

Corporate Social Responsibility in Europe

Rhetoric and Realities

Edited by **Regine Barth** and **Franziska Wolff**, Öko-Institut, Germany

The acid test of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is simply this: does it lead to positive impacts on society and the environment or is it just rhetoric? And if it does lead to positive impacts, how can these be enhanced? This timely book tackles this cutting-edge challenge by presenting empirical findings from a range of surveys and in-depth case studies. These build on a new methodological and theoretical framework for assessing and explaining the sustainability impact of CSR.

For selected sustainability issues – mitigation of climate change and chemical risk, resource management in marine fisheries, promotion of gender equality and countering of bribery – and within different European industries, the authors show that the rhetoric of CSR is still stronger than its reality. They do so by investigating into CSR practices which encompass the creation of a vision on CSR, its strategic and operative implementation and its organisational and cultural embedding within companies and their supply chains. The authors conclude that the reality of CSR is strong enough to allow for some rhetoric. They name intra- and extra-company success factors for, and limits of, producing sustainability impacts through CSR. Finally, they discuss its contribution to achieving public policy goals and the governance paradigms that are necessary to make CSR effective. The volume successfully combines a business and public policy perspective, based on an interdisciplinary approach.

This book will be invaluable for both students and researchers interested in the effects of CSR, and will prove a useful tool for policy-makers and CSR practitioners alike.

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