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CODE OF CONDUCT IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY *CONTEXT*

In the CSR Green Paper the European Commission defines CSR as “*a concept whereby Companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis*”. The current Code of Conduct is mainly related to the social aspects of CSR. It has been jointly produced by the European social partners, CEFS¹ and EFFAT², in the frame of their European social dialogue, to cover the European Sugar Industry (ESI)³.

This Code of Conduct is “business driven” and has to be understood in the context of the current development of the market organisation for sugar which will have to adapt to WTO constraints and globalisation of the economy. It will be recalled that first options of revision for the sugar COM will be presented by the European Commission in June 2003.

Mindful of this major economic challenge, the European social partners for the sugar industry underline the necessity to ensure that their industrial sector remains sufficiently competitive to enable it fully to assume its responsibilities vis-à-vis the different stakeholders.

Analysing the possible change in the industrial landscape which could be necessary, they agree to join their efforts in a constructive way in the frame of their European social dialogue, which is in no way intended to replace the dialogue at national level, of which rights and competences remain unchanged, but aspires to complement it by paving the way for mutual understanding and implementation of joint concrete and pragmatic actions aimed at strengthening each party’s social responsibility within the context of economic change.

¹ The Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre represents the sugar manufacturers and refiners in 15 European Countries (except for Luxemburg, plus Switzerland) as well as in Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia.

² The European Federation of Trade Unions for Food, Agriculture, and Tourism covers 120 affiliates representing 2.5 million members in 35 countries, among which Hungary, Poland, the Czech republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, Bulgaria.

³ ESI means the Members of CEFS operating in countries where the CEFS is represented and within the field of activity of the CEFS.

To this effect in particular they :

- Reaffirm their willing to persue their regular exchange of information and views on all questions with a social impact for their sector, as currently practised within the context of the European Social Dialogue.
- Confirm the possibility to take, if necessary, joint political initiatives within the frame of their Dialogue
- Undertake to discuss together any appropriate measure concerning vocational training which will favour sound preparations for conversion if necessary.

They will jointly support the good understanding and constructive monitoring of the current Code of Conduct.

Brussels, 7th February 2003

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