



Giving Europe BV and ISO 26000:2010: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of Organisations Version 3, June 2016

In recent years, the focus on CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility – by organisations is growing. This topic is very important to Giving Europe and to achieve it, Giving Europe applies the international norm ISO 26000:2010, which was examined and tested in July and August 2015 based on the practical guideline NPR 9026-Cr:2012.

Besides ISO 26000:2010, Giving Europe uses a large number of other quality and social norms such as the SA 8000 norm in countries where it produces and the PPP Code of Conduct in the Netherlands. However, the ISO 26000:2010 norm constitutes the backbone of Giving Europe CSR policy as of mid-2015.

What does ISO 26000:2010 mean for Giving Europe and its business relationships?

ISO 26000:2010 is an international ISO norm. Organisations and companies use this norm to indicate *and* demonstrate that they are aware of the various aspects of Corporate Social Responsibility, and that they truly carry out the corresponding actions. As far as we know, Giving Europe is one of the first distributors of business gifts and promotional products in the world that operates in compliance with the principles of ISO 26000:2010. By now, ISO 26000:2010 is a familiar norm in many other sectors.

Operating according to this ISO norm means that Giving Europe is aware of a number of social core themes and deals with them actively and responsibly, whether or not in consultation and/or cooperation with its suppliers and clients. In this manner, all parties involved contribute to a better world, a world in which the three Ps play an important and equal role: People, Planet and Profit.

CSR core themes

Unconnected to the organisational structure of Giving Europe, which is organised in such a way that the entire company is involved in its CSR policy, ISO 26000:2010 identifies six core themes.

1-Human Rights

This theme deals with safe work conditions, being open for complaints by employees, providing everyone with equal opportunities regardless of origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation, granting civil and political rights, and fundamental labour rights (such as banning forced labour or child labour, etc.). These issues are properly organised in Europe and certainly in the Netherlands, but are still lacking in countries in Asia. And it is in these countries in particular that Giving Europe produces its articles. That is why our company insists on very strict requirements from its suppliers. Testing commissioned by the suppliers occurs on sites where Giving Europe purchases. This relates to SA 8000 audits that are carried out by Asian Inspection, CTI and others. Through her BSCI-membership the organisation can also take note of SA 8000 audits which other BSCI-members have done, for suppliers which are new to Giving Europe. The SA 8000 norm was, amongst other things, developed for monitoring the compliance of human rights. Giving Europe has decided that all its suppliers based outside of Europe must be SA 8000 certified at the latest in 2019. At the end of 2017, more than 75% of the suppliers will be SA 8000 certified.

An important means of promoting compliance with human rights in countries such as China and India is paying realistic purchase prices. Giving Europe is one of the largest suppliers of promotional gifts in the Netherlands and can negotiate competitive prices due to its purchase volume. In all cases, these prices are based on realistic purchase prices, enabling suppliers to deal with their employees in compliance with the requirement of ISO 26000:2010 in social and financial terms.

2-Labour practises

From a social point of view, there are many requirements formulated for labour practises. These practises can differ per country. Giving Europe ensures proper dealing with its staff, uses good work conditions, uses the Netherlands General Employers' Association (Dutch: AWWN) to test job descriptions, ensures good and safe labour conditions, offers good pension schemes, and provides its employees with a well balanced package of courses and training.

Giving Europe requires its suppliers to implement such a policy as well. It can apply some pressure by selecting suppliers of promotional products that have their suppliers in countries such as China and India audited for the aforementioned SA 8000 norm.



3-Environment

The topic of environment has two dimensions. Firstly, the manner in which Giving Europe deals with the environment in its own sites. Secondly, the environmental aspects connected to the products that it sells.

In its business operations, Giving Europe stimulates measures that ensure the least possible burden on the environment. By now, the energy consumption per square metre of business surface area is lower than in comparable enterprises. We look continuously for ways to pack and distribute products in an environmental-friendly manner. For instance the choice was made to use degradable air bags which are used in the packaging of goods and for pallets, which, after they are no longer used, are recycled by the supplier. In this respect, amongst other things, 'green solutions' are also used by for instance transporters and cleaning companies. The lighting is energy-efficient and the circuits are daylight dependent. In addition, the entire vehicle fleet has the energy label A – B.

Giving Europe is aware of the fact that part of the products it offers can still not be qualified as environmental-friendly. This is related to the character of the company: it is a trading company that connects demand and supply in which commissioning parties do not always pay attention to environmental aspects.

However, other items in our product range are more environmental-friendly: sometimes due to the production method, sometimes because they last longer, and sometimes as a result of the material used. Giving Europe realises that these environmental aspects have not been adequately communicated up to now. In the coming month, additional attention will be paid to this subject in which we will work on an environment classification system that will be stated in the catalogues and/or on the website. Giving Europe stimulates the use of its website as *the* source of information about the products it offers. However, part of our clients still prefers the printed catalogue. This catalogue is produced as environmental-friendly as possible (FSC paper, small size, etc.). In due time, the paper catalogue will no longer be needed.

4-Honest business conduct

Transparency is the key word in which Giving Europe wants to conduct business with its suppliers and clients: clarity about prices, no hidden conditions, a generous recall policy, and a very strict anticorruption policy that applies to all countries where business is conducted. No gifts with a value of more than 100 are presented to third parties and our employees are forbidden from accepting such gifts. Exceptions are sometimes possible: in some cultures, it is offending not to accept a gift. In such cases, one can deviate from the rule, but only after consultation with management. This also applies to cases in which business trips are offered. Giving Europe expects its business associates to refrain from presenting unacceptable gifts and services to its employees.

Giving Europe operates in a sector in which many vendors are active. Compared to its competitors, Giving Europe pursues a path to achieve cutting-edge prices, an approach that it can allow itself as one of the biggest market players. Yet... we will always adhere to honest business practises. In its production policy, Giving Europe respects the propriety rights and copyrights of third parties.

5-Consumer affairs

As a supplier of business gifts and promotional products, Giving Europe conducts business with Distributors (who in turn supply to end consumers/companies) and not with end consumers. Yet Giving Europe considers itself responsible for the product safety of its articles. All products imported from outside the EU are supplied with the necessary certificates among which the European CE certificates, guaranteeing product safety.

As we said, we have a generous recall policy that covers any faults discovered in our products. Giving Europe informs its clients about the features and the points of attention regarding its products, for example through user manuals. The clients of Giving Europe can forward this information to the end user.

6-Involvement in the community

Giving Europe is very much involved in the local communities located near its sites. This is expressed in a policy of financial *and* product sponsoring in addition to frequent financial contributions to charity. The company does this because it believes - just like any other company - in social responsibility. The policy of the company is not to publish which activities are sponsored or supported otherwise and which charities are financially supported. This however involves substantial amounts every year.



ISO 26000:2010: communication

Giving Europe always informs its employees about the progress it makes towards its objectives based on this norm, and involves its employees and business associates as much as possible. An example of this is placing this short version of the ISO 26000:2010 document on its website. The performances achieved will periodically be reported on the website.

Do you want to know more about ISO 26000:2010 and Giving Europe? Or are you interested in the complete ISO 26000 document of Giving Europe? Call us or mail us!