



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union

Skopje, 1 November 2012

**Official award ceremony of
the National Award for the best Corporate Social
Responsibility Practices in 2011**

(Hotel Holiday Inn)

**Speech by
H.E. Mr. Aivo Orav
Head of EU Delegation**

Dear Minister Mr Sarachini,

Dear Mr Nikolov,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers for inviting me to briefly address you today on the occasion of the ceremony of the 2011 National Award for the Best Corporate Social Responsibility Practices.

Corporate Social Responsibility is considered to be one of the necessary values underlying the new economic and social system of the European Union. This concept, whereby companies on a voluntary basis integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations, can help to reconcile economic, social and environmental ambitions of the Union.

Much progress has been made on this subject since the Lisbon Council in March 2000 made its appeal to companies' sense of social responsibility. Today, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility is fully embedded into the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and integrated into the many EU policies, including: social and employment policy,

industrial and enterprise policy, environmental policy, consumer protection, rules and procedures for public procurements and external relations.

Enterprises, as the motor for economic growth, job creation, and innovation, are key actors in delivering the Lisbon's sustainable development objectives.

Clearly, in a market economy, businesses have to make profit. However, a genuinely European view considers that to achieve this objective in a sustainable way, their economic activities must ultimately serve the interests of the society.

Enterprises do this through the wealth they generate, the jobs they provide, the goods and services they offer, while at the same time, taking care of the environment and local communities where they operate.

In the European Union, the number of business acting in a social responsible way, adopting and implementing their own codes of conduct and working in collaboration with different stakeholders to foster corporate social responsibility is constantly increasing.

The number of such companies is growing not as a result of additional legal obligations, but of actual will of businesses to

respond to the expectations of society, to go beyond the law and to contribute to sustainable development.

The EU supports this event as it considers that the general public should recognize and reward the efforts of individual companies not just for making a good profit but also for making fair contribution to addressing certain societal challenges.

At the end, I congratulate to all winners of the 2011 National Award for Corporate Social Responsibility Practices and hope that positive example that you provide shall inspire other local companies to come forward with new innovative initiatives.

Thank you very much for your attention.