Abstract: The legal and methodological aspects of the corporate social responsibility are applied also in the public institutions. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a concept regarding businesses contribution to the development of modern societies. Businesses social responsibility refers to companies involvement in communities life – in their social and environmental problems. CSR concept includes more elements, like assuring equal opportunities, continuing training of personnel, the impact of business’s activity over society, concern for the environment etc. In Europe, many companies begin to implement CSR. Businesses pass voluntarily their obligations beyond the law regarding environmental protection and social sphere and begin to use a series of tools and measures in this respect. In Romania, corporate social responsibility represents an area that has begun to develop only in the last few years. Local communities may use CSR as a tool in order to involve active local businesses in community’s life. The organizations that represent the community have to identify the most important aspects of the public agenda and present them to the businesses in order to obtain their support. In public administration, CSR activities have an impact on the environment in both operating entities, their internal audiences (employees, management team) and the external public represented by the state institutions, media, trade unions and civil society.

Keywords: social responsibility, public administration, governance

JEL CLASSIFICATION: G32, G33, G34

1. Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a concept regarding businesses contribution to the development of modern societies. Businesses
social responsibility refers to companies involvement in communities life – in their social and environmental problems.

Corporate social responsibility refers to involvement of organizations in communities' life – in their social and environmental problems. CSR’s actions are direct connected to an organization’s reputation and that for, to its market competitiveness. CSR concept includes more elements, among are the following: assuring equal opportunities, assuring continue training of personnel, the impact of company’s activity over society, company’s reputation, brand and marketing, ethics investment, concern for the environment, and ethics in corporate government.

Local communities may use CSR as a tool in order to involve active local business in community’s life. The organizations that represent the community have to identify the most important aspects of the public agenda and present them to the business in order to obtain their support. Over time, this concept was theorized in different manners by thoughts trends. “Responsible” initiatives of the businesses were named using a large variety of terms: corporate citizenship, corporate philanthropy, corporate societal marketing, community affairs, and community development. As states and international institutions realized, the adoption of CSR’s principles by businesses will serve sustainable development objectives; it emerge the necessity of some international standards in order to define what “desirable corporate behavior” means.

To this framework were annexed recommendations and principles/guidelines to guide states and local authorities in public policy making process, policies that will promote, assure transparency and sustain CSR’s initiatives of the businesses activating in different areas. Local communities have needs that businesses may satisfy by using local communities’ resources. In that way, there will emerge mutual relationships at a global level, between institutions, businesses, and local communities at different levels.

2. CSR framework

European Union is interested in CSR, which is seen a way for achieving the objective established by the European Counsel in Lisbon 2000, “become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable to sustain economic development by creating more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.” In Lisbon Strategy, European Commission shows that corporate social responsibility represents a contribution to sustainable development, and to achievement of Strategy’s objectives. “Voluntary business initiatives, in the form of CSR’s practices, can play a key role in contributing to sustainable development while enhancing Europe’s innovative potential and competitiveness” For guiding business in its CSR’s implementation, E.U. elaborated, also, a list of principles. These hint at two dimensions of business - community relationships:

- An internal dimension, in which organizations have the following responsibilities (in its relationships with employees): assure a health and safe work environment and the improvement of the quality of the employees’ life, be responsible when restructuring in crises, taking into consideration all sides’ interests, and minimize the impact of their activities over the environment and natural resources.

- External dimension, in which business should (in their relationships with all stakeholders): support the development of communities where they run their activities and the development of local economic systems by concluding partnerships with local distributors, respect human rights, and protect and encourage environment protection at a global level.

The stage of CSR’s implementation by European organizations is reflected in documents enacted by European Union institutions. All European countries have the same objectives: promoting dialogue with stakeholders and public-private partnership; transparency and credibility of CSR’s instruments and practices; dissemination of the best practices; assuring a strong and consistent connection between the support of development’s objectives and public policies.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has a mission to support member states to achieve sustainable development in economic fields.

Global Compact represents a U.N. General Secretary’s initiative to create a partnership...
between United Nations and various businesses for supporting sustainable development at a global level. The program became operational in July 2000. Global Compact represent a network formed by United Nations’ agencies, companies, labor unions, academic organizations, civil society organizations, governmental or administrative institutions, that act like a guide for CSR oriented businesses.

3. Evolution of the concept of social responsibility

We can say that the first academic debate about corporate social responsibility began in 1950. The name of “social responsibility” was in the forefront of society’s expectations of business and the company’s ethical obligations toward this. Howard Bower, “father” of CSR, defined it as “obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to take those decisions, or follow the directions that are approved in terms of values and goals of our company”. In contrast, in the 1970s the scientific research direction has shifted to the companies’ ability to respond to environmental requirements. The name of “corporate social responsibility” has raised the question of how and with what consequences companies should adapt to the needs of society. We believe that this concept can be applied equally to public administration. Corporate Governance (CG) has emerged as a concept in 1992, following the Cadbury report in the UK. Corporate governance is defined as the management of the entire system of relationships between board, management, shareholders and other stakeholders.

Social responsibility and marketing

Societal marketing

The term „societal marketing” was introduced by Kotler in 1972 in the prestigious Harvard Business Review Magazine. Original definition of societal marketing drew attention to marketers on a third item, (besides meeting the needs of consumers and profit maximizing) - long-term consumer welfare „long-run consumer welfare”). Kotler improves the definition given in 1972 and in 2000 in the Millennium edition „Marketing Management” moves from long-term consumer welfare to society welfare. („Thus, the societal marketing concept calls upon marketers to build social and ethical considerations into their marketing practices” (Kotler, 2000, p. 25).

Abratt and Sacks (1989) attests that the societal marketing concept has not found its way into the language of business. From there were other terms that had a greater impact on the business environment such as social responsibility, business ethics, corporate citizenship. Even other terms of marketing and social marketing, green marketing, marketing ethics and marketing causereleted received more attention than societal marketing.

In Romania also the term has had problems regarding its „affirmation” in the business and academic environment. In the first edition of Kotler’s Marketing Management published in 1997, which is translated as „social”, keep the confusion in this regard. CSR activities have an impact on the environment in both operating company: domestic public company (employees, management team, shareholders) and the external public company (suppliers, customers, competitors, government agencies, media, NGOs, trade unions, civil society).

European integration and social responsibility

Definition of the European Commission says that corporate social responsibility is a concept whereby companies integrate their social and the economic environment in their operations and interact with key players in their field of interest voluntarily. There are two reasons for public involvement in corporate social responsibility. First, social responsibility can be a useful tool in promoting community policies. Several Member States have developed policies for social responsibility, which differ because they reflect national traditions, situations and challenges. To facilitate the exchange of information on national policies and to support his work in social responsibility, European Commission has gathered together a group of local representatives of the Member States. The European Commission will continue to facilitate an exchange of information, dissemination of useful practices on
social responsibility and initiatives relating to the exploration and establishment of Total Quality Management System as well as other policies (legislation related to corporate social responsibility). The European Commission has also proposed a review of practices related to social responsibility in all countries, measuring performance and value added.

While the development of management tools is seen as an essential step to enable companies to make general commitments into concrete actions, discussion of social responsibility is controversial. Some people say that every company should develop its own approach to social responsibility, while others recognize the benefits of globalization in facilitating the comparability and transparency practices of social responsibility. This will facilitate the assessment of social responsibility practices. Social responsibility tools and practices will be more effective if they are in a standardized way. They should be transparent and be based on clear and verifiable criteria. Public policies can help to develop a framework which aims to promote transparency and credibility for social responsibility practices.

Civil society does not promote the fact that voluntary initiatives are sufficient to protect the rights of workers and citizens. He called for an organizational framework in which to establish minimum standards in this area but also to establish a leeway for companies. To be credible, social responsibility practices should not be developed, implemented and evaluated unilaterally by businesses, but with different categories of co-participants and interested groups (stakeholders). The European Council noted that social responsibility can contribute not only to encourage a high level of social cohesion, environmental protection and respect for fundamental rights, but also to improve competitiveness across all business types, from local to multinational enterprises, and all sectors. Identifying the common framework for the global dimension of social responsibility is a challenge for staff diversity in local policies, protection of workers, and environmental legislation. Implementing Social Responsibility principles should go beyond legal requirements with which companies must face and approaches should involve consultation with interested groups worldwide.

3. CSR in Romania

In Romania, began to appear increasingly more corporate social responsibility campaigns. One main reason for this change could be appearing on the Romanian market of multinational traditional companies. Appearance in Romania the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility is the primary cause and economic development as the market debut of multinational companies that have created a certain pressure on companies to create their corporate image and reputation. There are corporate foundations in our country, corporate volunteer programs, marketing initiatives related to the case, campaign donations and social programs supported by companies. Companies with the largest involvement in social responsibility projects are still international companies, the Romanian capital still not having this concern. One of the elements missing from the market in Romania is information on the impact of CSR on consumers and society. One reason is that the subject is relatively new to the Romanian public.

On the academic and business field, CSR has not yet managed to get a lot of discussion. Until now there is no ongoing corporate social responsibility course distinct from any of the universities in Romania, but at the conferences organized in the country, however the problem arises in communications CSR. NGOs are promoting this very fierce marketing orientation of companies by organizing various events, conferences. The most famous event is the Civil Society Gala.

Public institutions are starting to dose their efforts for mobilization of businesses’ support for a cause; they do not want just their money. this approach may lead to a long time relationship, based on mutual trust and respect, to another businesses’ vision on the role and the implications of some types of support like donations, and increase the businesses’ will for social involvement.
4. Conclusions

The meaning of corporate social responsibility concept is still unclear for some organizations. Even most of the organizations have met it sooner or later, there is still a low understanding level of this concept. Confronting with a lack of working force at the county level, public institutions see corporate social responsibility more like an orientation, somehow imposed, for improving the quality of employees’ life and not a voluntary intervention for solving community’s problems.

There are areas in which organizations involve and instruments they use (community – local infrastructure, labor market – professional development, and environment – waste, water, and soil pollution using participative decision-making, free services, employees volunteering, and cleaner production) in a greater extend than specified in legislation, and less conscious that they are specific to corporate social responsibility.

Public organizations make their actions public in areas related to corporate social responsibility rather inside the organization and not outside it. the organizations should promote these interventions at a greater extend; especially that social involvement of the institution is seen in direct connection with the organization’s performance.

Also, the researched organizations support their partners (private organizations and ngos) using local advertising and employees training programs.

Finally, we may conclude that, beyond representing a barometer for the actual state of the organizations in relation with corporate social responsibility, the research had an important role in promoting this concept to the organizations selected, generating interest and availability for implementing corporate social responsibility in investigated organizations.

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