
The Corporate Social Responsibility Model in Romania: A Theoretical and Practical Approach for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

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In the context of Romania's accession to the European Union, the implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) into day-to-day business decisions has become one of the main pillars of the economic and social development. Although CSR was initially considered an attribute of large companies, especially international and multinational ones, in the last years the importance of the concept application was also demonstrated for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). This particular importance is based on the strategic advantages and positive stakeholders' implication that CSR usually

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brings on for the responsible companies. Considering the above mentioned premises, the purpose of the present research paper is to emphasize the main characteristics of CSR in Romania for all types of companies, but especially for SMEs. First part of the paper aims to synthesize the CSR models considering the specialized literature and the European requirements in the field. Second part of the paper is devoted to CSR model identification for the Romanian business environment based on theoretical and practical evidence. Finally, third part of the research aims to highlight the main advances in the domain of SMEs' CSR in Romania – what was done, as well as other necessary measures – what should be done, in order to transform this type of implication into strategic business actions developed according to the European and national requirements. Examples of best practices and relevant case studies would be analyzed for strongly confirming the theoretical framework and also an optimal model could be emphasized for SMEs in Romania.

Key words: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Model of CSR, Business Strategy, Comparative Advantage, Stakeholders, Small and Medium Sized Companies (SMEs), Business Environment in Romania

JEL Classification: M14, M19

1. Introduction

At the level of the European Union, the last years were marked by the economic crisis and the development of business-society models as a response to the increasing demands of different stakeholders. In this sense, CSR became a powerful instrument for differentiating companies on the market and for inducing competitive advantages for the responsible actors.

Due to its potential to consolidate business-society relationships and to rebuild trust in business by addressing community problems and challenges, CSR became an integral part of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and it represents one of the main pillars of the Europe's competitiveness model. In March 2010, in the current context of the economic crisis and the affirmation

of the knowledge-based society, the European Commission made a strong commitment to renew the European strategy for promoting CSR (Iamandi, 2011).

2. Literature review: CSR in SMEs in E.U.

There are a set of key-issues usually associated with CSR in the specialized literature: definition, theories and models of CSR; relationship business-society in the context of CSR; reasons for involving in CSR practices; advantages induced by CSR; relationship between financial and social performance; implementation of CSR by different types of companies etc.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) beneficiates of a wide range of definitions, but one that generally incorporates the most relevant aspects corresponds to the European Commission and its Multistakeholder Forum on CSR: 'a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis' (EMF on CSR, 2004, p. 3).

Because of the links identified in the specialized literature between CSR and competitiveness (see, for example, Martinuzzi, Gisch-Boie and Wiman, 2010; Iamandi, 2010; European Commission, 2008), the CSR-induced benefits could be synthesized as follows:

- Maximizing opportunities at the global level;
- Improving relations with stakeholders;
- Increasing brand value;
- Fostering business on the long term;
- Minimizing operational associated risks;
- Competitive differentiation (Iamandi, 2010).

For the purpose of the present research, we are going to take into account the recommendation of the European Commission (2003)

regarding the definition of SMEs: companies having less than 250 employees and a turnover of less or equal to € 50 million.

The importance of CSR in SMEs was specifically emphasized beginning with 2001 (European Commission, 2001), given the fact that SMEs represent the greater contributors to the economy and employment at the level of E.U.

Regarding the implementation of the CSR concept, large companies can usually address more easily the needs of their stakeholders and the ones of the society at large, meanwhile SMEs are more flexible and responsive, but less financially and time effective. The advantages induced by CSR positively influenced both large companies and SMEs, the difference being reflected in the nature and impact of the influence.

One of the specific advantages that CSR could bring for SMEs refers to the enhancement of their competitiveness in the market, considering the fact that SMEs are particularly active in one or more of the following fields of CSR: market, employees, society or environment, all of these fields forming *the comprehensive approach on CSR* (Austrian Institute for SME Research, 2007, p. 3).

In a specialized report, the ways in which CSR could positively influence the competitiveness of SMEs are presented as follows:

- Improved products and production processes, resulting in an enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty;
- Higher motivation and loyalty of employees, leading to a higher innovation and creativity;
- Better promotion due to the award of prizes and positive image;
- Better positioning on the labour market and better networking with business partners and authorities, including better access to public funds due to a better company image;

- Cost savings and increased profitability due to a more efficient use of human and production resources;
- Increased turnover or sales due to a competitive advantage derived from the above (Austrian Institute for SME Research, 2007, p. 3).

In order to benefit from the advantages induced by CSR, SMEs could develop and implement a set of responsible practices not very complex or cost-intensive (as it is the case of the examples that we are going to present in this research paper), but very efficient in terms of mutual advantages: for the company and for the society as well.

3. Brief description of CSR models in E.U.

Taking into account the different types of responsibilities that one company should assume regarding its stakeholders and the society as a whole, as well as the reasons behind adopting a responsible business conduct, four CSR strategic models are usually considered in the specialized literature (Galbreath, 2006; Iamandi, 2011), especially because of their propensity at European level: *CSR model based on shareholder strategy*, *CSR model based on altruistic strategy*, *CSR model based on reciprocal strategy* and *CSR model based on citizenship strategy*.

The CSR model based on shareholder strategy is founded on the assumption that the only responsibility of a company is to maximize revenues and profits for its shareholders, being reflected in the vision of the neo-liberal economist Milton Friedman. The firms that are applying this type of CSR model are adopting responsible business initiatives only in the light of improving their corporate profitability. This CSR strategy is a reactive one.

The CSR model based on altruistic strategy affirms the duty of a company to contribute to the development of the host community by 'giving something back to the community', without expecting anything in return. This type of corporate involvement strengthens the

relationship between company and society. This CSR strategy is a compensatory one.

The CSR model based on reciprocal strategy is best represented by the ‘enlightened self-interest’, being pragmatic by its nature. The company that applies such a CSR model tries to solve the conflict between its economic objectives and the social, environmental or moral pressures of the society at large. The corporate involvement is based on the assumption that CSR is a long-term investment that could bring benefits for the responsible companies. This CSR strategy is a proactive one.

The CSR model based on citizenship strategy has a wider coverage and recognizes the importance that various stakeholders have for the company, by taking into account the necessity of responding to their frequently divergent expectations. This CSR strategy is an integrated one (Galbreath, 2006; Iamandi, 2011).

For a detailed presentation of the four CSR models in terms of specific goals to be followed, implementation vehicles, measurement methods or instruments, beneficiaries of the responsible initiatives, corporate benefits and time-frame, see **Table 1**.

Table 1

CSR Models	
CSR Model = Main Issues =	
<i>1. Goal</i>	
<i>2. Vehicles</i>	
<i>3. Measurement</i>	
<i>4. Beneficiaries</i>	
<i>5. Corporate benefits</i>	
<i>6. Time frame</i>	
I. CSR Model based on Shareholder Strategy	II. CSR Model based on Altruistic Strategy
<i>1. Goal:</i> Profit	<i>1. Goal:</i> Giving-back to community

2. Vehicles: Rationalization, Self-interest	2. Vehicles: Philanthropy
3. Measurement: Financial results	3. Measurement: Donations
4. Beneficiaries: Shareholders, Others indirect	4. Beneficiaries: Community groups and causes
5. Corporate benefits: Financial	5. Corporate benefits: May not be measured
6. Time frame: Short-term vision	6. Time frame: Intermittent, Possibly timed
III. CSR Model based on Reciprocal Strategy	IV. CSR Model based on Citizenship Strategy
1. Goal: Mutual benefits	1. Goal: Sustainability, Transparency
2. Vehicles: PR, Partnerships, CSR forms	2. Vehicles: Corporate governance, Applied ethics
3. Measurement: Activity-based reporting	3. Measurement: Triple bottom-line, Holistic
4. Beneficiaries: Company and Community	4. Beneficiaries: Company, Partners, Wider society
5. Corporate benefits: Financial, Commercial, HR	5. Corporate benefits: Tangible and Intangible
6. Time frame: Medium- to Long-term vision	6. Time frame: Long-term vision

Source: Authors' adaptation after Galbreath (2006, pp. 176-180).

4. CSR models in Romania

The concept of CSR in Romania was introduced, at the beginning of 2000s, by the multinational companies (MNCs) that 'imported' their responsible practices from other more developed European countries. Although after 2004 the European Commission recognized the importance of CSR also for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and specialized reports appeared in Romania after its accession to the E.U., the implementation of responsible practices by SMEs is less developed and scarcely approached in our country, especially because of financial reasons.

Regarding the CSR of MNCs in Romania, two models could be identified, from the ones presented in the above section: *the CSR model based on reciprocal strategy* and *the CSR model based on shareholder strategy*, emphasizing the fact that the main purpose behind corporate involvement still is the pragmatic approach (Iamandi, 2011). One of the main challenges associated with these two models is represented by the fact that most of the companies implementing CSR practices in Romania do not strategically correlate their corporate social programs with the development of business objectives on the long-term, missing an important part of the competitive advantages that CSR could induce for the responsible companies.

Considering the above arguments, one of the objectives of the present paper is to identify the CSR models for the SMEs in Romania, based on a thorough analysis of a set of relevant examples in the field.

5. CSR of SMEs in Romania

Most of the researches in the field of SMEs are based on empirical analysis of practical examples, because of the specific nature of these companies. One of the main hindrances of analysing CSR in SMEs in Romania was represented by the fact that most of the responsible companies are involved in philanthropic actions without pursuing long-term strategies for correlating their economic, social and environmental objectives.

5.1. Analysis of best practices and relevant case studies

To pursue our research regarding the depiction of the CSR activities of the Romanian SMEs, we investigated several firms of which we selected a cluster of fifteen relevant companies. Our selection criteria consisted in: (a) *the availability of data* and *the propensity of the companies towards promoting their CSR activities* through their websites or other thematic websites, various press releases or enclosure/reference in

various national or international – mainly European focused – research reports and (b) *their field of activity*, our straight aim being to have a wide range of companies from this point of view and to assure the inclusion in the analysis of a miscellaneous cluster with potentially differentiated CSR activities (economic, social, environmental or global components of CSR). In addition, by using this criterion, we followed a subsidiary goal: taking into account the economic crisis and the way it affected the various domains of activity, we wanted to assure, at least for several companies, the existence of specific CSR accomplishments, following the broad diversification reasoning.

Therefore, we present our group of fifteen analysed companies with their respective main domains of activity: Baneasa Shopping City – general store; Borderline Services – human resources education, training and consultancy; Elmi Prod Farm – cleaning, polishing, perfuming and personal use products; Excedent – food and catering industry; Galfinband Galati – basic metal and fabricated metal products; Graphtec Design – advertising services and metallic construction works; Groove Hour – advertising, branding and promotional campaigns; Icemenerg – energetic research and development; Integrator Soft – supplying and implementing software solutions; Marketonline.ro – on-line electronics supplier; Muricom – food industry; Pallas Consulting – consultancy and accounting; Pluriconsult – consultancy and evaluation services; Ro-Credo – bread and pastry products; TuvKarpal – business and management consultancy activities.

5.2. Research premises and methodology

The development and implementation of CSR in Romanian SMEs in the last years and the lack of a strategic focus in designing CSR policies actually represent the two research premises of our study.

In order to analyse the CSR activities of the Romanian SMEs and to emphasize the main advances in the domain of SMEs' CSR in

Romania, we developed an integrative research based on two main levels:

- (I) We explored the public CSR actions of the fifteen selected companies in the framework of the four CSR pillars (Martinuzzi, Gisch-Boie and Wiman, 2010) that encompass *economic topics – EC, environmental topics – EN, social topics – S and global topics – G*. For a detailed presentation of the corresponding elements included in each of the four CSR pillars, see **Table 2**.
- (II) We complemented the first level of the analysis by investigating what CSR model best corresponds to the Romanian SMEs by referring to the four general CSR models in E.U.: *the model based on shareholder strategy, the model based on altruistic strategy, the model based on reciprocal strategy, the model based on citizenship strategy or a combination between them*.

Table 2

CSR Pillars

CSR – Economic topics (EC)	CSR – Environmental topics (EN)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pursue sound corporate governance practices ▪ Ensure transparency through economic, social & environmental reporting ▪ Engage in fair competition ▪ Foster innovation ▪ Combat bribery & corruption ▪ Employ socially responsible investments (SRI) ▪ Protect intellectual property rights ▪ Offer safe and high-quality products/services ▪ Foster sustainable consumption & production ▪ Implement sound risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the protection of air and water, land biodiversity ▪ Minimize the amount of toxic substances, emissions, sewage and waste ▪ Conserve natural resources, apply renewable energy & avoid the usage of raw materials ▪ Engage in climate protection ▪ Boost innovation for improvement in efficiency ▪ Consider the whole product life-cycle and facilitate reusability & recyclability of products.

management systems.	
CSR – Social topics (S)	CSR – Global topics (G)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage in fair and efficient human resource management (HRM) ▪ Guarantee safety, occupational health & security ▪ Respect freedom of association ▪ Abandon discrimination & encourage diversity ▪ Respect consumers' interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raise stakeholders' awareness for social & environmental topics ▪ Practice sound stakeholder management ▪ Facilitate sustainable supply chains ▪ Respect human rights ▪ Engage in poverty reduction ▪ Involve in the development of public policies.

Source: Martinuzzi, Gisch-Boie and Wiman (2010, p. 16).

5.3. Research results

In *Table 3* we present our findings regarding the inclusion of each company's CSR activities in accordance to the four CSR pillars, after analysing each action and attaching it to a certain CSR topic.

Table 3

Examples of CSR in SMEs in Romania

1. Company: BANEASA SHOPPING CITY	
<i>Main field of activity: General store</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A
CSR – Social topics (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 	CSR – Global topics (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support for fundraising campaign conducted by United Way (2010)
2. Company: BORDERLINE SERVICES S.R.L.*	
<i>Main field of activity: Human resources education, training and consultancy</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Free offer of educational services 	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A
CSR – Social topics (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 	CSR – Global topics (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Free offer of educational services
3. Company: ELMI PROD FARM S.R.L.*	
<i>Main field of activity: Cleaning, polishing, perfuming and personal use products</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC)	CSR – Environmental topics (EN)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A
CSR – Social topics (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 	CSR – Global topics (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Various sponsorships of humanitarian organizations or for humanitarian purposes
4. Company: EXCEDENT S.R.L.* <i>Main field of activity: Food and catering industry</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bonuses for loyal customers 	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A
CSR – Social topics (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial benefits for employees 	CSR – Global topics (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Donation of products and money to a homeless children care centre
5. Company: GALFINBAND S.A.** GALATI <i>Main field of activity: Basic metal and fabricated metal products</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equipment of schools' laboratories with IT 	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmentally friendly production
CSR – Social topics (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Occupational health and safety at work 	CSR – Global topics (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive CSR (workplace, society, environment) ▪ Dissemination of information on CSR ▪ Equipment of schools' laboratories with IT ▪ Sponsorships for humanitarian purposes (grants for children with low financial possibilities and outstanding results in school; donations for Pantelimon Parochial House)
6. Company: GRAPHTEC DESIGN S.R.L.* <i>Main field of activity: Advertising services and metallic construction works</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Client oriented policy 	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of ISO 14001 standards in order to reduce negative effects, to reduce energy consumption and to improve overall environmental performance
CSR – Social topics (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of the OHSAS 	CSR – Global topics (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive CSR (workplace,

18001 standards for the health and safety of its employees	society, market, environment)
7. Company: GROOVE HOUR S.R.L.* <i>Main field of activity: Advertising, branding and promotional campaigns</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of i-Tour Project on domestic tourism promotion and information 	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of i-Tour Project on domestic tourism promotion and information
CSR – Social topics (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 	CSR – Global topics (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotion of public involvement into national-wide issues related to economic development, health and cultural valorisation ▪ Implementation of i-Tour Project on domestic tourism promotion and information ▪ Support of the National Programme for Promoting Voluntary Blood Donation ▪ Support and promotion of the valorisation of historic monuments in Constantza
8. Company: ICEMENERG S.A.** <i>Main field of activity: Energetic research and development</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmentally friendly production processes
CSR – Social topics (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of employee training ▪ Organization of social events for employees ▪ Measures for health protection of employees ▪ Labour market integration of young people 	CSR – Global topics (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive CSR (workplace, society, environment)
9. Company: INTEGRATOR SOFT S.R.L.* <i>Main field of activity: Supplying and implementing software solutions</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A
CSR – Social topics (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 	CSR – Global topics (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organization and implementation

	of the social responsibility program 'From Theory to Practice' dedicated to Brasov students' integration into real-life practice (since 2004)
10. Company: MARKETONLINE.RO S.R.L.* <i>Main field of activity: On-line electronics supplier</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) ▪ Donation of 1% of all its revenues to an NGO that provides social services for disadvantaged groups (February-March 2008)	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) ▪ N/A
CSR – Social topics (S) ▪ N/A	CSR – Global topics (G) ▪ Donation of 1% of all its revenues to an NGO that provides social services for disadvantaged groups (February-March 2008)
11. Company: MURICOM S.R.L.* <i>Main field of activity: Food industry</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) ▪ N/A	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) ▪ N/A
CSR – Social topics (S) ▪ N/A	CSR – Global topics (G) ▪ Products sponsorship for kindergartens or health centres ▪ Products sponsorship during Christmas time for two churches that share packages for poor people ▪ Products sponsorship for two sport associations
12. Company: PALLAS CONSULTING S.R.L.* <i>Main field of activity: Consultancy and accounting</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) ▪ Recycling paper used in daily activities in collaboration with www.copaculdehartie.ro	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) ▪ Recycling paper used in daily activities in collaboration with www.copaculdehartie.ro
CSR – Social topics (S) ▪ Participation in the activities of the AIESEC students association www.aiesec.ro	CSR – Global topics (G) ▪ Encouragement of employees to donate 2% of income tax for charity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participation in the charity marathon 'Relay Carpathians' www.maratondhl.ro ▪ Sponsorships
13. Company: PLURICONSULT S.R.L.* <i>Main field of activity: Consultancy and evaluation services</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stimulation of professional associability (public-private partnerships) within the assessing policy programs and projects domain in Romania 	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A
CSR – Social topics (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 	CSR – Global topics (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A
14. Company: RO-CREDO S.R.L.* <i>Main field of activity: Bread and pastry products</i>	
CSR – Economic topics (EC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of the relationships with the suppliers and customers ▪ Implementation of 'foods for the future' program (in 2007: launch of bakery products with long shelf life and use of natural products, without additives and preservatives) ▪ Development of new products (2010-2011) according to the new exigencies of the market (functional products for metabolic and special diseases) ▪ Promotion of the campaign 'Today I eat healthy' for information and awareness of young people and students ▪ Consolidation of the partnership with the Ministry of Health 	CSR – Environmental topics (EN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measurement of the ecological impact of their products ▪ Promotion of sustainable development
CSR – Social topics (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consolidation of the partnership with the Ministry of Health ▪ Value promotion like respect and care for the employees 	CSR – Global topics (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involvement on local, national and international level to consolidate and promote the Romanian cultural values and traditions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participation in social and ecological projects ▪ Involvement in education both for children and grownups towards a healthy nutrition ▪ Promotion of the campaign 'Today I eat healthy' for information and awareness of young people and students ▪ Support of programs for social canteens and churches: theological seminary canteen of Tomis Archdiocese, Social canteens St. Andrew and Three Hierarchs, St. Parascheva etc. ▪ Support for children with special needs: Fair Play Association – Social canteen and children nursery, Speranta Association for children with AIDS, MGH Foundation for children with AIDS, CHI Ro Foundation for children with AIDS ▪ Support for talented children and young people involved in extracurricular and school activities ▪ Support for sports ▪ Consolidation of the partnership with the Ministry of Health
<p>15. Company: TUVKARPAT S.R.L.* <i>Main field of activity: Business and management consultancy activities</i></p>	
<p>CSR – Economic topics (EC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of customer feedback opportunities 	<p>CSR – Environmental topics (EN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmentally friendly production processes ▪ Implementation of ISO 14001 for environmental standards
<p>CSR – Social topics (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement of the infrastructure at the workplace ▪ Flexible working hours ▪ Permanent employer-employee 	<p>CSR – Global topics (G)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive CSR (workplace, market, society, environment).

dialogue and training ▪ Provision of customer feedback opportunities	
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Notes: * - Company with limited liability (LTD); ** - Stock company.

Source: Mandl & Dorr (2007, p. 69); CNIPMMR (2007, pp. 44-51);

<http://www.boussolecsr.eu/en/infopage/12-Best%20practices>;

<http://www.baneasashoppingcity.ro/>;

<http://www.comunicatedepresa.ro/borderline-services/>;

<http://www.firme.info/elmi-prodfarm-srl-cui40005/>;

<http://www.datasmart.ro/firme/14962692-excedent-srl>;

<http://www.galfinband.ro/>;

<http://www.graphtec.ro/>;

<http://www.groovehour.com/>;

<http://www.icemenerg.ro/>;

<http://www.integrator.ro/>;

http://www.integrator.ro/noutati_english.htm;

<http://www.marketonline.ro/>;

<http://www.dragosdehelean.ro/2008/02/07/campanie-de-marketing-legat-de-o-cauza-facuta-de-un-imm/>;

<http://www.bizoo.ro/firma/muricom>;

<http://www.cylex-romania.ro/bucuresti/pallas+consulting+srl-500430.html>;

<http://www.pluriconsult.ro/home>;

<http://www.bizoo.ro/firma/rocredo>;

<http://www.tuvkarpat.ro/ro/>.

The results show that the most part of the SMEs' CSR actions fall into the fourth category – *global topics* – *G*, being mainly activities engaging the responsible company in poverty reduction. In addition, except for one company, all the other fourteen analysed companies participate in actions that could be considered as having a global impact in terms of the CSR pillars, which emphasizes the importance of different stakeholders for the corporate activities.

The fourth pillar is closely followed by the first one, *economic topics* – *EC*. Ten of the fifteen companies focus on deeds that confirm their inclination towards the EC pillar. Among the topics that are worth mentioning there are: offering safe and high-quality products or services, fostering sustainable consumption and production and even fostering innovation.

The second and the third pillar seem to have the same importance: seven companies out of the fifteen ones are involved in environmental or social activities.

As far as the environmental pillar (*environmental topics – EN*) is concerned, the companies focus mainly on boosting innovation for efficiency improvement, considering the whole product life-cycle and facilitating reusability and recyclability of products. These topics are reflected largely by using environmentally friendly production processes or by implementing various international standards.

With regard to the social pillar (*social topics – S*), the activities reflect predominantly the engagement in fair and efficient human resource management (HRM), while guaranteeing safety, occupational health and security at the workplace.

The analysis of the case studies corresponding to the fifteen companies also takes into account *the potential benefits* that the responsible companies have obtained or are to obtain because of their involvement in CSR practices. In this way, a pragmatic approach (we present here only the impact of the analysed CSR activities at corporate level) emphasizes the following benefits considered by companies: better image; better atmosphere; higher awareness among the target group; better financial results and increased turnover on the short-term; higher efficiency; better customer relations; higher number of customers; less staff problems (Mandl & Dorr, 2007, p. 69).

5.4. Optimal CSR model for SMEs in Romania

The analysis of the CSR actions conducted by SMEs in Romania emphasizes a short-term and intermittent vision of their practices, not being aware of the benefits that CSR could bring on the medium- and long-term. The two CSR models usually applied by the Romanian SMEs are based on the shareholder strategy and on the altruistic strategy, being mainly basic in their nature.

The best option for the Romanian SMEs would be, exactly like in the case of large companies, to concentrate more on correlating business and social objectives on medium- and long-term, and to put a greater emphasis on *the CSR model based on reciprocal strategy*.

A mix between the four theoretical models, according to the specific objectives of each company, would actually represent the optimal choice in this sense, especially taking into account the general trend registered at the level of the E.U. to concentrate most of the CSR actions in the direction of the model based on the citizenship strategy.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The development of CSR in Romanian SMEs in the last years, although highly hindered by the economic crisis, proves the importance that all the companies, no matter their size, put on the comprehensive accomplishment of economic, social, environmental and global objectives. The increasing role of the stakeholders in all the business decisions is reflected by the fact that most of the analysed companies are considering the global aspects a top priority. At the same time, most of the CSR actions of the Romanian SMEs are directed at employees and customers, because of their positive impact on the short-term.

The main recommendations in the field envisage, on one hand, the necessity of concentrating more on medium- or long-term vision, and, on the other hand, the requisite to consolidate the competitive role that CSR could have for SMEs by directly implementing specific measures of the reciprocal strategy. The main problem that remains in here is represented by the lack of financial resources that most of the SMEs are declaring when questioned about their CSR vision.

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