

CERTIFICATION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Abstract

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Corporate social responsibility is in the focus of many companies in recent years. It becomes a way of sustainability for many companies on the market. It expresses a voluntary commitment of companies to behave responsibly to their surroundings within three pillars: economic, social and environmental one. The issue of social responsibility is developing in many European countries and European Commission is aiming at support for national CSR strategies. There are countries with highly developed CSR, on the other hand there are countries, such as the Czech Republic, where a public policy is being reformed, including discussions about CSR. This paper supports the idea that states should encourage social responsibility, as it allows businesses to become sustainable which leads to the stability of the economy. CSR activities can be focused on philanthropy, the care of the employees, the environment and transparency of economic activities. The process of CSR certification is important in the development of CSR in the Czech Republic. It allows companies to demonstrate their activities and visible achievements in this field. This paper describes the most popular types of certifications that are used in the Czech Republic and standards that do not have certification purposes, but they are very important. These are standards SA 8000, ISO 26000, ISO 9001, ISO 9004, ISO 9000, ISO 14001, ISO 14004, OHSAS 18001, IQNet SR 10 and the National Quality Policy.

CSR, corporate social responsibility, certification, SA 8000, ISO 26000, ISO 9001, philanthropy

Corporate social responsibility is currently much discussed topic not only in business area. In fact, corporate social responsibility means voluntary commitment of companies to behave responsibly to its surroundings. Every company moves in space, which is defined by its business partners, suppliers, customers, industry, people outside of the company and the company's impact on them. „Organization, which strives for sustainable development has to work permanently with financial, environmental and social aspects in term of the impact of their activities“ (CQS, 2013e).

There are countries with already developed CSR implementation whereas for example the Czech Republic is in the process of increased attention to this issue with several new initiatives being discussed. Some authors claim that the CSR concept may become very important for society and therefore there should be a clear strategy for

implementation of CSR goals in companies as well as clear certification guidelines (HUSTED, B., ALLEN, D., 2006; KULDOVÁ, L., 2010, 2012; PAVLÍK, M., BĚLČÍK, M. *et al.*, 2010; LOUCHE, C. *et al.*, 2010).

The company aims to behave responsibly to the stakeholders. Social responsibility is currently one opportunity for the company to improve competitiveness. „Customers and consumers want to guarantee, that purchased products originate in acceptable working environment. New strategy based on sustainable development of human resources could achieve success on international markets...The companies consider degree of risk. If suppliers wouldn't meet basic requirements related to working conditions of employees, in such case their name would become the target of public critic and then they would lose their position on the market“ (Ekvalita, 2012).

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has appeared in the 50s of the 20th century. It is important for the management as a way of building relationships with partners leading to improve reputation and the credibility of the company. The issue of CSR is based on activities directed into three levels, namely into the economic activity of the company, social development and environmental protection. An important feature of CSR is volunteering. Enterprises perform lots of activities and CSR can be for them voluntarily adopted concept of behaviour that is beyond legal requirements.

Situation of CSR in European Union

The turning point of EU action in the field of CSR was the adoption of the Lisbon strategy in March 2000, which aimed to transform the EU by 2010 to the most competitive and dynamic economy, capable of sustainable economic growth with more jobs and greater social cohesion. The Green Paper from 2001 is important in the field of CSR as well. The aim of this book was to open a debate about the concept of CSR and lay the foundations for building a CSR strategy within the EU (Franc *et al.*, 2006).

The issue of corporate social responsibility is significantly a voluntary behaviour, in many European countries adjusted by different regulations, without disturbing the principle of volunteering. Corporate social responsibility is certainly also the state's interest because CSR helps companies to become sustainable in the long term periods, leading to the stability of the economy and its actors. For this reason, the state should encourage enterprises to become more socially responsible.

The European Commission is trying to motivate national states to implement national strategies for CSR. There are European countries where the national policies of social responsibility are highly developed and on the other hand there are countries with no national strategy for CSR. The Czech Republic belongs to the second group and its national strategy for CSR is still forming and is frequently a discussed issue.

The certification process related to CSR in companies plays an important role in the development of CSR area and the national policy of social responsibility. Certification of companies in the field of CSR allows companies to publicly demonstrate their volunteer activities and make visible their successes in this area. Certification can help them to cope with the recommendations for relations between enterprises within the European Union prepared by the European Commission.

Situation of CSR in the Czech Republic

Currently, a lot of companies in the Czech Republic have decided to behave responsibly to its surroundings. These companies also use various tools through which the public is informed about their activities. Transmission of this information through websites, annual reports or press release,

is frequent. One of the options of the company how to inform its partners is, that the company engages itself in social responsibility and associated activities through certification. There are several certificates that relate to various aspects of social responsibility or a social responsibility in general. Some of them are not widely used in the Czech Republic, others have only local application in selected countries. Most popular types of certifications used in the Czech Republic including some standards, which do not have certification character, however they are very important for business subjects for implementing elements of the CSR in their activities, will be mentioned in the following text (QEMS, 2013).

In the Czech Republic, there are currently implemented the following types of certifications and standards: SA 8000, ISO 26000, ISO 9001, ISO 9004, ISO 9000, ISO 14001, ISO 14004, ČSN OHSAS 18001, IQNet SR 10. There is also the National quality policy organizing project of the National program of conformity assessment for management system of corporate social responsibility, which has also the certification character.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kinds of Certificates for CSR in the Czech Republic

Standard SA8000

Internationally recognized reference norm for the field of social responsibility is standard SA8000 which is recognized the most for socially responsible management of human resources. „SA8000 certification is available now through an extensive network IQNet involving fifty countries. In the Czech Republic the partner organisation is CQS. In collaboration with partner organizations IQNet can assist organisations to demonstrate their commitment to ethically sustainable business environment. SA8000 standard is based on international standards relating to working conditions, which are contained in International Labour Organization convention, in Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention of the Rights of the Child. Main focus of standard SA8000 is aimed at improving conditions around the world“ (CQS, 2013e).

Standard SA8000 was issued by international nongovernmental organization Social Accountability International (SAI) which is located in New York. Social Accountability International grants permission to certification bodies, which also carry out audits in accordance with SA8000 standard. „SA8000 standard is used for certification for an independent assessment of the organization's ability to perform the requirements, for assessment of the customers, for fulfilling the requirements of the regulation, organization's own requirements established for the field of the working environment

within the effective functioning of all processes and improvement of the management system“ (Ekvalita, 2012).

SA8000 certification can be done after the compliance with requirements of international standard SA8000, which is issued only by independent certification body credited by SAI. Standard SA8000 contains all the requirements related to the CSR. This standard allows to develop, maintain and enforce the policy and procedures of social responsibility in nine areas: working hours, health and safety, prevention of discrimination, work of children and adolescents, forced labour, freedom of association, restriction of disciplinary practices, remuneration to meet basic needs and control system for continuous improvement (Ekvalita.cz, 2012; SA8000, 2008).

For example, arrangements relating to working hours must be in accordance with applicable laws and industry standards for working hours and holidays. “Usual working week, without overtime, must be determined by law, but it mustn’t exceed 48 hours. One day off after every six consecutive days of work must be provided to employees” (CQS, 2013e). Cases, where national legislation enables greater working time, or where freely negotiated collective agreement enables averaging of working hours including adequate time for rest, are the exception. „All overtime work must be voluntary, mustn’t exceed 12 hours a week and mustn’t be required at periodic intervals“ (CQS, 2013e). Overtime work is allowed in the case of interest in meeting short-term business demands.

In the area of health and safety at work the company must ensure safe and healthy working environment and must take effective arrangement to prevent possible accidents or health damage of employees resulting from work, work-related or occurring during the work, and further it must minimize the cause of risk which lies in the work environment. „The company shall appoint a representative of top management, who will be responsible for ensuring safe and healthy work environment for all employees, and will implement elements of health and safety requirements described in this standard“ (CQS, 2013e). The company must also provide regularly instructions on health and safety and keep a written record of all accidents that occurred in the workplace. The company will ensure protective equipment for workers at its expense, in the case of an accident at work will provide first aid and will provide follow-up treatment. The company also commits to assess all the risks resulting from the work to new and expectant mothers. “The company shall ensure access to clean toilets, to drinking water and possibly a facility for food storage” (CQS, 2013e). Common facilities provided to employees must be always clean, safe and meet basic needs of employees. Employees have the right to leave workplace without previous request because of imminent serious danger.

„The company isn’t interested or doesn’t support discrimination in hiring, compensation, access to education, promotion, termination or retirement of employees based on race, national or social origin, caste, origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, marital status, membership in trade unions, political opinion, age or any other condition that could lead to discrimination. The company mustn’t tolerate any conduct that is threatening, abusive, exploitive or sexual coercive, including gestures, language and physical contact, in the workplace or in the community, and other facilities provided by the company for the use of personnel“ (CQS, 2013e).

The company mustn’t be involved in support of child labour. The company must create, document, maintain and communicate effectively with all staff and stakeholders the policy and written procedures for remediation on children, who have found themselves in the situation of child labour. The company must provide adequate financial support enabling such children to remain in school until they legally stop being classified as children (reaching 15 years or more if the minimum age for school attendance or work is set up higher). The company can employ young workers (worker being in the age of a child or younger than 18 years), but if these young workers are subjected to school attendance, they can work only at times when the classes have ended. The time spent at school and at work mustn’t exceed 10 hours, young worker mustn’t work longer than 8 hours, he/she mustn’t work over night too (CQS, 2013e).

The company mustn’t occupy itself with or support using forced and obligatory labour. Neither the company nor any person supplying labour to the company mustn’t withhold any part of the salary, assets or documents in order to force these people to continue in work for company. Employees have the right to leave work area after standard working hours and be able to terminate their employment providing that they give their employer rational reasoning. Neither the company nor any person supplying labours to the company mustn’t occupy itself with human trafficking (CQS, 2013e).

All employees have the right to establish, join and organize trade unions of their choice and collectively negotiate on their behalf with the company. The company must respect this right and it must effectively inform the employees. The company mustn’t intervene in any case in the management, operation or administration of the organization of these employees or intervene in collective bargaining. The company will ensure that representatives of employees and personnel involved in the organization were not subjected to discrimination, harassment or intimidation. The company treats all employees with dignity and respect. The company doesn’t occupy itself and doesn’t tolerate using corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion and verbal abuse of workers.

No hard or inhuman treatment is allowed (CQS, 2013e).

The company must respect the right of employees to have a level of subsistence and it must ensure that all the wages paid for normal working week meet at least legal or industrial minimum standards which must be sufficient enough to meet the basic needs of workers and must provide them with non-prescription income. The company shall ensure that deductions from wages were not made for disciplinary purposes. All overtime must be paid with a premium rate, which is defined by national regulations. The company must not use only working contractual arrangement if used several successive short-term contracts (CQS, 2013e).

Top management must determine in a written form social responsible policy and working conditions policy and publish these policies in noticeable and easily visible location in area of the company, further it must inform workers that the company has voluntarily committed to meet the requirements of SA8000 standard. This policy must be adapted to all requirements of this standard, it must be adapted to national and other regulation and requirements to which the company has committed, and the policy must be regularly reviewed to be continually improved (CQS, 2013e).

Benefits of certification for companies lay mainly in the following points:

- implementation, maintenance and enforcement of policies and procedures in this area,
- evidence that policies, procedures and practices are in accordance with the requirements of this standard,
- improve its position in a competitive environment which is becoming a „competing values“,
- fulfilment of the requirement of foreign customer to declare working conditions,
- improved communication of employees with employers regarding work environment,
- efficient and reliable supply chain
- measurable summary of organization's achieved results in social responsibility
- better management of risks associated with the work, reputation in the labour market (Ekvalita.cz, 2012).

Guidance on Social Responsibility: ISO 26000

The issue of corporate social responsibility is treated by many international standards; between them is the substantial modification of ISO standard, more precisely ISO 26000 Guidance on social responsibility standard. The Czech technical standard ČSN ISO 26000 – Guidance on social responsibility was issued, which has the same status as the official international version. This international standard contains guidelines to the basic principles of social responsibility, guidance on ways of integration of the socially responsible behaviour into the organization. International ISO 26000 standard provides instructions to the basic

principles of corporate social responsibility, to main subjects and matters falling within the field of CSR and ways of implementing socially responsible behaviour into existing strategies, systems, practices and processes of the organization. The ISO 26000 standard is addressed to organizations of all sizes – large and small, in developing and developed countries. This standard is addressed to voluntary using; it is not indented for certification, rulemaking or for use in the field of contractual relations. International ISO 26000 standard provides the organizations with a manual how to integrate socially responsible behaviour into already existing strategies, systems, procedures and processes; the standard also emphasizes the importance of results and performance improvement. This standard primarily defines the basic concepts associated with the given topic.

ISO 26000 standard explains the terms and definition related to the issue of CSR, further it occupies itself with current trends in social responsibility, characteristics of social responsibility and government relations to the CSR. The principles of social responsibility including transparency, ethical behaviour, stakeholders or human rights, are also explained. The standard explains all the aspects which are important for the acceptance of social responsibility by the company, for example management of organization, labour relations, the environment, correct manufacturing processes or civil engagement and community development.

Quality Management: ISO 9001:2009, ISO 9004:2010, ISO 9000:2006

The Czech Republic has implemented many other standards which are very close to the issue of social responsibility. One of them is the ISO 9001:2009 standard dealing with quality management. „Standard ISO 9001 specifies requirements for a quality management which can organizations use for internal application, certification or for contractual purposes with suppliers and customers. It is used in certification for independent assessment of the organization's ability to fulfil the requirements stated in the norm ISO 9001; it is used to assess customers, to compliance regulations, to set own requirements for the efficient functioning of all processes and continuous improvement of the quality management system“ (CQS, 2013).

Another similar standard for quality management is ISO 9004:2010 dealing with the sustainable success of the organization. „The ČSN EN ISO 9004 standard gives an instruction to a wider range of objectives of a quality management system than does the ISO 9001 standard. It is mainly concentrated on continuous improvement of performance and efficiency of the whole organization. It is used for continuous performance improvement of organizations when the top management exceeds the requirements of ČSN EN ISO 9001“ (CQS, 2013). Another norm dealing with quality management which is in the centre of our attention, is the standard

ISO 9000:2006 on Quality Management System – Fundamentals and vocabulary. “The standard ČSN EN ISO 9000 gives the foundations and principles of quality management and quality management system terminology. It is used to explain the terms used in the quality management system and their interactions” (CQS, 2013).

Benefits of certification of the quality management system according to ČSN EN ISO 9001:2009 are for example in the increased quality of services to demanding customers and in the possibility to obtain new customers considering the increase of their satisfaction. Certified companies according to ISO 9001 can also compete for large contracts, particularly in the public administration, effectively using the set of processes to increase sales, profit, market share and increase the satisfaction of the owners. The introduction of ISO 9001 guarantees the stability of the production process and thus stable and high-quality services and products, showing the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the quality management system by independent party. The standard also brings improvement of management system, improvement of the company's organization structure, improvement of the order and increase of efficiency in the whole organization. The ISO 9001 standard also leads to the costs optimization by reducing operating costs, reducing the costs of defective products, savings in raw materials, energy and other resources. Subsequently, it can cause the increase of public trust and of state control bodies. It can also build regulating system reacting flexibly to changes of customer requirements, legislative requirements and changes within the organization.

Environmental Management: ISO 14001:2005, ISO 14004:2005

The standard relating to the issue of social responsibility is certainly the standard ISO 14001:2005 – Environmental Management system-Requirements with guidance for use. “The ISO 14001 specifies requirements on environmental management system which organizations can use for internal application, certification or for contractual purposes with suppliers and customers. It is used in certification for an independent assessment of the organization's ability to establish and maintain procedures to identify the environmental aspects of its activities, services and products, which can be controlled and which may be expected to have some influence on compliance of legal and other requirements, its own set of requirements for the efficient functioning of all processes and the continuous improvement of the environmental management system” (CQS, 2013).

Another related standard is ISO 14004:2005 – Environmental Management System – General Guidelines on principles, system and supporting techniques. „The ISO 14004 gives guidance on a wider range of environmental management than it is provided by ČSN EN ISO 14001. Its attention

is focused on the continuous improvement of performance and efficiency across the organization“ (CQS, 2013). The benefits of this standard are primarily to ensure and to improve the care for the environment, to raise the awareness of own responsibility, transparency and risk reduction, employee motivation, early recognition of problem with the environment, more attention to the implementation of legal and other requirements, competitive advantage, management tools and appropriate use of resources (CQS, 2013).

Safety and Health Management at Work: OHSAS 18001:2008

The next standard, OHSAS 18001:2008 – Management Safety and Health at Work, affects as well the social responsibility in a company. “The standard OHSAS 18001 is designed to be applicable for all types and sizes of organizations and the standard's structure follows the standards ČSN EN ISO 9001 and ČSN EN ISO 14001 in order to create a system of management of health and safety at work in parallel with the system of quality management and environmental management system in the organization. Environmental management system is based on the analysis of the environmental aspects while the application of OHSAS 18001 is based on risk analysis and minimization of risks. The main purpose of the norm is to lead the organization to propose and implement measures which, wherever possible, will eliminate hazards and reduce the danger or isolate employees from it. In case this is not possible, working activities must be planned and managed through organizational measures so that its performance will be safe and not health threatening” (CQS, 2013).

The benefits of this norm are related to the improvement of safety and health protection at work being adopted at all levels in the organization, especially on top management. Furthermore, systematic risk reductions are demonstrated, more precisely threats endangering safety and health of all personnel influenced by actions, products or organization's services. Other benefits of this standard include: minimizing the costs associated with accidents in the workplace, demonstration of the commitment to meet legal and regulatory requirements relating to health and safety at work and to build system reacting flexibly to changes in laws and regulations, safety requirements as well as changes within the organization, such as new technologies or organizational changes (CQS, 2013).

New Initiative: IQNet SR 10

Recently, there are many announcements and public commitments of organizations to promote social responsibility in their business. Every bigger firm is aware of the fact, that customers are sensitive to the image of the company; therefore they try to perform their activities in a socially responsible manner. “National and international initiatives started to emerge whose aim is to summarize all the

necessary requirements that a socially responsible organization must fulfil. Such initiative is a new product IQNet SR 10...is compatible with other management systems such as ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001. It is therefore ideal for integration in organizations that have these systems already established; we can of course implement this specification in any organization" (CQS, 2013).

IQNet SR 10 is a certification of a Social Responsibility Management System. When creating IQNet SR 10 mainly standard ISO 26000 was used, which serves as a guide to comprehensive understanding and accurate fulfilment of all the requirements given by the specification. SR 10 IQNet obtains the principles and basic themes of ISO 26000 such as: "accountability, transparency, ethical behaviour, respect for stakeholder interests, and respect for the rule of law, respect for international standards of behaviour and respect for human rights...the main requirement...is to ensure that an organization identifies its impacts resulting from their decisions and actions. The company must try to eliminate all significant impacts. These impacts must be assessed with regard to stakeholders and sustainable development. The organization must know all its stakeholders who are affected by the activities of the company. ...". (CQS, 2013) With the introduction of SR 10 IQNet, a company must ensure the availability of resources, human resources and specialized knowledge, organizational infrastructure, technology or financial resources and appoint a management representative for social responsibility who will examine the social responsibility management system. The company must also identify all of its legal requirements as well as its environmental aspects and evaluate compliance with them, set functions, responsibilities and powers to monitor, measure, analyze and continuously improve the performance of the management system of social responsibility, to take corrective and preventive measures in relation to social responsibility and conduct internal audits.

This new initiative SR 10 IQNet is focused on social responsibility and especially on stakeholders, who are as usually in the centre of the attention. It defines nine groups of stakeholders and requirements which must be taken into consideration by the organizations. Among the mentioned stakeholders belong:

1. owners, shareholders and investors,
2. employees,
3. customers, users and consumers,
4. product suppliers, service providers and partners,
5. alliance, to which the organization reports and cooperation that follows,
6. competitors,
7. state / public administration,
8. local community and society as a whole,
9. environment. (CQS, 2013).

The price for audit and a subsequent certificate is set by agreement. This amount depends on the size and organizational structure of the company, on the location, on number of branches and their location, on the nature and the scope of management system and the degree of assistance to advisor in the management system. For many companies this certification process is quite expensive. Among the certified companies in the Czech Republic we can find Nestlé, Sony, Toyota, Shell, Epson, Lomin, APP, Samsung, Karlovarský porcelán with SA 8000 certificate. Others include GEODIS BRNO, spol. s r. o., AQUASYS, spol. s r. o., VERKON, s. r. o., POHL cz, a. s., Mark2 Corporation Czech, a. s., ALGON, a. s., GC Systém, a. s., Metrostav, a. s., Skanska, a. s., Stavební společnost Jaroslav Oršuliak, a. s., THERMIA-BAU, a. s., CENTRA, a. s., ALBERT-AHOLD Czech Republic, a. s., AGC GLASS EUROPE, Bialelli, AURA, s. r. o., EURO, s. r. o., FATO, a. s. The company CAR CLUB Ltd. received international IQNet and CQS National Certificate on Management System of Social Responsibility as specified IQNet SR 10.

National Quality Policy

The only existing CSR effort of the government in the Czech Republic so far was to control the creation of the National Quality Policy (now the National Policy on Quality). This is a document which was accepted by the government and it contains intentions, aims, objectives, methods and tools influencing the quality of products, services and activities within the national policy and public administration for achieving and maintaining competitiveness on the European and world markets. National Quality Policy management was entrusted to the Ministry of Industry and Trade. National Quality Policy has set out priorities, among which we can find increasing competitiveness of Czech manufacturers production, providers of service accessibility, harmonization of Czech legislation with EU legislation in the area of public interest, improving living conditions, harmonization of technical regulations and standards, motivating businesses to implement programs for sustainable improvement of the quality of management and production.

"The Council of Quality decided in 2010 to give the possibility of administration of national document to domestic organizations. It did so by the virtue of their initial role and an increasing demand for an acceptable form of activities demonstrating social responsibility" (Enviweb, 2011). A project was subsequently prepared, whose output was to accredit certification bodies by the Czech Accreditation Institute (CAI) and conduct a pilot testing certification in specific companies. "The project was discussed under the name National program of assessment of social responsibility management system, agreed in other relevant expertise sections of Quality Council of the Czech Republic and was submitted to the

Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing, the Czech Accreditation Institute, Business Council and the Ministry of Industry and Trade. All these institutions, excluding the Ministry of Industry and Trade, recommended to the Quality Council to adopt this document. The basic premise is voluntariness without state interference into these activities" (Enviweb, 2011).

The basic advantage of the described program is its compatibility with international standards for corporate social responsibility, regardless of whether it is a demonstration of relevant activities by obtaining a certificate, auditor's certificate or it has the character of CSR implementation process. The most significant is the fact, that it affects the entire management system. It is quite simple, it can be used to complement already established administrative system of documentation and could be used in small and medium enterprises. Project requirements are divided into these chapters: Management System, Social Responsibility, Management Responsibility, Stakeholders, Economic Aspects, Environmental Aspects, Social Aspects, Resource Management, Communication and Measuring, Analysis and Improvement. The advantage of the National program of conformity assessment is its usability not only in the business sector, but also in public administration. This document sets out rules of organization's behaviour from the perspective of philosophy 3P (Profit-People-Planet). It recommends to implement and to certify management systems of social responsibility. Quality Council has developed evaluation methodology of social responsibility in organizations, which became the basis of the Czech National Award for social responsibility. This national program specifies the requirements of the management system of social responsibility and is applicable to all types and sizes of organizations, business and the public sector. "The concept of social responsibility management system adopted in this document is based on the principles and structure of the other standards for management systems and it is conceived in terms

of generally accepted principle that organizations systematically create and implement its policy and targets of social responsibility beyond legislative requirements to ensure an integrated, balanced and equal treatment in the three pillars-economic, environmental and social" (NPJ, 2011).

Social responsibility in the sense of this National Programme includes such behaviour principles, which are specified in many international documents. These behaviour principles should be the objectives of the organization and should contribute to the sustainable development and promotion of the quality of life for organization's employees. These are the following principles: accountability, transparency, ethical behaviour, meeting the needs of stakeholders, the rule of law, international standards and human rights.

CONCLUSION

Certification of companies in the field of corporate social responsibility is very desirable. The most important motivations generally are increasing loyalty of employees, improvement of the company's image and the subsequent increase in competitiveness. The following other motivations could be considered as well: an impartial view on type of business and its impact on society or the environment, an effective communication with business partners to fully answer their needs, an increase in social responsibility of management companies or the use of certification to enhance the status of a socially responsible and sustainable business.

Thinking about the future of CSR, there is expected to be an innovative approach. Three main future trends have been identified by LOUCHE, C. *et al.* (2010): the convergence of international CSR standards, the management of costs related to the implementation of CSR and opportunities for innovation. There is no doubt that the convergence of international CSR standards is on the increase and the Czech Republic is part of this European process.

SUMMARY

The aim of this paper is to show increasing importance of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) and certification processes related to it. CSR is voluntary commitment to behave responsibly to the surroundings within economic, social and environmental pillars. The issue of social responsibility is developing in many European countries, European Commission is supporting the development of national CSR strategies and the Czech Republic is also involved. This paper supports the idea that states should encourage social responsibility, as it allows businesses to become sustainable which leads to the stability of the economy. CSR activities can be focused on philanthropy, the care of the employees, the environment, the transparency of economic activities and other issues. The process of certification is important in the development of CSR in the Czech Republic. It allows companies to demonstrate their activities and visible achievements in this field.

This paper describes the most popular types of certifications that are used in the Czech Republic and standards that do not have certification purposes, but they are very important. These are standards SA 8000, ISO 26000, ISO 9001, ISO 9004, ISO 9000, ISO 14001, ISO 14004, OHSAS 18001, IQNet SR 10 and the National Quality Policy.

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