several changes and updates to the document, with the newest version coming in force to from January 2016¹⁴. The application of the corporate governance rules described in this guide is voluntary, however listed companies are required to comply, and any accidental or persistent non-compliance should be followed by an immediate explanation of this fact. Thus, it should come as no surprise that this criterion has been met by the largest number of companies. 36 of the 39 assessed companies have put in place their rules of corporate governance, adapted to the suggestions of WSE. All 36 companies had the appropriate information on their site and referred to all the elements mentioned in the document.

In conjunction with the issue of corporate governance should be examined the existence and publication on the website of the company's code of conduct. The code of conduct was found in 22 companies. It should come as no surprise that all companies that have met this criterion have also filled the precedent for governance.

¹⁴ Warsaw Stock Exchange. Odpowiedzialność społeczna giełdy, 2015.

With respect to workplace initiatives undertaken by the voluntary employer, 24 companies have introduced distinct labor practices into their operations. Most practices have been strictly related to the industry and the character of the company's operations. In the raw materials and chemicals companies a great emphasis has been placed on work safety programs and training. In others, representing the financial sector or IT and telecommunications, there are many actions aimed at better integration and employee support. Naturally, companies that have met this criterion have also recorded practices that go beyond the particular sector. Many companies have introduced parent-friendly projects, either as a support for new parents or for disadvantaged families. There have also been some examples of corporate volunteerism. Very few companies have recorded good practices in the non-discriminatory policy and diversity area. Only 11 companies mentioned their attitude to the issue of discrimination in the workplace and/or diversity. Unfortunately, even within those 11 companies, the majority have limited themselves to the gender statistics of how many women and men they employ. The actions promoting diversity of women in the workplace were rarity.

A great number of the researched corporations, for instance the raw material industry firms, operate in the field where consumer and customer issues are not the priority for their work, as their sales are specific B2B tractions, at the beginning of the supply chain. That could partly be the reason for a low score in this category. Namely, only 11 examined companies have showed concern for consumer issues and among their most frequent practices are: call centers, private consultations, loyalty cards or various promotional gadgets. In many cases there have also been some involvement in the consumer education in a variety of forms, from magazines, to handbooks and guides on topics such as the environment or social and political issues. Sometimes also the promotion and advertisement have taken the form of customer education, like in the case of ENEA and its "Check who sells you energy".

The category related to environmental policy and sustainable development was the second in terms of its popularity with Polish companies. Most of the studied companies (28) had their environmental policy announced on the company's website or at least clearly explained their approach to environmental protection and described their commitment to sustainable development. Depending on the company's commitment, information was either an accumulation of statements and descriptions of the various innovations and processes that help the enterprise in sustainable development, or a detailed policy with explanation of undertaken actions. Some companies have put information in their CSR reports, others have created separate reports only for their environmental policy, such as PKN Orlen with its annual "Environmental Report". Interestingly, there have been corporations, almost exclusively in the raw material and chemical industry, that have published an information about company's environmental policy, without acknowledging CSR nor the responsible business. In those cases the environmental issues were somewhat replacing the CSR, being the only reference to corporate responsibility.

Participation in the development of the local community has been a popular way to integrate CSR into the study group – 26 companies have decided to engage in local

community issues, especially through charitable activities, sponsoring sport or culture. The actions varied from educational programs for adults or children and collaborations with universities, to organizing cultural, sport or educational events. Most popular were social campaigns and charitable actions, such as marathons, charity auctions, grant programs or fundraising. Firms would also gladly support governmental and non-governmental organizations with their efforts.

Many companies have decided to carry out activities corresponding to the type of their business activity. Thus a pharmaceutical company NEUCA has created a preventive health care support program for patients; PGE as an energy supplier has launched a number of initiatives related to the development of knowledge about nuclear energy, such as the Atom program for students and the "Mr. Thunder and Experiments" for children, or PGNiG that created an educational project for children "Geotalent". Numerous enterprises have also established their own foundations that would do the charitable work on their behalf. Corporations that decided to do so were among others PKP with PKP Group Foundation, Cyfrowy Polsat with its Foundation Podaruj Dzieciom Słońce, or ENEA Foundation.

The results of this research clearly demonstrate that the oil industry is the most conscious and active in the field of CSR. The two companies in our sample, PKN Orlen and Grupa Lotos, met almost all the evaluation criteria examined, despite the fact that Polish companies in this sector have never been involved in negative incidents and controversies, unlike some of their global counterparts. However, ambitious socially responsible company should look beyond its financial gain, trying to improve its structures and wellbeing of employees. That is a conclusion to which many Polish companies still have to come to, but once they do, they will be able take full advantage of CSR from the financial, organizational and philanthropic point of view.

5. Conclusions

Many scientists and practitioners find that the concept of responsible business and its realization are not effective. Some even talk about social irresponsibility¹⁵ and see CSR initiatives as a means of ephemeral redemption, because in reality all the prejudices caused to the society and the environment, are superior to the organizational capacity to repair them. In other words, world problems, such as corruption, human rights violations, or environmental destruction continue to occur, despite the growing promotion and widespread dissemination of CSR. Even if we see the impact of CSR on local communities and ecosystems, on a large scale global problems are not disappearing and with constant industrial development will even degenerate. A professor of environmental sciences, J. Hollender, quoted by Visser (2013)

¹⁵ Tench R., Sun W., Brian J.: Corporate Social Irresponsibility: A Challenging Concept. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2012, p. 7.

said: “Most sustainability and corporate responsibility programs are about being less bad rather than good. They are about selective and compartmentalized ‘programs’ rather than holistic and systemic change”¹⁶. The phenomenon observed by Hollender can easily be assigned to the assessed companies. The research shows that Polish corporations, with a small amount of some optimistic exceptions, are still not fully acquainted with the concept of CSR. Enterprises are either not implementing responsible business at all, or when trying to do so, are focusing on activities that help in improving company’s image. Instead of creating and implementing a sustainable and responsible business model that would be a positive contribution to the society, they rather focus on the appearances.

Finally, one needs to mention that, even though the results of the conducted research are far from optimistic, the general trend within the examined companies seems to be showing that Polish companies are changing their attitude towards CSR and are attempting to incorporate its rules. That was evidenced by the fact that during the works on this paper some of the researched companies, with poorest results, have already made changes in the field of responsible business, by adding information about their new CSR initiatives. That information seems to be encouraging, because to cite Paul Samuelson “A large corporation these days not only may engage in social responsibility, it had damn well better try to do so”¹⁷.

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¹⁶ Visser W.: CSR 2.0: Transforming Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility. Springer Science & Business Media, 2013.

¹⁷ Carroll A.: Corporate Social Responsibility, Evolution of a Definitional Construct, University of Georgia, 1999, p. 10.

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Appendix: Assessment table

SCORE		RI	RBF report	ISO26000	GC	CSR policy	CSR report	Governance	Code	Ethical code	Labor	Diversity	Consumer	Environ.	Community	
	Raw Material Industry															
1	Alchemia S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
9	Grupa Kęty S.A.	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
9	Jastrzębska Spółka Węglowa S.A.	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
13	KGHM Polska Miedź S.A.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
11	Lubelski Węgiel Bogdanka S.A.	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
12	Polskie Górnictwo Naftowe i Gazownictwo S.A.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
3	Sanockie Zakłady Przemysłu Gumowego Stomil Sanok S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
3	Stalprodukt S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
8		4	3	4	3	5	4	7	6	4	5	3	0	8	5	
	Energy Suppliers															
9	Apator S.A.	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
12	Enea S.A.	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
13	Energa S.A.	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
11	PGE Polska Grupa Energetyczna S.A.	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
10	Tauron Polska Energia S.A.	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
2	Zespół Elektrowni Pątnów-Adamów-Konin S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
10		4	2	2	3	5	5	6	5	3	5	2	4	6	5	
	Chemical and Pharmaceutical Industry															
9	Grupa Azoty S.A.	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
2	Boryszew S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
2	Ciech S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
8	Neuca S.A.	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
13	Pelion S.A.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
4	Synthos S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
6		2	2	1	1	3	2	3	3	4	5	2	1	5	4	
	Finance															
4	Getin Noble Bank S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
9	Giełda Papierów Wartościowych w Warszawie S.A.	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
1	Getin Holding S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	Kruk S.A.	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Powszechna Kasa Oszczędności Bank Polski S.A.	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
10	Powszechny Zakład Ubezpieczeń S.A.	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
6		2	3	1	0	3	1	6	3	3	3	1	2	3	4	
	Informatics and Telecommunication															
5	Asseco Poland S.A.	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
1	CD Projekt S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Cyfrowy Polsat S.A.	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
1	Midas S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Netia S.A.	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
4		0	1	0	0	3	1	5	1	0	3	1	2	2	3	
	Oil Industry															
12	Grupa Lotos S.A.	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
14	Polski Koncern Naftowy Orlen S.A.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
13		2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
	Transport															
1	Newag S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	PKP Cargo S.A.	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
3	Inter Cars S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
3		0	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	
	Fashion, Clothing and Jewellery															
7	LPP S.A.	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
7		0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	
	Postal Services															
6	Integer.PI S.A.	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
6		0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
	Electronics Production															
2	Amica Wronki S.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2		0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
39 TOTAL		14	14	11	9	24	16	35	22	18	24	11	11	28	26	