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CRISTINA NICOLESCU

Corporate Social Responsibility in the Romanian Higher Education

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CRISTINA NICOLESCU

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Abstract

This study argues that although society in post-communist Romania has made huge strides towards embracing democratic values, one of the main challenges remaining is how political culture views the individual's responsibility to society. The author examines how the education system can provide the means to produce such change, and evaluates how capable Romanian universities are of doing so. Believing the teaching of social responsibility to be one way of tackling proposed changes in business and economics higher education, the author presents the main findings of an inquiry into Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) teaching in Romania based on an analysis of universities' business and economics faculties' curricula, and complements this with a student survey focusing on CSR knowledge. Finally, policy options are offered aimed at bringing CSR into universities' curricula, in order that the higher education system will be able to generate and support the needed changes in the level of individual social responsibility within Romania.

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The views contained inside remain solely those of the author who may be contacted at cnicolescu@policy.hu. For a fuller account of this policy research project, please visit <http://www.policy.hu/cnicolescu>.

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Language Editing – Martin Baker
Formatting and Type-setting – Linda Szabo

International Policy Fellowship Program
Open Society Institute
Nador Utca 9
Budapest 1051
Hungary

www.policy.hu

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Ultimately, if CSR is to be integrated into mainstream business practices it needs to be embedded in the core of mainstream business education (CSR Magazine, 2005: 5).

Introduction

Society is *everybody's* business. Individuals, larger or smaller groups, formal or informal entities, public or private, governmental, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, all are part of society, shaping society and being shaped by society. Responsibility should be *everybody's* business. Individuals, larger or smaller groups, formal or informal entities, public or private, governmental, for-profit or not-for-profit - all should be responsible as regards the society they exist in. How many persons really *are* responsible, though, is hard to establish. How their responsibility should take shape is a matter of individual choice. That society has the responsibility to educate everyone to be responsible is a must. From all societal actors, universities are the ones educating the future elites of a country. What they teach and what they do not teach may make or break a nation's future and well-being.

This study looks into what business and economics faculties in Romania teach and do not teach about social responsibility. The dynamics of the business sector and, for societal well-being, the great amount of dependence on the performance of the business sector point towards such a choice. In a country looking towards democracy, ending its transition period and towards European integration, how well business and economics schools train future business leaders can lead to success - or failure - in the long run. Dealing with the disengagement of the Romanian population and the limited degree of social responsibility requires a multilayered approach - and this study looks only at *one* of the layers: the degree of exposure of students in business and economics schools in Romania to the concept and practice of corporate social responsibility (CSR from now on) as part of the formal curricula.

Several studies point to an interest in CSR from both students and businesses. In 1999, a study of the Aspen Institute's Initiative for Social Innovation via Business found that, after the first 2 years of schooling, "students' priorities shift from customer needs and product quality to the importance of shareholder value"; also, such students welcomed the idea of learning more about CSR and having it integrated into core curricula. (CSR Magazine, 2005: 4) An identical pressure towards gaining more CSR knowledge, as regards concept and

practice, comes from the business sector. A 2001 survey of CSR Europe, the Copenhagen Center and IBLF regarding attitudes and training needs with CSR from companies identified “a clear need for new business models and management skills to help companies respond to the triple responsibility of business: economic, social, and environmental.” (CSR Magazine, 2005: 5) AccountAbility (a London-based think tank) points to the fact that responsible business practice is becoming an increasingly important driver of national and regional competitiveness in Europe based on a Responsible Competitiveness Index (RCI), a measure that estimates the statistical relationship between the state of corporate social responsibility and the competitiveness of nations; also acknowledged is the fact that corporate responsibility is rapidly moving upwards on the management education agenda in business schools, and companies are increasingly stressing a need for education to develop new knowledge and skills for current and future leaders in this regard. (London Business School and EABiS, 2005)

The roots of this study are in situations like the one described by a Regional Branch Manager of a Human Resources Company in Romania:

In recruiting personnel for our client companies, we have found that students lack both skills and knowledge. Abilities like leadership, teamwork, and active problem solving are rarely addressed during faculty... Graduates declare they are rarely engaged in applied projects that require teamwork, although company-based work would require exactly this. There is a deep gap here. The only students having this kind of abilities are those that have been engaged in student organizations, i.e. who have had access to non-academic forms of training. (Interview)

Efforts to include CSR in the core curricula of business schools are currently being developed throughout Europe:

The launch of the CSR Curriculum Development Program comes at a crucial time [2005], when discussions on the relationship between corporate responsibility and management education are currently center-stage amongst business leaders, academics, policy-makers, civil society and with business media. It recognizes the need for tangible, results-driven partnerships. It aims to equip current and future leaders with the knowledge and skills required to manage the complexity of modern business in a way that creates value for both shareholders and society at large. (Peter Lacy, Executive Director, EABiS)

Romanian business schools should try to push onwards the European movement of integrating CSR into core business education, not for the sake of integration but for the sake of meeting the expectations of a dynamic and

modern business environment, i.e. educating responsible managers with a broad range of stewardship skills in addition to high-level technical competencies. (CSR Magazine, 2005:5) Business pressure here is not yet very strong in Romania as yet, but the various multinational companies, who are increasingly present on the Romanian market, already bring along not only the higher standards of professional and technical skills required from employees but also accountability requirements and the responsibility practices that they adhere to due to their international nature. This study urges business and economics schools to seek out a pro-active approach to teaching CSR, as a means via which students can become competitive actors on the social development market and be persons able to offer the results-driven partnerships that businesses are looking for. The study is based on original data documenting the state of the field in teaching CSR in Romania, reviewed in the wider context of teaching CSR in Europe; and it promotes three alternative solutions for further education dealing with social responsibility in business and economics schools, with these being analyzed according to a set of criteria and sought after ends via the offering of recommendations to all corporate, social responsibility, education stakeholders.

1 Higher Education and Social Responsibility

Unlike the largest parts of Western Europe, Romania can pride itself on having the highest proportion of young *volunteers*. An overwhelming 74.29 percent of the total number of volunteers are between 15 to 25 years old; and a further 9.41 percent are aged between 26 to 35 (as reported by the volunteer centers in the country in 2004). Out of a total number of volunteers, 77 percent are students. The need to acquire practical skills and knowledge, a desire to experience a real working environment, the need to explore and test possible working environments can be aimed at after graduation; and a need to have professional contacts in respective areas of interest are the most important rationales for a student to do voluntary work. Talking with students in a volunteer selection procedure and in placement interviews, volunteer coordinators find out about the disappointment many of them face once entering a higher education system either because the respective specialization offers something other than what they expected or because the amount of memory-work required greatly outweighs the degree of practical skills and abilities developed

within formal curricula. This description fits perfectly into the wider context of citizen participation in Romania, illustrating a rather disengaged population still depending on the government to address any societal problems and not perceiving in any way their individual social responsibilities - and not attempting at all to improve living conditions in their given community.

Table 1: Donations by Romanian businesses

By type		By frequency/year	
In cash	15%	Once	25%
In kind	10%	Twice	20%
In cash and in kind	14%	Three times	13%
None	61%	Four times	9%
		Five times	9%
		More than five times	24%

Source: ARC-Allavida (2003: 32, 35)

Yet this study was inspired by something else: the relationship between non-profit and business sectors in Romania. A recent study on the philanthropic behavior of the business community in Romania, conducted by the Association for Community Relations (ARC) and Allavida (2003), shows us that most Romanian companies do not have a strategy for becoming involved at a community level, even though the majority of them had donated to causes in cash or kind during the last year.¹ This proves that the philanthropic behavior of the Romanian business community is localized and occasional in scope, is subjective and reactive in its motivation, and is unrelated to business strategy (as further data from the above-mentioned study show). The most widespread motivation for Romanian companies to donate to a cause (74 percent) is humanitarian (including helping children and/or the poor). This could explain why areas like environment protection, human rights promotion and/or civic education, which imply a giving-back-to-the-community idea, are *not* among the most favored donation areas for Romanian companies. Most philanthropic acts in Romania emerge from an emotional rationale and follow a reactive approach, being limited to an act of giving (i.e. and there is no idea of giving-back-to-the-community). Trends in business engagement in the community mostly began with the multinational companies bringing into Romania their social responsibility initiatives and policies at a company level; yet such engagements for Romanian companies in the community remain limited.

¹ The data was collected by Metro Media Transylvania Institute in June 2002, from a sample of 778 businesses active in Romania.

The post-communist Romanian society is striving to radically change and embrace democratic values and procedures. Huge progress has been made, but the challenge now has become narrowed down to changes that aim at an entire way of thinking and at political culture itself, thus requiring a major re-definition of how a citizen relates to the political system in the sense of having a degree of individual responsibility to society. One major field of such change is the education system. Universities are the main actors having the means to produce such change – yet the situation in Romanian universities is not able to successfully deal with such challenges. A recent study on ethics in Romanian universities (Miroiu et al., 2005) shows a high degree of criticism by students of the quality of the educational service provided by such universities, with 41 percent pointing to the limited involvement of university professors in advising students about the processes involved in drafting projects and/or their graduation papers. Another 35 percent of students point to the difficulty of communication with professors, while over 50 percent of students see limited possibilities for expressing their personal opinions and interpretations of subjects taught.

Schools and universities still have to reform Soviet-era pedagogy and curriculums, and are often short of both capacity and teaching talent. But that's something that every post-communist country is still grappling with (*The Rise of Nearshoring*, 2005: 70).

Faced with the facts presented above, the need to amend the approach of Romanian universities towards educating the future elites of the country becomes obvious. Universities need to take the lead in transforming Romanian society and take on the difficult role of beginning such changes, so that they become visible, responsible and involved actors within their respective communities. The higher education landscape in Romania has diversified significantly in the past decade from the point of view of specialties on offer but also because of the emergence of private higher education institutes. There is a need for a service-oriented approach that will attract not only a high number of students but also the best students for the university so that it keeps its high profile. The labor market in Romania constantly challenges universities' teaching styles, which are "still rooted in communist-era thinking: inefficient, old-fashioned, largely immune from competition" (*East, west...*, 2005: 33-4); while analysis points to the positive effects of a reformed higher education system:

In countries that have liberalized higher education, private-sector entrants have begun to make a difference. But schools almost everywhere still

prize memorization and regurgitation over critical thinking and creativity, which encourages cheating and corruption – and is bad for long-term competitiveness. (*East, west...*, 2005: 33-4)

There are several things supporting the focus of this study as regards education in business and economics faculties in Romania (which are principally educating future business elites). One comes from the recent evolutions in the former communist states, Romania included. Social, economic and political transition processes have proved that the state does *not* have the capacity to provide solutions for all social and community problems. Thus the issue is raised of whose responsibility it is to do what in order to have a healthy, reward-giving society. The business sector has been identified as the missing link in the challenging puzzle of facing up to such social problems. A culture of corporate involvement in the community has started to develop, encompassing a wide range of specific activities, from philanthropy to volunteerism and cause-related marketing, along with a series of corporate concepts: corporate governance, corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, corporate community involvement or corporate volunteerism, all aimed at promoting and stimulating the business sector at a community level as a means of creating social responsibility. The stakes involved reforming business and economics higher education become more important in this context, with an appropriate change addressing two levels of social responsibility: individual social responsibility and corporate/business social responsibility.

Teaching social responsibility is one way of tackling the proposed changes in business and economics higher education. Corporate Social Responsibility has emerged as a promising concept for business engagement in society to address major societal challenges that governments and non-profit sector have failed to successfully address. The concept is both specific and comprehensive, allowing for a diversity of approaches by the business sector as regards acting in a socially responsible manner whilst uniting under its wide umbrella a range of concepts and practices that allow for tailored solutions to various problems, serving diverse interests and engaging a variety of stakeholders. CSR entered the political and economic mainstream at the UN's World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 (Nelson, 2002), and the European Union has issued several official documents promoting CSR and supporting its implementation Europe-wide (European Union, 2001), while also recommending a multi-stakeholder approach to CSR in order to attain the strategic goal of the European Union, adopted by the Lisbon Summit of March 2000, namely to be-

come by 2010 “the most competitive and dynamic, knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices play a key role in contributing to sustainable development while enhancing Europe’s innovation potential and competitiveness. (Jose Manuel Barosso, President of the European Commission)

1.1 Teaching Corporate Social Responsibility – State of the Field

Inquiries into CSR teaching in Europe began in the early 1980s and were constantly growing in the 1990s, with some of the most important overviews coming from Mahoney (1990), Zsolnai (1998), Cowton and Cummins (2003) (see Matten and Moon, 2004). Up to now, there have been no attempts to map CSR teaching in Romania. However, CSR is not an unknown concept in the country, and several initiatives to promote CSR have developed in the past 4 years.² The research department of Business Media Group, a business focused publishing group, conducted a survey on a sample of over 500 businesses active in Romania, and focused on their social responsibility projects on 2003 and 2004. There were 160 companies that responded to the BMG survey. Among the respondents, 33% are Romanian capital companies, the majority of them operating the field of IT&C (22%). The areas they were involved in during 2003 and 2004 were the social one (43%), being followed by education, health, the arts and culture, and sport. Donations went from 500 euro to over 2 million euro. The majority of companies donated from 10,000 to 50,000 euro (Biz 2005: 20) This section thus looks at the latest CSR teaching developments in Europe - and focuses on presenting the main findings of the inquiry into CSR teaching in Romania based on a curriculum analysis of business and economics faculties in Romania; and this is complemented by a student survey focusing on CSR knowledge.

For us, the mission of responsible involvement in the social and cultural life of the community is just as important as involvement in economic development. (Marketing Manager, Romanian branch of an international company)

² For an overview of CSR initiatives in Romania see Nicolescu (2004).

1.2 Teaching Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) across Europe

A recent study on CSR Education in Europe, conducted by Matten and Moon (2004), points to the idea that

CSR is an idea whose time has come in Europe (Wolf, 2002). It is manifest in: company communications, company organizational structures, company reports and audits, new business coalitions, new consultancy firms, portfolios of traditional business consultants, government policy, and media coverage.

It also acknowledges the growing number of higher education institutions across Europe favoring the inclusion of CSR-related knowledge in their formal curricula.

Table 2 Challenges for business education providers

Challenges for business education providers:	• provision of graduates with CSR skills
	• supply of CSR education for practitioners
	• specialist CSR education for industries
	• research to advance CSR knowledge

Source: Matten and Moon (2004)

The Matten and Moon (2004) survey on CSR teaching in Europe revealed over 23 different program labels for CSR teaching, the most common being sustainable development, environmental or ecological management and business ethics. Other labels ranged from corporate and public governance to culture, diversity, leadership or stakeholder management, with the label CSR itself being used only by 11 percent of surveyed universities and business schools (as the same study shows). Thus, CSR education appears as “a dynamic platform for teaching a number of current societal issues” (Matten and Moon, 2004: 10). The types of CSR education programs and/or modules range from undergraduate studies to MA/MSc and MBA programs, being supplemented by executive education and short courses, and by PhD programs focusing on CSR.³ The European Academy of Business in Society’s (EABiS) directory of Education, Training and Research on CSR and Business in Society includes 170 leading business schools in Europe and their CSR-related modules.

The Directory represents an important landmark in Europe for companies like Microsoft and other founding members of the European Academy, who are increasingly looking to team up with business schools to develop

³ A PhD in Corporate Social Responsibility is offered by the Nottingham Business School in the United Kingdom in cooperation with the International Center for Corporate Social Responsibility.

our leaders, recruit talents and further improve the quality and structure of our management and leadership programs. (Philippe Courtouis, CEO, Microsoft Europe, Middle East and Africa)

Inquiries into the degree and triggers of mainstreaming CSR education coming from Matten and Moon (2004) refer to 47 percent of the surveyed higher education institutions offering optional CSR modules, 38 percent embedding CSR in other existing modules and courses, 27 percent including CSR in compulsory modules and 20 percent using other CSR teaching activities (such as seminars, special events, conferences etc.); while combinations of the above are also possible. It should be noted that there is a diversified approach to teaching CSR, more specifically regarding the engaging of other stakeholders (civil society, media, business etc.) within CSR teaching.

The role of NGOs, as reported by two thirds of respondents, is particularly interesting as it represents the introduction of a new community of practitioners in business schools. One might speculate that, through CSR teaching of business and education, managers might be assisted in overcoming more traditional boundaries and in improving wider engagement. (Matten and Moon 2004)

Table 3 The Use of CSR teaching tools in Europe

CSR Teaching Tool	% using the tool
Business speakers	32%
CSR case studies	25%
NGO speakers	20%
CSR professional speakers	17%
Internships	6%
Communications/media speakers	5%
Other	17%

Source: Matten and Moon 2004

1.3 Teaching Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Romania

As compared to the European situation, CSR teaching in Romania is almost non-existent, at least not explicitly. Two methods have been used to assess the degree of CSR teaching in Romania: a curricula analysis of business and economics faculties in Romania, and a student survey on students in business and economics (from the same universities).⁴

⁴ The faculties referred to are: The Business Faculty and the Institute of Economic Studies from Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj Napoca, The Academy of Economic Studies from Bucharest University, the Faculty of Economic Studies from West University in Timisoara, and the Faculty of Economy and Business Administration in Iasi.

The curriculum-based analysis had as its foundation a list of terms and concepts commonly used in CSR teaching across Europe, taking its guide from the “CSR Education in Europe” study by Matten and Moon (2004). The analysis looked for specific topics and/or similar topics from within the curricula of Business Faculties and the Marketing and Management specializations in the Economics Faculties.⁵

Data in Table 4 above shows that 5 of the 10 most common CSR-module labels in Europe can also be found in Romanian university curricula, with some of them using the same title and others using labels that can be somehow assimilated with European ones. It should be noted, though, that, in Romania, there are no classes/courses explicitly referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility.

Q: To what extent do you think the graduates of your faculty are familiar with the CSR concept and practices as a result of the formal educational programs being offered by your faculty?

A: Probably insufficiently... [...] What I can tell you here for sure is that there is no formal discipline focusing on CSR. The subject is mentioned marginally, as part of disciplines with a similar conceptual content (macroeconomics, business negotiations, marketing and others)... (Interview, Assistant professor, a Romanian University)

The student survey⁶ serves to complement the above data with information on the level of CSR knowledge and sources of information about CSR of students in the 3rd and 4th years of study in business and economics (marketing and management specializations) faculties in Romanian Universities. From the 10 CSR labels included in Table 1 (above) students reported attending classes on Business Ethics, Sustainable Development, Community Marketing and Ecological/Environmental Management, yet only 12 percent said that these modules/classes referred in any way to CSR.

5 The curriculum analysis was initially planned as an in-depth analysis of course syllabus, and not only to make a comparison of course titles/topics and to assess the degree of inclusion of CSR-related knowledge in business and economics faculties in Romania. Unfortunately, the practice of providing a course syllabus is not very widespread in Romanian Universities, and the analysis was limited to a comparing of course topics.

6 The student survey was done in October-November 2004. Questionnaires were distributed during classes with the permission of the professor, and were collected immediately after they had been filled in. Respondents were, thus, students that attend such classes, as the purpose of the survey was to assess the degree of exposure to CSR-related knowledge via formal curricula.

Table 4 CSR Teaching in Romania – Curriculum Analysis

CSR Module Label in Europe	Course Title in Romania	Location
Business Ethics	Business Ethics	Cluj Napoca, Iasi
Corporate Social Responsibility		
Ecological/Environmental Management	Environmental Law	Cluj Napoca
	Environmental Economy	Iasi
	Environmental Economy and Protection	Cluj Napoca
Globalization, Geopolitics		
Sustainable Development	Sustainable Development Management	Cluj Napoca
Business and Society		
Corporate Citizenship		
Corporate Governance		
Diversity Management	Strategic Management	Cluj Napoca, Iasi
	Intercultural Management	Iasi
	Change Management	Iasi
Community Marketing	Strategic Marketing	Bucharest
	Social-political Marketing	Bucharest
	Services Marketing	Cluj Napoca, Iasi
	Direct Marketing	Iasi

Only 1.87 percent of surveyed students declared themselves familiar with the CSR concept to a large and/or very large extent; while 19 percent said that they were quite familiar with the concept. An overwhelming 76.25 percent of students had very little knowledge of CSR, though - out of which 42.50 percent declared that they had never heard of CSR (while there were only 2.50 percent non-respondents with this item).

Table 5 Students' appreciation of the degree of skills and abilities provided

Q: To what extent do you think the current curriculum provides you with enough practical skills and abilities to facilitate your successful integration on the labor market after graduation?	
To a large and very large extent	5.62%
Enough	29.37%
To a small and very small extent	51.25%
Not at all enough	10.00%

In terms of sources of information on CSR, a surprising 30 percent of the students indicated mass-media as their source of information on CSR. Other sources listed were conferences (7.50%), non-profits (5.62%), Junior Achievement Modules (optional modules taught outside formal curricula), the internet

and the workplace (below 3 percent). A large percentage of students (30.62%) did not respond to this question; and while 18.12 percent students had classes on CSR, only 8 percent could define CSR correctly, with 20.62 percent failing in this attempt; while the large majority of 71.20 percent did not try to define CSR at all. This data supports the claim that CSR is rarely mentioned within classes being taught in business and economics faculties, the concept being mentioned as more marginal, and as not very important within the context of various disciplines. At the same time, we should note that the degree of dissatisfaction of students with regard to the level of practical skills and abilities provided by current curricula is over 61 percent. Students still say they get little or no practical skills and knowledge to facilitate their successful integration into the labor market following graduation.

1.4 Transforming Business and Economics Education – the Path towards Educating Future, Socially Responsible Elites

The first three sections pinpointed the reality of CSR teaching in Romania as compared to the situation in Europe, highlighting the little or no CSR education provided by Romanian business and economics faculties as being part of the current curricula. Data also points to the limited student development opportunities outside classes being offered by the higher education system, along with little or no practical skills and abilities acquired during formal education. The main problem foreseen is the focus of Romanian universities on *lectures* rather than on practical assignments or applied teaching, along with old curricula encompassing little or no modern concepts or societal trends such as corporate social responsibility. The results are dissatisfied students, low levels of employment and the social alienation of young persons not being trained as responsible individuals and responsible future leaders.

We are a company dealing with recruitment and selection of personnel, including internship programs for students. The expectations of clients regarding the qualifications of students and/or recent graduates are very high. Sometimes our selection rates are only 5% of applicants, as it is very difficult to find people with the appropriate level of professional training... We wish to develop this segment of the labor market [i.e. students] to be ready for the expectations of our client companies. (Interview, Regional Branch Manager, Human Resources Company, Romania)

This section focuses on providing alternatives to stated problems and looks at them according to a set of criteria. The discussed alternatives aim at a diver-

sification of topics taught in business and economics faculties in Romania by including CSR as a core concept had by the existing curricula. Teaching CSR will allow for opportunities for practical skills development, exposing students not only to the concept of social responsibility applicable at both individual and corporate levels but also to the latest debates on the role of the business sector in society. The purpose of this section is thus to outline available alternatives when addressing the challenges of business and economics higher education institutions existing now; it also looks with a competitive perspective at needs as regards diversifying educational offerings that will attract more and high quality students, giving them prestige and expertise, and thereby positioning universities as engaged and socially responsible actors within the community. The ultimate goal for discussed alternatives is seeing the role of higher education system in generating and supporting needed changes in levels and forms of individual and corporate social responsibility within transitional society Romanian.

2 Policy Options

Three alternative solutions will be looked at:

- Option 1: Including CSR as a theme for existing courses
- Option 2: Introducing the CSR course into curricula (core and/or elective)
- Option 3: Offering within the university a combination of extracurricular CSR-focused activities (seminars, lectures, study visits, projects, practical activities etc.)

Options will be analyzed and compared according to the following criteria:

- The existence of able and trained people
- Opportunities for practical projects/activities for students
- The number of stakeholders involved in implementation
- Costs of implementation
- Degree of reaching the target group (students)
- Quality and diversity of CSR information
- Degree of integration of CSR within other knowledge
- Compliance with reforming trends and European standards
- Compliance with existing bureaucratic procedures

2.1 Policy Option 1: Embedding CSR as a theme in the existing courses

The first approach to including CSR in the curricula of business and economics faculties in Romania is embedding CSR in existing courses, with this also being the choice of 38 percent of European institutions included in the Matten and Moon's 2004 study. This solution would assume that every course identified as a potential one for CSR education (see section 3.1 above) would include teaching knowledge of the concept and the practices of CSR. Connections should be made between CSR and the main topic of the course; also, CSR should be integrated at a reasonable proportion into practical and/or written student assignments. Putting CSR knowledge within existing courses would ensure a very high number of students being exposed to CSR education as part of their formal courses already being taught, some of which can be expected to be compulsory. This approach would also allow for the integration of CSR knowledge with other core concepts for business and economics. The danger to be avoided is to present CSR as a rather marginal concept within a wider framework of other, more important concepts, thereby diluting the content and value of the concept. Among the implementation issues needing consideration, the most important appear to be the high number of professors that would agree to include CSR in their existing courses - and that should be trained to teach CSR, i.e. for there will be a variety of classes that might include CSR-related knowledge (as previous curriculum analysis has revealed). (For an evaluation of this alternative, with criteria for analysis and comparison, refer to Annex 1).

2.2 Policy Option 2: Introducing CSR courses into the curricula (core and/or elective)

The second alternative solution concerning CSR education is creating special courses with a Corporate Social Responsibility topic, these being either core or elective. Teaching *optional* modules on CSR was the most preferred approach when it comes to mainstreaming CSR for European universities (47%) - while 27 percent chose to implement *compulsory* modules on CSR. Teaching a special course focusing on CSR allows an in-depth exposure to the concept and practice of CSR, ensuring unity for the concept. CSR could also be a topic for practical assignments and, given available time, other stakeholders regarding CSR development might become involved in the teaching process. Some issues needing to be considered when analyzing this option refer to bureaucrat-

ic procedures that should be followed in order to include a new course in formal curricula. According to the type of course, its degree of reaching students could attain 100 percent if it is compulsory, though this will be less if optional. Besides bureaucracy, the degree of novelty of such classes must be thought about, along with the limits on capacity and training available as regards teaching CSR in Romania; yet there is also European experience and knowledge that can be used, especially in terms of theory and a conceptual approach to CSR. As previously mentioned here, there are also practical examples of CSR projects emanating from various companies which have been developed and successfully implemented in Romania, e.g. pointing to case studies and course material that are locally based. Annex 1 provides an evaluation of this alternative according to criteria for analysis and comparison.

2.3 Policy Option 3: Offering within the university a combination of extracurricular CSR teaching activities (seminars, lectures, study visits, projects, practical activities etc.)

The third option within CSR education consists of providing, under a university umbrella though outside the formal curricula, a combination of 'other' CSR teaching activities - such as seminars, lectures, conferences, special events, and practical projects. This will allow for the greatest degree of diversity of approaches to CSR and for a variety of teaching methods, along with a high number of opportunities for practical skills' gaining and topic knowledge; it would additionally lead to the engagement of a large number of CSR stakeholders (non-profits, businesses, media etc.) who could put themselves forward to counterbalance the lack of trained academic staff teaching CSR. From a practical point of view, this will require a large amount of administrative work so as to organize events/lectures/seminars and other activities – so a committed person would be needed to successfully implement this. Some of the risks needing to be considered are that CSR will be approached mostly from practitioners' perspectives, thus diminishing its value as a *theoretical* concept; so its integration into the core business and economics education may be more difficult. The number of students being required to enroll here should not be estimated a too high a level as there are no formal requirements of any kind and no official recognition of such activities. One major hindrance to this option is that, even if it does allow CSR to be taught within a university, while involving human and material resources from the university, it still keeps CSR *outside* formal curri-

cula, i.e. preventing its entrance as a subject into the core business education body of a discipline. (For an evaluation of this alternative according to criteria for analysis and comparison refer to Annex 1).

3 Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Social responsibility is the greatest challenge of this century - and societies need to be 'well trained' to be able to successfully face this challenge. For former communist countries, the changed role of the state and the emergence of other important actors on the societal stage has been a very important change. The state is no longer the sole player within the societal game, making and breaking its own rules. A responsible and civically active citizenry is needed – and a reliable and professional education system is the key. Looking at the place and role of universities in generating and sustaining this needed social change, CSR education emerges both as a need and as a tool via which to educate future business elites to be socially responsible, thus also ensuring socially responsible conduct, through such formal curricula, by *individuals* (via people's exposure to the concept and to practices of corporate social responsibility). Besides universities, students, the business sector, non-profit organizations and the public sector should be considered when discussing such changes.

Whilst corporate responsibility remains high on the agenda for most leaders, there is an urgent need for more and better knowledge and skills as regards the changing role of business in society... To ensure that current and future managers are equipped to meet this challenge, partnerships between companies and business schools are critical. (Patrick de Smedt, Chairman of Microsoft Europe, Middle East and Africa)

Three alternative solutions have been introduced and discussed (according to a set of criteria detailed in Annex 1). There is no perfect solution to the problem - and the education system allows for flexibility in choosing tailored solutions, ones suited to a local situation. Analyses of proposed alternatives provide information on the advantages and risks entailed by each of them, allowing a freedom of choice therefore for specific local conditions. Nevertheless, in the light of European experiences and practices, and considering the state of Romanian higher education as a system, the *second policy option* would seem to be the most appropriate in addressing such challenges. When introducing optional CSR-related modules into business and economics faculties

in Romania, several of the problems seen in this study might be addressed. A CSR optional course would allow for an appropriate amount of time being dedicated to both theoretical and practical knowledge on the topic. In addition, it could accommodate guest speakers from business and non-profit sectors, allowing students to become familiar with a 'practitioner perspective'. A reasonable amount of practical assignments and team projects could also be included in the course so as to facilitate active learning and problem solving. The support of the business sector in the community may increase, in time, if the university proves to be the results-oriented partner that businesses seem to be looking for. The university autonomy existing in Romania lets universities decide upon changes in curricula as long as they accommodate the wider policy of the Ministry of Education and comply with existing legislation. It is thus in the power of the university *alone* to decide about whether or not to include an optional CSR module in the formal curricula. This solution is a first step to opening formal curricula towards including CSR as an important subject to be taught in both business and economics faculties.

I think there should be a specific discipline – maybe at the beginning called 'CSR and Business Ethics' – to facilitate its being accepted. This discipline should be compulsory at a MA/MSc level, seeing that undergraduate programs are training people for executive positions, while the MA/MSc programs train people for leadership positions... (Interview, Assistant professor, Romanian University)

In addition to supporting the secondly proposed policy option, some general recommendations for CSR education stakeholders can be made.

3.1 Recommendations for Universities

Universities should see themselves more as competitive actors on the education market, aiming to promote diverse and high quality educational offers to thereby attract good students. Teaching techniques, methods and tools should be adapted to current societal changes, and curricula should be adjusted continually to equip students with relevant theoretical and practical skills and knowledge. Integrating CSR into business and economics curricula will transform universities into triggers of social change, acting as engaged and socially responsible actors within the community. By teaching CSR, universities, and, specifically business and economics faculties, will contribute to educating future, socially responsible business elites.

By putting CSR at the heart of their curriculum, business schools can play their part in ensuring that tomorrow's leaders and companies think and act responsibly, creating value for both shareholders and society at large. (Craig Smith, Senior Fellow, Marketing and Management and Associate Dean, London Business School)

3.2 Recommendations for Students

Students should make every available opportunity to personally develop, whether this takes on board inside or outside the formal curricula; and they should act in a socially responsible manner both as individuals and also as members of their respective professional communities; and they need to put pressures upon universities to provide high quality educational services.

3.3 Recommendations for the Business and Non-Profit Sectors

The business community and non-profit organizations are the 'practitioner side' of the CSR education, and their input as regards efforts to include CSR in the higher education system is essential. Both businesses and non-profit organizations engaged in promoting and developing CSR in Romania should engage universities as *partners* in CSR-related projects, using activities as student development opportunities, and implementing them in *collaboration* with universities. Business and non-profit sectors might hold relevant resources that could be used for CSR teaching, for example, successful stories that can become case studies, or innovative partnerships tackling community problems that can point to the business value of CSR activities. Ideally, they should allow universities to use these knowledge resources for quality educational projects. In addition, they should also employ the research skills of academia to further their CSR projects and to measure CSR business and community effects.

Teaching CSR could be an excellent opportunity to materialize the intentions of a university to strengthen collaboration with practitioners. I think that a maximum of support would be given to a proposal to teach CSR if coming from a leader of the business community, displaying credibility and knowledge of the subject... (Interview, Assistant professor, Romanian University)

3.4 Recommendations for the Ministry of Education

The role of the Ministry of Education is to provide an overall framework to support proposed changes. Its main role should be to acknowledge the value of CSR education as regards business and economics education in Romania, while watching over the quality of higher education on offer by Romanian universities. Policies to promote equilibrium among theoretical and practical skills and knowledge included in formal curricula will be needed, along with planning and management of the education system in order to attain European standards in the areas of business and economics higher education.

We have chosen CSR as part of our strategy for improved competitiveness... It is part of the glue that binds together the re-launched Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs. (Gunter Verheugen, European Commission Vice-President for Enterprise and Industry)

The future drivers of CSR integration in teaching, as identified by the EABiS and ICCSR (2003) survey on teaching and researching CSR in Europe, are expected to come in the form of pressure from the business sector,

either indirectly, by entering degree specifications and the importance of CSR in school rankings, or directly, by approval and support coming from the corporate sector. This would suggest that European business schools see the marketplace assigning greater value to CSR in curricula... (EABiS, 2003: 4)

The road to European integration has shown us several times that changes regarded as being new, and coming from other countries have eventually got closer and closer to Romania - and have sooner or later become new for Romania. It is expected to be the same in the case of business pressure on the higher education system to produce highly trained graduates, not only in terms of specialized knowledge and technical capacities but also in terms of wider views on the global market and the impact of social issues on business decisions and practices overall.

Table 6 A rating of drivers as regards introducing CSR into curricula

Driver	Rating
Required for program accreditation	3.7
Business approval and support	3.4
Inclusion in business school rank	3.0
Employment success of graduates	2.6
Governmental incentives, requirements, regulations	2.5
Increased enrolments	2.3

Source: EABiS (2003: 5); rating ranges from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

This is a time for leaders to make a stand and lead the way... This is a time for business and economics faculties in Romania to take the lead in the social changes of society by putting CSR at the core of management education, so that they prove themselves pro-active and responsible institutions, training not only the managers of tomorrow but the *leaders* of tomorrow, whilst employing the European experiences gained by both academics and business leaders – because “ultimately, if CSR is to be integrated into mainstream business *practices* it needs to be embedded in the core of mainstream business *education*” (CSR Magazine, 2005: 5).

Managers know how, leaders know why. Managers do things right, leaders do the right thing... (Warren Benis and Burt Nanus)

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Annex 1

Evaluation of policy alternatives according to the proposed framework of the analysis

Criteria / Options	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Existence of capacity and trained people	low	low/medium	high
Opportunity for practical projects/activities for students	low	medium	high
Number of stakeholders involved in implementation	low	low/medium	high
Costs of implementation	medium	medium	medium
Degree of reaching the target group (students)	high	medium/high	low/medium
Quality and diversity of CSR information	low	high	high
Degree of integration of CSR among other knowledge	high	medium	medium
Compliance with reforming trends and European standards	high	high	high
Compliance with existing bureaucratic procedures	high	medium	medium