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КОРПОРАТИВНАЯ СОЦИАЛЬНАЯ ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬ В СТРАНАХ ЕАЭС

Аннотация. В статье поставлена в центр внимания множественность измерений концепции КСО, даны примеры проектов КСО в регионе Большой Евразии, проанализировано развитие стратегии корпоративной социальной ответственности в России и странах ЕАЭС.

Ключевые слова: КСО, корпоративная социальная ответственность, Евразийский экономический союз (ЕАЭС), Большая Евразия, инновации, устойчивое развитие.

Introduction

The global business community challenges the era of remarkable social, political and economic transformations. We exist now in the new model of global information society with constantly increasing tempo of development and simultaneously surviving most serious integration processes.

Among the most ambitious integration project can be called the initiative of the Greater Eurasia region. In 2016 at St. Petersburg International Economic Forum President Vladimir Putin claimed the idea of creation of greater partnership in the Eurasian region uniting EAEU, China, India, Pakistan, Iran and other states of Eurasian continent. At the same time President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev offered a project of EAEU – EU Forum.

The Eurasian union is positioned as an innovative form of economic cooperation responding to global political and economic changes. The concept of EAEU suggest creation of an economic union of state with unified policies in major spheres of economics: removal of limitations for trans-border movement of goods, services, capitals, work force; lowering logistic expenses; promotion of competition at the joint market; lower prices; higher productivity; production intensification due to stronger demand and growing employment; boosting market volume. Foreign states also show interest to cooperation with EAEU, creation of free trade zones etc.

Globalization, internationalization, transcontinental integration projects bring new requirements to management, forces to closer cooperation with state institutions, civic institutions. Corporations actively use the potential of soft power, economic and public diplomacy in order to achieve specific economic goals, in many cases via corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The notion of CSR is quite versatile having no unified definition. Its evolution was shown in the monograph by Eugeny Blagov “CSR: evolution of the concept”. Prof. Blagov revealed the major interpretations of the notion in the theory of strategic management depending on the concepts of planning, positioning, resource and dynamic abilities [2, 10]. SCR is understood as a voluntary solution of companies to take part in improvement of social life and environment [3, 44], or – as a charity, or – as a tool of profit maximizing. In order to overcome such versatility the ISO 26000 standard was brought to life.

Hypothesis

In order to strengthen the integration processes and competitiveness of EAEU, its state-members shall boost the joint projects in the field of CSR. Strategically important development of the Union depends both on economic growth, and on reputation of sustainable development of its enterprises.

Results and discussion

CSR first appears in strategies of American and European companies in the middle of XX century. Some researchers indicate the beginning of CSR culture in Germany since 1521 when in Augsburg had been built the first social quarters. In 2010 the German government initiates the Aktionsplan CSR, which actually means the CSR becomes a piece of the national idea. The project was called “CSR – Made in Germany” [4]. “Made in Germany” mark means that at least 55% of production is concentrated inside the country, and fully responds to most strict criteria of sustainability.

Such world-famous organizations as the UN and the EU are focused on developing and adhering to responsible business practices. They are aware of the importance of social responsibility, the increase of which leads not only to the development of business, but also to the development of the states themselves.

Corporate social responsibility strengthens its positions in modern Russian business community. CSR introduces itself as a response of business to the problems of sustainable development. Companies start to cooperate with authorities in order to raise the level of social and economic life as a modern consumer demands more than just goods and services. A customer nowadays is interested in social and cultural-humanitarian accomplishment of a business. More Russian companies provide non-financial reporting. In 2014 the library of non-financial report of Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs contained 469 reports from companies operating at Russian market.

The major stimulus of CSR development in Russia come outside – requirements of international partners, conditions of external markets, growth of population prosperity. The chief challenge for development of CSR in Russia is its high cost and lack of comprehensive methods of efficiency assessment. Solution of social and ecologic problems of the society by companies is regarded as long-term investment with unknown results. They are expected to reveal new market possibilities, avoid risks and improve reputation, but their high costs is the key argument to cut SCR programs.

In most cases SCR programs aim at providing modern safe conditions for personnel, increase staff qualification, improve their health protection and industrial safety. Among external programs the leaders are corporate philanthropic or charity programs (aid for hospitals, disabled societies etc). Large Russian companies concentrate on ecologic projects (e.g. Gazprom, Russian Railways, Rosatom etc). Besides, a separate article in reports belongs to sports, education and culture projects.

A considerable difference of Russian experience from international practice is a generally low level of corporate development and introduction of ethic codes, inactive participation of CEOs in CSR projects. While in foreign companies CSR and issues of sustainable development fall under responsibility of director boards and CEOs, in Russia these programs usually belong to departments responsible for personnel or PR.

A similar situation can be seen in other states of EAEU. In 2015, the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) entered into force, signed by the heads of the Russian Federation, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Kazakhstan. The main objectives of the union were:

— creation of the necessary conditions for the development of the economies of the listed states, which will contribute to raising the standard of living of the population;

— striving to form a single market for goods, services, capital and labor resources within the Union;

— modernization, cooperation and increase of competitiveness of national economies in the global economy.

D.Galtsina and O.Filatova [5] recommend to intensify development of national CSR systems in EAEU in order to upgrade the discussion between Eurasian Economic Commission and business communities of EAEU states to the new level of efficiency and provision of stable long-term development.

Armenia joined the UN Global Compact “Towards Corporate Social Responsibility” in 2006. In 2015, a conference on CSR in vocational education was held in Yerevan. Armenia systematically carries out reforms for the development of social partnership between educational institutions, private business, trade unions, employers and state structures. As a result, assistance to people with disabilities, the organization of children's camps, free travel for trainees (South Caucasus Railway), work experience for students and work for graduates, the organization of trainings (Kompass LLC (Armenia)), etc.

VTB Bank (Armenia) implements projects in the field of CSR on an ongoing basis, affecting education, culture and charity. In 2016, the bank provided financial assistance to children with cerebral palsy from dysfunctional families, and also allocated funds for the construction of a center for children with cerebral palsy and oncological diseases. In the field of sports, VTB (Armenia) continues to support the Yerevan Sailing Club [6].

“CSR Armenia” organization is engaged in the program of creating a single group of companies, which strengthens the CSR system through its joint projects. Special attention is attached to environmental issues and environmental protection. The issue of institutionalization of CSR in Armenia, namely the direct inclusion of CSR programs in the strategic plans of companies, is also acute effective human resource management, positive reputation among stakeholders, etc. The organizations also come up with the position that the state should take into account the development of CSR in regulatory documents.

Over the past five years, CSR practices in Belarus have become more systematic, but not all companies add social responsibility to their strategic plans.

On July 1, 2005, the president signed a decree “On the provision and use of gratuitous (sponsorship) assistance. The stakeholders indicate the difficulty of applying this decree and advocate for its improvement.

In 2015, Bank VEB developed a CSR strategy for the period 2016-2018. The Bank has taken initiatives to support theaters, festivals, museums, to preserve historical heritage, to support sporting achievements.

EPAM organizes trainings and open lectures for students, opens research IT laboratories for universities. They opened the innovation studio E-KIDS for schoolchildren [7].

MTS (Belarus) supports sport (took part in the holding of the 27th European Rhythmic Gymnastics Championships), cultural events (the White Square advertising and marketing festival), social projects (computer literacy training for the elderly).

By virtue of the focus of its business, MTS (Belarus) creates special tariff plans for different social groups (“Internet for teachers”) [7].

However, the financial results from CSR activities in Belarusian companies remain dubious. The degree of integration of such projects in the strategic plans of companies is negligible. The development of CSR in Belarus is hampered not only by financial difficulties, but also by a lack of awareness of the essence of CSR, the lack of an example to follow, a small degree of institutionalization.

Kazakhstan has set a goal: to become one of the 30 most developed countries by 2050. One can follow such political vector only through widespread innovation development, through a system of economic and social principles. Accordingly, one of the most important tasks for Kazakhstan, in the context of this policy course, is the development of CSR strategies. This includes: creating mechanisms that will help determine the degree of efficiency of tax incentives

to increase business interest in CSR, systematic promotion of CSR information in society and in business, institutionalization, detailing CSR principles in legislation, ensuring “transparency and accountability of local authorities on the use of social investments, the creation of a research base in the field of CSR” [8].

In Kyrgyzstan, with regard to CSR, there is an acute question of a systematic approach to this phenomenon. Without understanding CSR as a system, without introducing CSR into the strategic plans of companies, it is impossible to effectively use this phenomenon to improve their financial performance and competitiveness. Despite the difficulties in managing CSR, we can note the success of several companies in this direction.

In 2017, DemirBank won in the nomination "Achievements in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility". However, it was difficult to find projects on the basis of which the company won, as there are no open standardized social reports.

A little more information can be given on the socially oriented activities of Gazprom Kyrgyzstan. The company tries to participate in the development of society, in the development of the ecological, economic and social sphere. Thanks to the Gazprom for Children program, fitness complexes are being built in Kyrgyzstan. By 2019, a school with the latest equipment and sports facilities will be built in Bishkek. Every year, the company provides charitable assistance to veterans of the Great Patriotic War (congratulations to veterans on Victory Day), children and children's institutions (more than 1,000 children are assisted in the framework of the “Caravan of Good” action) [10].

The sectors most involved in CSR are subsoil use, telecommunications, financial companies, trade. We see that in Kyrgyzstan there are examples of the use of CSR in the activities of organizations. But this can be called non-systemic charity, which creates much more business risks than CSR, which does not improve financial performance and can have a bad effect on the company's reputation. Kyrgyzstan needs to connect to sustainable development processes. But such a connection should be deliberate and planned. The state and companies should form their vector of interaction with CSR, which will ensure efficiency in the field of social responsibility.

All of these countries lack their own features of CSR, which would characterize the direction of social actions of business and the state. This demonstrates the underdevelopment of the concept of corporate social responsibility.

One of the goals of the union is to increase competitiveness. In today's world, this is difficult to achieve if you do not apply CSR strategies. Associations between countries can only enhance the effect due to synergy in this matter. The development and movement of the EAEU can create special conditions for promoting business on the path of sustainable development. The Union, through CSR, can contribute to raising the standard of living in the participating countries.

The EAEU can follow in the footsteps of the EU, and create its own regulations and projects to stimulate CSR, which will be based on the “international ideological field shaped by the provisions of the International Labor Organization (ILO), Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), World Summits and so on. ” Improving not only the legal framework, but also the creation of non-legislative initiatives aimed at encouraging businesses to systematically and volumetrically apply CSR practices, will bring the EAEU countries to a new level of living standards.

At the EAEU level, it is possible to propose the following: to adopt regulations on corporate behavior of companies, develop standards for CSR assessment and reporting for the countries of the Union, form institutional structures, and carry out training and certification of CSR specialists.

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