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## Corporate Social Responsibility Practices Amid Political and Economic Transformation in Europe

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**Abstract.** Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has evolved over time, influenced by political, social, and economic changes, leading to a growing recognition of the importance of addressing social and environmental issues. Many companies now incorporate sustainability and social responsibility into their business strategies, but the role of CSR can vary across regions. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the need for businesses to prioritize social and environmental issues. Methodology used secondary data analysis for emphasizing CSR practices of companies and CSR initiatives that proved to be a façade for corporate greenwashing. With this research the author intends to raise awareness over the social and environmental problems that should be seen as a matter of concern for individuals and organizations of all kind. The role of CSR in sustainable development is complex and multifaceted, and ongoing efforts are required to promote responsible business practices.

**Keywords.** corporate social responsibility, Economic Social Governance, greenwashing, CSR practices

### Introduction

The evolution of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices has been influenced by political, social, and economic transformations in Europe and the world, leading to growing recognition of the importance of businesses addressing social and environmental issues. Since the 20th century, CSR has gained acceptance, with many companies now incorporating sustainability and social responsibility into their business strategies. However, the role of CSR can vary significantly across regions, reflecting differences in social, cultural, and economic contexts. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of addressing social and environmental issues and has created new challenges and opportunities for businesses to engage in responsible business practices. Despite this, some corporations face criticism for their CSR initiatives, which are seen as a façade for corporate greenwashing.

The role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in sustainable development is complex and multifaceted and requires ongoing efforts to promote responsible business practices. NGOs play a crucial role in holding companies accountable for their actions and can monitor, lobby, and raise awareness about issues related to corporate responsibility. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for businesses to prioritize social and

environmental issues and has created new challenges and opportunities for responsible business practices.

### **Theoretical context**

The evolution of political, social, and economic transformation in Europe and the world has had a significant impact on the applicability of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices. In recent decades, there has been a growing recognition of the need for businesses to address social and environmental issues, as well as to promote sustainable development.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has a long and complex history, which can be traced back to the early 20th century when businesses began to recognize the importance of social responsibility. However, it wasn't until the 1950s and 1960s that the modern concept of CSR began to take shape, largely as a response to growing public concern over the negative social and environmental impacts of business activities.

During the 1970s, the concept of CSR gained greater attention because of the publication of several influential books, including “Corporate Social Responsibility” by Howard R. Bowen, which argued that businesses had a responsibility to address social and environmental issues as part of their core operations. This period also saw the emergence of socially responsible investing, which encouraged investors to consider the social and environmental impact of their investments.

In the 1980s and 1990s, CSR began to gain more widespread acceptance as a business practice, as companies began to adopt codes of conduct and establish social and environmental reporting mechanisms. This was also a time when businesses began to face increasing pressure from stakeholders to address issues such as human rights, labour practices, and environmental sustainability.

Since the turn of the 21st century, CSR has continued to evolve, with many companies now incorporating sustainability and social responsibility into their business strategies. This has been driven in part by the increasing recognition of the importance of sustainability for long-term business success, as well as by the growing awareness of the urgent need to address global social and environmental challenges such as climate change, poverty, and inequality.

Overall, CSR plays an important role in promoting responsible business practices and contributing to sustainable development. By adopting socially and environmentally responsible policies and practices, businesses can create value not only for their shareholders but also for their stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, and the environment. CSR can also help to build trust and reputation, enhance brand value, and foster innovation and competitiveness.

However, the role of CSR can vary significantly across regions, reflecting differences in social, cultural, and economic contexts. For example, in developed countries, CSR is often seen as a way for businesses to address social and environmental challenges and enhance their reputation, whereas in developing countries, it may be more closely tied to poverty reduction, community development, and environmental sustainability.

Certain corporations receive backlash for their CSR initiatives because their motive is not genuine sustainability efforts, rather it is just a façade for corporate greenwashing.

Greenpeace defines “greenwash” as the deceptive practice of conveying misleading information about a company's environmental practices or the environmental benefits of its products or services to consumers. While oil, car manufacturing, coal, and nuclear companies are the main perpetrators of greenwashing according to Greenpeace's definition, many businesses operating in other fields have also been caught using environmental issues to

generate publicity and increase sales. The actual number of such businesses is likely to be much higher than what is currently known. (Greenpeace)

### **Methodology**

The methodology used is analysis of secondary data found on various platforms. Firstly, was made a introduction in the concept context, explaining importance of the topic. Following were mentioned the way the political, social, economic, and pandemic context influenced the practices of CSR.

Were discussed good examples of CSR practices in companies followed by greenwashing accusations and scandals related with the same companies and conclusions of this analysis.

### **The political, social, economic, and pandemic impact on corporate social responsibility practices**

The evolution of political, social, and economic transformation in Europe and the world has had a significant impact on the applicability of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices. In recent decades, there has been a growing recognition of the need for businesses to address social and environmental issues, as well as to promote sustainable development. This has been driven in part by a range of political, social, and economic transformations, including the following:

1. **Political Transformation:** The political landscape in Europe and the world has undergone significant transformation in recent decades. This includes the transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic systems in many countries, as well as the growing importance of international institutions and agreements in shaping global governance. These transformations have created new opportunities and challenges for businesses to engage in CSR practices. For example, the emergence of international human rights norms and standards has put pressure on businesses to address issues such as labour rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability (Gond & Crane, 2010).

2. **Social Transformation:** Social changes, such as demographic shifts, changing consumer expectations, and growing social movements, have also had an impact on the applicability of CSR practices. For example, the increasing importance of millennials as consumers and employees has led to a growing demand for socially responsible products and companies (Deloitte, 2018). Similarly, the rise of social movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement has put pressure on businesses to address issues such as racial justice and diversity (Crane, Matten, & Spence, 2019).

3. **Economic Transformation:** The economic landscape has also undergone significant transformation in recent decades, with globalization and the rise of new technologies transforming business models and supply chains. These changes have created new opportunities for businesses to engage in CSR practices, such as by promoting sustainable supply chains and circular economy models (European Commission, 2020). However, they have also created new challenges, such as increased competition and the need to balance short-term profitability with long-term sustainability.

**The COVID-19 pandemic** has had a significant influence on the implementation of CSR practices by businesses. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of addressing social and environmental issues and has created new challenges and opportunities for businesses to

engage in responsible business practices. Some of the key impacts of the pandemic on CSR include:

1. **Increased focus on employee well-being:** The pandemic has put a spotlight on the importance of protecting employee health and safety. Businesses have been under increased pressure to provide adequate protective equipment, implement social distancing measures, and support remote working arrangements to help limit the spread of the virus (Dhiman & Sheoran, 2020). Additionally, businesses have increased their support for employee mental health and well-being by offering resources such as counselling services and mental health days.

- The multinational consumer goods company Unilever implemented a global program to provide its 155,000 employees with access to mental health resources and support, including counseling services and virtual meditation and yoga classes.

- The telecommunications company Vodafone provided its employees with access to a mental health app, which includes resources such as stress management and meditation exercises.

- The retail giant Walmart implemented social distancing measures in its stores, such as limiting the number of customers allowed in the store at one time and implementing one-way aisles to help reduce the spread of the virus.

2. **Communicating transparently:** The pandemic has highlighted the importance of engaging with stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, and local communities. Businesses have been under pressure to communicate clearly and transparently about their response to the pandemic and to work collaboratively with stakeholders to address the challenges posed by the crisis (Vargo & Lusch, 2020).

This includes regular updates to customers and suppliers about changes to business operations, safety measures implemented to protect employees and customers, and how the business is supporting local communities during the crisis.

- The cosmetics company L'Oreal provided regular updates to its customers and suppliers about changes to its business operations during the pandemic, including how it was implementing safety measures to protect its employees and customers.

- The technology company Microsoft launched a COVID-19 data tracker, which provides regular updates on the spread of the virus around the world and includes information on how businesses and individuals can protect themselves.

- The coffee company Starbucks communicated its response to the pandemic with customers through its website and social media channels, providing information on store closures, safety measures, and how the company was supporting its employees during the crisis.

3. **Supporting local communities:** Businesses have also been involved in supporting local communities during the pandemic, including providing donations to local hospitals and healthcare workers, supporting local small businesses, and partnering with non-profit organizations to address community needs.

- The automotive company Ford partnered with GE Healthcare to produce ventilators for hospitals in the United States, and also provided donations of personal protective equipment to hospitals and first responders.

- The clothing retailer H&M donated \$500,000 to the World Health Organization's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund and partnered with non-profit organizations to distribute personal protective equipment to healthcare workers in affected areas.

- The fast-food company McDonald's donated millions of dollars to local communities around the world to support COVID-19 relief efforts, including donations of food, supplies, and financial support to healthcare workers and first responders.

4. **Increased attention to supply chain sustainability:** The pandemic has exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains and has highlighted the need for greater attention to supply chain sustainability. Businesses have been under pressure to ensure that their supply chains are resilient and that they are working with suppliers who are committed to responsible business practices, such as ensuring fair labour conditions and environmental sustainability (Liu et al., 2020). Some businesses have implemented sustainable supply chain practices, such as sourcing products locally to reduce transportation emissions, increasing the use of renewable energy in operations, and working with suppliers who are committed to ethical and sustainable practices.

- The food and beverage company PepsiCo announced a goal to source 100% renewable electricity across its global operations by 2030, and increased its investment in sustainable packaging solutions to reduce waste.

- The clothing company Patagonia shifted its focus to selling products made from sustainable materials, such as recycled polyester, and committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2025.

- The technology company Google announced a goal to operate on carbon-free energy by 2030 and committed to investing in sustainable infrastructure, such as wind and solar farms, to help achieve this goal.

5. **Investing in healthcare research and development:** Some businesses in the healthcare industry have increased their investments in research and development to address the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, pharmaceutical companies have invested in developing vaccines and treatments for the virus, and medical equipment manufacturers have increased production of critical supplies such as ventilators.

- The pharmaceutical company Pfizer developed one of the first vaccines for COVID-19 and has committed to manufacturing and distributing billions of doses around the world.

- The medical equipment manufacturer Medtronic increased production of ventilators and other critical medical supplies to help meet the demand caused by the pandemic.

- The biotechnology company Moderna developed another vaccine for COVID-19 and is working to develop additional vaccines and treatments for other diseases.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on CSR practices, highlighting the importance of addressing social and environmental issues and the need for businesses to be resilient and adaptable in the face of global crises.

Following are exposed recent examples of CSR practices across different regions:

1. Nike's "Move to Zero" initiative: In response to the growing concerns over climate change, Nike launched its "Move to Zero" initiative to reduce its carbon footprint and promote sustainability. The company has set a goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2025 and is investing in renewable energy and sustainable materials.

2. Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan: Unilever, a multinational consumer goods company, has developed a Sustainable Living Plan that outlines its commitments to sustainability across its operations, products, and supply chain. The plan includes targets to

reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve water use efficiency, and promote sustainable agriculture.

3. **Tata Motors' Community Development Programs:** Tata Motors, an Indian automobile company, has developed a range of community development programs to support education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability in the communities where it operates. The company has also set up a foundation to support social initiatives in these areas.

4. **Nestle's Cocoa Plan:** Nestle, a Swiss multinational food and beverage company, has developed a Cocoa Plan to promote sustainable cocoa farming and improve the livelihoods of cocoa farmers in West Africa. The plan includes initiatives to improve farming practices, provide training and support to farmers, and promote gender equality.

5. **Toyota's Environmental Challenge 2050:** Toyota, a Japanese automobile company, has set a long-term goal of achieving zero carbon emissions from its vehicles and operations by 2050. The company is investing in research and development to promote the use of electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles and is working to reduce emissions from its manufacturing operations.

These examples demonstrate how CSR practices can vary across different regions and industries, but they all share a commitment to promoting sustainability, social responsibility, and positive impact in the communities where they operate.

Following are some examples of CSR practices demonstrate how European companies are committed to promoting sustainability, social responsibility, and positive impact in their operations and communities.

1. **Danone's "One Planet. One Health" initiative:** Danone, a French multinational food products company, launched its "One Planet. One Health" initiative to promote sustainable agriculture, water conservation, and healthy eating habits. The company has set targets to reduce its carbon footprint and improve the nutritional value of its products.

2. **H&M's Sustainability Strategy:** H&M, a Swedish multinational fashion company, has developed a sustainability strategy that includes commitments to reduce carbon emissions, improve working conditions in its supply chain, and promote circular fashion. The company has set a goal to become climate-positive by 2030.

3. **L'Oreal's Sharing Beauty With All program:** L'Oreal, a French cosmetics company, has launched its Sharing Beauty With All program to promote sustainable production, reduce its environmental impact, and support communities. The program includes initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve water management, and promote sustainable sourcing of raw materials.

4. **IKEA's People & Planet Positive strategy:** IKEA, a Swedish multinational furniture retailer, has developed its People & Planet Positive strategy to promote sustainable production, reduce waste, and support communities. The company has set a goal to become circular and climate-positive by 2030 and is investing in renewable energy and sustainable materials.

5. **Nestle's "Nespresso Positive Cup" initiative:** Nestle's Nespresso, a Swiss coffee company, has launched its "Nespresso Positive Cup" initiative to promote sustainable coffee farming, reduce waste, and improve the social and economic conditions of coffee farmers. The initiative includes partnerships with coffee farmers and recycling programs for used coffee capsules.

While the companies mentioned in the previous examples have made efforts to promote sustainability and social responsibility, they have also faced criticism or scandals related to greenwashing or other CSR-related issues.

1. **Danone:** Danone has been criticized for its marketing of bottled water as a healthy and environmentally friendly product, despite concerns over the environmental impact of plastic water bottles. The company has also faced criticism for its business practices in India, where it has been accused of using unsustainable and exploitative practices in its dairy supply chain.

*French yogurt and bottled water company Danone is being sued by three environmental groups (ClientEarth, Zero Waste France, Surfrider Foundation Europe) for allegedly failing to adequately reduce its plastic footprint. The groups are using France's "duty of vigilance" law, which requires large French companies to monitor their human rights and environmental impacts, as the basis for the lawsuit. Danone, along with Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and Nestlé, was identified as one of the world's top 10 plastic polluters in a December brand audit. The lawsuit calls for Danone to be held accountable for its plastic use and to release a new plan within six months that would include a phase-out of plastics. Danone denies the accusation and says it is committed to reducing plastic use and developing alternative materials. The case is one of several legal actions taken by NGOs to halt the rising tide of plastic waste, as only 9% of plastic waste is ever recycled. (The Guardian, Reuters)*

2. **H&M:** In 2020, H&M faced criticism for burning unsold clothing and accessories, which led to accusations of wastefulness and a lack of commitment to sustainability. While H&M has taken steps to promote sustainable fashion, the company has been accused of greenwashing by some critics.

*The fast-fashion giant H&M has been accused of greenwashing by an exposé that revealed its environmental promise to be deceptive. The company used scorecards to inform customers about the eco-friendliness of its products, but over half of these scorecards were found to be misleading, according to a report by Quartz. Some scorecards even allegedly provided false information about a product's sustainability. As a result of the report, H&M has removed the scorecards, which were based on the Higg Material Sustainability Index, and the Sustainable Apparel Coalition has temporarily halted the use of consumer-facing transparency scorecards. The watchdog group also found that the scorecards only gave the average environmental impact of textile types rather than the environmental impact of a finished product. {Citation}*

*A recent case of greenwashing has emerged against the Swedish fast fashion company, as a lawsuit has been filed in a federal court in Missouri alleging that the company has engaged in "misleading, illegal, and deceptive" practices to profit from consumer trends towards environmentally friendly products. The suit accuses H&M of leading customers to believe that their Conscious Choice products are environmentally responsible, despite evidence to the contrary. (Cameron, 2022)*

3. **L'Oreal:** L'Oreal has faced criticism for its use of potentially harmful chemicals in some of its beauty products and for its marketing of these products as environmentally friendly or natural. The company has also been accused of promoting unrealistic beauty standards and using underpaid and exploited labor in its supply chain.

*Negative marks were given to L'Oreal by EthicalConsumer.org in several categories, including animal testing, climate change, poor environmental reporting, habitats and resources, pollutions and toxics, human rights, workers' rights, supply chain management, irresponsible marketing, anti-social finance, controversial technologies, and political activities. (based on research conducted by EthicalConsumer.org.)*

4. **IKEA:** While IKEA has made efforts to promote sustainability and social responsibility, the company has faced criticism for its business practices in some regions. For example, IKEA has been accused of using forced labor in its supply chain and contributing to deforestation in Russia and Ukraine.

*An investigation by NGO Earthsight has claimed that IKEA's furniture empire is supported by illegal timber from the Carpathian forests in Ukraine. The report claims the retailer has been selling thousands of items made using illegally felled trees, including chairs and tables sold in the UK, US, Germany, Poland and Romania. The report claims that much of the illicit logging is carried out by state forestry firms running Ukraine's forests, which breach regulations including environmental impact assessments and logging beyond licensed boundaries. IKEA has denied wrongdoing and launched an investigation into the findings. The company claims it will contact the Ukrainian government regarding necessary actions. (Press Release: Earthsight report exposes Ikea's illegal logging links, June 2020)*

*A new report by Earthsight, a nonprofit environmental group based in London, has revealed that IKEA is likely to have sold children's furniture made from wood linked to illegal logging in Russia for years. The report shows that some of the pine wood used for IKEA's popular children's furniture, including Sundvik beds and Flisat dollhouses, is likely to have come from Russian logging companies in Siberia that repeatedly violated Russian environmental laws. The Russian companies engaged in illegal logging have been linked to IKEA and other Western companies, including the ExportLes group controlled by a local politician in Siberia's Irkutsk Oblast province, Evgeny Bakurov. Bakurov's companies have often presented their tree-cutting operations as legal "sanitary logging," but the report alleges that they have operated in protected forest zones, illegally stripped trees along miles of shorelines crucial for fish spawning, erosion, and flood control, and have logged a wider area than permitted. Over the past decade, Bakurov's logging firms are estimated to have felled 2.16 million cubic meters of wood from protected forests. Customs records show that Bakurov's companies shipped pine to a wood-processing plant in Russia and then on to an Indonesian company, PT Karya Sutarindo, which manufactures furniture almost exclusively for IKEA (Earthsight, July 2021).*

5. **Nestle:** Nestle has faced several controversies related to its environmental and social practices, including accusations of promoting unsustainable practices in its cocoa supply chain and contributing to deforestation in Indonesia. The company has also faced criticism for its marketing of bottled water as an environmentally friendly alternative to sugary beverages.

*According to Greenpeace research from November 2019, household brands such as Nestle, Unilever, and P&G are buying palm oil from suppliers linked to forest fires in Indonesia, which have caused a haze of toxic air affecting Southeast Asia. The report suggests that the companies, along with some of the world's largest palm oil traders, are purchasing products from producers responsible for some 10,000 fires, releasing an estimated 360 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> between August and September 2019. The environmental group accuses the companies of*

*creating a facade of sustainability by sourcing from the worst offenders and calls for those responsible for the fires to be held accountable. Four of the palm oil traders named in the report - Wilmar, Cargill, Musim Mas, and Golden-Agri Resources - were said to have supplied over three-quarters of the world's palm oil in 2015. Critical endangered species such as orangutans and Sumatran rhinoceros live in the affected areas. Nestle is alleged to have bought from 28 of the 30 producer groups most linked to Indonesia's recurrent fires crises, Unilever from at least 27, and P&G from at least 22. Palm oil is found in many everyday food items and cosmetics, and around 50% of all packaged foods contain it, according to the WWF.(Nestle and Unilever 'linked to Indonesian forest fires engulfing southeast Asia in noxious haze', 2019)*

*In March 2018, a study by State University of New York and Orb Media discovered that over 90% of the top bottled water brands examined were contaminated with microplastics, with Nestle's water containing the highest level of microplastic pollution. Nestle bottles were found to contain up to 10,000 pieces of microplastics per liter, including polypropylene, nylon, and polyethylene terephthalate. While Nestle conducted its own testing and found "between zero and five plastic particles per liter," according to Nestle's head of quality Frederic de Bruyne, they were the only company from the study to publish results of its independent studies. A 2016 report by the European Food Safety Authority, cited in the bottled water study, stated that up to 90% of microplastic particles consumed by humans can pass through the gut without a trace. As a result, the World Health Organization has announced plans to study the potential health risks associated with drinking bottled water containing microplastics.(Nestle's 'Pure Life' Water Filled With Plastic, Class Says, April 2018) (foodnavigator.com, 2022)*

Here are some examples of pharmaceutical companies that have CSR campaigns but have also been involved in scandals:

1. **Johnson & Johnson:** Johnson & Johnson has a strong CSR program that includes commitments to sustainability, diversity and inclusion, and community engagement. However, the company has faced several scandals, including a 2010 recall of millions of products due to quality control issues and lawsuits related to its marketing of opioids.
2. **Pfizer:** Pfizer has a CSR program that focuses on improving access to healthcare, reducing its environmental impact, and promoting ethical behavior. However, the company has faced criticism for its pricing practices, including allegations of price-gouging and anti-competitive behavior.
3. **Novartis:** Novartis has a CSR program that includes commitments to ethical behavior, diversity and inclusion, and environmental sustainability. However, the company has faced several scandals, including a 2018 scandal involving payments to President Trump's personal lawyer and allegations of bribery and corruption in its operations in Greece.
4. **GlaxoSmithKline (GSK):** GSK has a CSR program that focuses on improving access to healthcare, reducing its environmental impact, and promoting ethical behavior. However, the company has faced several scandals, including allegations of bribery and corruption in its operations in China and a \$3 billion settlement with the US government over allegations of illegal marketing practices.
5. **Roche:** Roche has a CSR program that includes commitments to sustainability, social responsibility, and ethical behavior. However, the company has faced criticism over its pricing practices, including accusations of charging excessively high prices for cancer drugs.

### **Further steps**

In March 2022 world leaders from over 100 countries agreed to develop a legally binding treaty to combat the issue of plastic waste. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) assembly have adopted the resolution “End Plastic Pollution: Towards an internationally legally binding instrument”. The UNEP have been working with governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders to address the issue of plastic pollution. The goal of the treaty is to address the entire lifecycle of plastics, from their production to their disposal, and to establish a framework for cooperation among countries in reducing plastic pollution.

This is a historic agreement, as it marks the first time that governments have come together to take coordinated action against the growing problem of plastic waste. The agreement is seen as a significant step forward in the fight against plastic pollution, and it has been welcomed by environmental groups around the world. The treaty is expected to be finalized in 2024 and will be open for signature and ratification by countries. (UNEP, 2022)

### **Conclusions**

The impact of CSR on sustainable development is complex and multifaceted, and depends on a range of factors, including the specific context, the goals and objectives of the CSR initiatives, and the extent to which they are integrated into business strategy and operations. Some studies suggest that CSR can have a positive impact on environmental, social, and economic outcomes, while others highlight the need for greater transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in CSR practices.

Overall, while the historical evolution of CSR has been marked by significant progress, the challenges of promoting responsible business practices and contributing to sustainable development remain complex and ongoing. To fully realize the potential of CSR, businesses, policymakers, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders must continue to work together to develop innovative and effective approaches to promoting sustainable and responsible business practices.

However, the role of CSR can vary significantly across regions, reflecting differences in social, cultural, and economic contexts. Additionally, some businesses engage in greenwashing, which undermines the effectiveness of CSR practices. Nonetheless, CSR continues to play an important role in promoting responsible business practices and contributing to sustainable development, and businesses can create value for themselves and their stakeholders by adopting socially and environmentally responsible policies and practices.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices of businesses. The pandemic has highlighted the need to address social and environmental issues and created new challenges and opportunities for responsible business practices. The impacts of the pandemic on CSR practices include an increased focus on employee well-being, transparent communication with stakeholders, supporting local communities, increased attention to supply chain sustainability, and investment in healthcare research and development. The pandemic has demonstrated the need for businesses to be adaptable and resilient to global crises. Recent examples of CSR practices across different regions include Nike's “Move to Zero” initiative to reduce its carbon footprint and Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan to promote sustainability.

The examples provided demonstrate the efforts made by European companies to promote sustainability, social responsibility, and positive impacts in their operations and communities. The companies mentioned have launched initiatives, strategies, and programs to reduce their environmental impact, improve working conditions, and support communities.

However, some of these companies have also faced criticism or scandals related to CSR-related issues, such as greenwashing or using unsustainable and exploitative practices in their supply chains. Therefore, it is important for companies to continue to prioritize sustainability and social responsibility, not just as a marketing strategy but as a genuine commitment to making a positive impact on society and the environment.

NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and other organizations play a crucial role in holding companies accountable for their actions. The private sector is responsible for a significant portion of the world's economic activity, and its impact on the environment, social issues, and human rights cannot be ignored. NGOs can help ensure that companies are acting ethically and responsibly by monitoring their behavior and advocating for change when necessary.

One way that NGOs and other organizations can monitor companies is by conducting research and investigations to uncover any unethical practices or violations of laws and regulations. This information can be shared with the public and used to pressure companies to change their behavior.

NGOs can also use their influence and connections to lobby governments and other stakeholders to hold companies accountable for their actions. This can include advocating for stronger regulations, urging consumers to boycott certain products, and collaborating with other organizations to put pressure on companies to change their practices.

Another important role that NGOs and other organizations can play is in raising awareness about issues related to corporate responsibility. By educating the public about the impact that companies can have on the environment, human rights, and social issues, NGOs can help create a more informed and engaged citizenry that is more likely to demand accountability from companies.

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