

# **Communication on Engagement 2017**

## **Implementing UN Global Compact principles in the Association of Danish Law Firms (Danske Advokater)**

### **1. Introduction**

I am pleased to confirm that the Association of Danish Law Firms (Danske Advokater) reaffirms its support of the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti- Corruption.

In this our third Communication on Engagement, we describe our actions to integrate the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations. We are also committed to share this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Yours sincerely

Paul Mollerup

Managing Director

## **2. The Association of Danish Law Firms (Danske Advokater)**

The Association of Danish Law Firms was founded in January 2008 in order to further the interests of Danish law firms, their owners and employees. The goal is to promote the practice of law and the use of lawyers in society, and be an important public voice in respect to the rule of law and other matters essential to the functioning of a modern democratic society. We therefore bear actively to the law-making process by participating in public consultations as well as appointing members to governmental committees.

The Association has two main tasks as a business association for the Danish law firms:

1. To further the interests of our members by exerting influence on politicians and policy makers within all policy areas of interest to law firms.
2. To help develop the business of running law firms, enabling our members to meet their current challenges – and the challenges of the future – with respect to competition, new services, human resources and best practice.

Furthermore, we provide a wide range of services and products to our members:

- Continuing legal education – tailored to the special requirements of law firms – both legal and law firm management. As the law firm is the member entity, we offer training courses to the entire law firm staff - lawyers, administrative personnel and secretaries alike.
- Advice on innovation, IT and business development in the law firm.
- Access to domestic and international networks, benchmark data, political influence and cash benefits such as reduced course fees, competitive legal indemnity insurance, legal publications and conferences.

A council and a Board of Directors legally governs the Association of Danish Law Firms. They jointly formulate the Association's political views. Members of the Council are elected at the General Assembly, and they elect the Board of Directors from their midst. The Association's Managing Director and management oversee the daily activities of the 29 employees of the Secretariat and co-ordinate the activities of the large number of subcommittees and network groups linked to the Association. The Secretariat is located in premises, which enables the Association of Danish Law Firms to host and offer fully catered conference-, continued legal education-, and meeting facilities.

You can find further information on our website: [www.danskeadvokater.dk](http://www.danskeadvokater.dk)

### **3. Our approach to the 10 principles – our CSR strategy**

In the fall of 2010, the Association of Danish Law Firms joined the UN Global Compact program. We defined three major stakeholder groups that guided the direction of our CSR policy - where we wanted to make a difference within the natural context of our business. These are:

1. People (employees and members of our Association – the law firms)
2. Society (locally)
3. Society (globally)

We decided to implement our CSR initiatives in respect to the three subareas - people, planet and profit, in two stages. The first stage was concentrated on implementing initiatives within the Secretariat of the Association of Danish Law Firms to ensure that all members of staff understood UN's basic principles, and to ensure the willingness to implement sustainable solutions throughout the organization. The second stage was directed at initiatives outside the Secretariat, first towards our members- the law firms, and later towards society – first locally and finally globally.

The second stage of this implementation process is now our primary focus, without forgetting to implement ongoing improvements to the wellbeing of our employees. We focus on how to motivate our members, the law firms in Denmark, to embrace CSR principles, both in their law firms, but also towards their clients and we do this through the launch of the “Lawyers Code”.

#### **3. a. Summary of ongoing CSR initiatives – within our own organisation.**

The CSR initiatives, which make most sense in the context of our relatively small organisation, have been initiatives concerning people (securing a healthy and safe working environment, where our employees thrive) and our planet (our contribution to minimising our impact on the environment).

##### **People (human rights and labour)**

The Association of Danish Law Firms respects the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and we believe that all employees have the right to individual freedom of expression and opinion. These ideals are at the foundation of our workplace culture. We encourage these ideals through regular staff development interviews and regular meetings between management and employees, where any work related topic can be discussed.

We conducted our latest work-place assessment survey in November 2016. The survey showed a relatively high level of employee satisfaction with only a few areas of discontent e.g. high noise-levels in certain areas, temperature issues at the peaks of summer and winter, and finally a feeling of consistent heavy workloads. The Working Environment Committee, which consists of representatives of both management and employees, address the areas of employee discontent and regularly implement initiatives to improve employee satisfaction. The next work place assessment survey will be conducted at the end of 2019.

New initiatives since our last COE include:

- Implementation of a new performance and development review system- NXT LVL, which primary focuses on developing the individual employee, rather than reviewing their accomplishments in the course of the year. The systems provokes regular feedback and an ongoing and continuous focus on developing the individual for the benefit of our Association, as well as the individual.
- Focus on health and the benefits of regular exercise by inciting employees to be more active by taking part in friendly pedometer challenges. At regular intervals we divide the staff into small teams that compete in obtaining the highest number of steps individually and as teams.
- In order to enhance our employees understanding of their own personality and inner workings, and at the same time improve co-operation, the working climate and minimise future conflicts, all employees were invited to take an enneagram (personality) test. The initiative culminated in all employees participating in a workshop. At the workshop, everyone was given the possibility to discuss and explore the reactions, motivations etc. of their co-workers, creating a better understanding of themselves and others.
- Introducing programs, where employees under stress or other troubled periods of their life can receive help through coaching sessions from an external source.
- We have been determined to create diversity throughout the Association and for example to create equal representation of males and females in the secretariat, the council, the Board of Directors and in working-groups etc. At the moment our current status is:
  - Secretariat - 38% male, 62 % female.
  - Council - 72 % - male, 28 % female
  - Board of directors - 78 % male, 22 % female, including a female president
  - Working group - No current statistics, but the Board of directors have issued a good governance policy, which deems that new members should be appointed every 6 years, and at the time of appointment, there must be taken heed to diversity in gender, age, geography and firm size.
- As a part of our conference facility, we also cater to a large number of guests, through Fazer Food Services. Fazer strives to help our guests and employees find a balanced and varied diet. To support this effort, they follow the national and Nordic nutritional recommendations and regulations, for example “The Keyhole” certificate with a focus on less and/or healthier fat, less sugar, less salt, more dietary fiber and wholegrain. Fazer’s main social and environmental impact is driven by the raw materials they use. They are driven by the belief that there is always more to be done, so they work hard for traceability and food safety through responsible sourcing. Annually updated category plans take into account corporate responsibility issues and negative impacts are continuously reduced through purchase compliance and follow-up. By promoting correct portion size, Fazer is also able to reduce the amount of wasted food. As a new initiative, Fazer has a goal of zero accidents in the workplace. This initiative is launched through safety guidelines outlined in

booklets and other material, conducting self-assessment on regulations, having safety risk assessments with all employees and all accidents are reported immediately.

## **Goals**

It is our goal to have a high rate of employee satisfaction and a low rate of absenteeism.

## **Monitoring and evaluating performances**

We believe that continuous dialogue with employees is the best way of securing a good working environment and preventing stress. The management, the Working Environment Committee and the HR-manager have the overall responsibility for monitoring the employees' well-being, both on a regular basis and through the new annual development system" (see above). By using these systems, we promote communication and provide useful feedback on development, but also individual performance, which facilitates better working relationships. Continuous feedback of employee performance is an important aspect in retaining a good work environment and ensure employee development. An actual "Board of Praise" has been placed in a centrally located position to remind everyone that praising each other gives a more fulfilling and productive work life.

Fazer Food services has a thorough compliance programme to ensure that their food services live up to Fazer's responsibility and ethical programme, e.g. the possibility for all employees or third party to anonymously contact the Group CEO, Group Legal or Risk Management or use the helpline system without risk of retaliation or other negative consequences.

## **Planet (environment)**

Our "Green Purchasing Policy", in which environmental considerations are essential, has been normative for all our 2015 - 2017 purchases. New initiatives that supplement the environmental considerations stated in "Communication of Engagement from 2015, are:

- Primarily focusing on social media and electronic newsletters, which means that we have stopped producing our quarterly magazine, which was printed and sent out to approximately 7.000 recipients. Our aim is to save paper and the energy loss from production and distribution.
- Further focus on recycling, e.g. the recycling of badge holders and lanyards from conference-, continued legal education-, meetings, etc. held at our facilities.
- A continuous focus on minimizing the amount of printed-paper.

## **Goals**

Our goal is to keep a constant focus on our environmental impact to ensure that we keep up awareness. We wish to continue to find areas where we can reduce our CO2 emissions and motivate our employees to follow the prescribed guidelines.

## **How we monitor and evaluate performances**

Our electricity and paper usage is closely monitored and registered. Furthermore, Fazer's performance and adherence to their organic policy is carefully monitored through their compliance programme, e.g. they daily weigh the amount of food waste. This waste is segregated from other waste, so it can be re-cycled.

### **3. b. Summary of CSR initiatives – towards the legal profession.**

The legal profession is a socially responsible profession that contributes to society. The Association's ambition is not only to show society that the legal profession largely contributes to securing the rule of law and due process, but also show that the profession engages in a large number of sustainable and pro bono initiatives.

A way to inspire more members to do even more is through the "Lawyers Code", a form of social responsibility code for the legal profession. The voluntary code prescribes that the law firms must devise goals for their pro bono work, handling ethical dilemmas and focusing on leadership, diversity and transparency. We hope that this code will act as an inspiration and standard for the whole profession. In the course of two years, the signatories of the code have grown from 14 to 76 law firms, representing both small and large law firms. Later this year, we publish the first report on "The Lawyers Code", where the progress will be elaborated further. Further information can be found on [www.advokatkodeks.dk](http://www.advokatkodeks.dk).

#### **People (human rights and labour)**

##### **i. Local initiatives (Denmark)**

Since our latest COE, the Association of Danish Law Firms, has:

- Put "access to justice" on the top of our agenda.
- At the beginning of 2017 we have produced a rapport with a number of concrete proposals together with the "Danish Bar and Law Society" and various "Legal Aid stakeholders" on how to improve the Danish legal aid system. This rapport has been forwarded to the Ministry of Justice and the first steps from their hands have been taken to reform the legal aid system.
- The Association is investigating whether digitalisation and LegalTech can help a larger number of society have a better access to justice.
- During 2016 and 2017 we have run a series of articles on pro bono work to increase our members' awareness on the value and effect of pro bono work and social responsibility.
- To enhance diversity in the legal profession, the Association in conjunction with The Association New Dane (Nydanser), one of Denmark's leading independent, knowledge-based centers for diversity, and our section for law students "The Law Factory" ran a diversity program "Law For All" reaching out to high schools in Denmark to dispel prejudices about attending law school. The specific goal of these visits were to enhance more ethnical minorities to choose law school and the legal profession.
- In collaboration with Justitia, a Danish judicial think tank, we have launched "Justitia Academy" for law students with an interest in the state of law. With this project, we aim to

promote the rule of law, democracy, fundamental human rights and freedom rights, in order to create a greater culture of awareness amongst the law students.

- In 2016 we conducted a survey with The Association of Danish Lawyers and Economists (djøf) on resilience and stress in the legal profession. The survey resulted in a guide, newsletters, a short film, a conference, and generally creating awareness on how to recognize and treat co-workers and employees with the traces of stress related problems.

### **Profit (anti-corruption)**

- The Association of Danish Law Firms carefully follows the professions obligations in preventing money laundering and corruption. We regularly update our toolkit in order to secure that our members have concurring anti-money laundering policies.
- Lately we have:
  - Produced a guide on the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) , aiding the law firms implement these. This work continues, developing guidelines within specific legal areas.
  - Introduced a favorable agreement with a private supplier “Got Ethics”, enabling our members to implement a whistle-blower system in a quick and carefree way.
  - Updated our anti-money laundering policies to concur with the latest changes to the anti-money laundering regulations and EU-directives – and helping our members to implement these through newsletter, roadshows, etc.

### **ii. Global Initiatives**

On a more global level The Association of Danish Law Firms collaborates with the International Bar Association (IBA) on several projects concerning Diversity, Human Rights and Access to Justice. In our experience, even though Denmark is a small country, we often tend to do things a little differently and quicker and can therefore be a source of inspiration to global initiatives.

### **Goals – national and global**

It is our goal to inspire and motivate our members and the legal profession to act as social responsible members of society using their specific skills and qualifications to reach this goal.

### **Monitoring and evaluating performances**

The legal profession has always done a lot of pro bono work and this is still the case. Many law firms are very active and we see it as one of our objectives, to tell society about these initiatives and thereby inspire the rest of the profession to do more.

The first rapport on the status of the “Lawyer Code” will be published later in 2017. In this rapport the law firms on the basis of a “comply or explain” principle have to monitor and rapport on their progress on the 6 elements stated in the Code. The association of Danish Law Firms hopes that the awareness and knowledge of the various initiatives can inspire others to new initiatives.

## 4. Future initiatives

In 2018 and 2019, we are planning to:

- Further our initiatives towards enhancing “access to justice”
- Continue our focus on employee well-being, both mental and physical health and the benefits that this will have in our everyday work life
- Continue our efforts to reduce our consumption of paper and electricity
- Strengthen our commitment in relation to communicating on the benefits of CSR, pro bono work, diversity, employee well-being and the benefits of good management and leadership, anti-corruption, etc., – especially towards our members
- Secure as many of our members as possible sign the “Lawyers Code” and launching the story of its benefits to the public.
- The final part of the ‘Law for all’ project has a goal to create educational materials to be used by career counselors, so they are better at advising students about the possibilities regarding Law studies and inspire more high school students of all social backgrounds and ethnical minorities to study law.
- Produce more compliance guides directed to law firms.

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