



# 19 COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT

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

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 fifth 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 policymakers 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 legaltech, compliance, IT and business development in the law firm.
- Access to domestic and international networks, benchmark data, political influence and cash benefits such as reduced fees on 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 31 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 in the secretariat and within 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 our advokatKODEKS –the“Lawyers Code”, which is a CSR-initiative specially directed towards law firms.





### 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 may be discussed.

We are currently conducting our latest work-place assessment- survey, expecting results to be available in November 2019. Our surveys generally show a relatively high level of employee satisfaction with only a few areas of discontent, primarily based on temperature issues at the peaks of summer, as we are located in a protected building, where air-condition cannot be installed. 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 and safety. Recently an occupational therapist was hired to evaluate the workspace environment of all employees.

#### New initiatives since our last COE include:

- The Association of Danish Law Firms has implemented a new performance and development review system- NXT LVL, which primarily focuses on developing the individual employee, rather than reviewing their accomplishments in the course of the year. The systems provokes regular feedback and an on-going and continuous focus on developing the individual for the benefit of our Association, as well as the individual. NXT LVL optimizes the employees' abilities to look forward and furthermore ties salary increases on the individual's ability to develop themselves.

- 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. Furthermore, they work hard at traceability and food safety through responsible sourcing. Annually updated plans take into account corporate responsibility issues and possible negative impacts are reduced through purchase compliance and follow-up. By promoting correct portion size, Fazer is also able to reduce the amount of wasted food.
- Fazer works diligently on creating a safe workplace. They have lowered their accident frequency with 40 % compared to 2017. The quality review in 2018 was the best ever. When there is an accident at work, the whole organization is informed, so everyone can learn from it. They do this to prevent similar accidents. In 2017 40 % of Fazer’s work accidents were cutting accidents. Since 2018 everyone wears cutting gloves when they are in a kitchen, and in 2018 only 5 % of accidents were cutting accidents.



### Goals

The Association has a clear goal of maintaining a high rate of employee satisfaction with a low rate of absenteeism, and at the same time increase productivity. To be able to do this, management has initiated a project analysing and implementing better management. The goal is to improve job motivation and minimise inexpedient work processes. This will be an ongoing process through the recognition that we can always learn more and do better, especially in an ever-changing world. The first element of this management improvement project was implementing a salary policy, so it became more transparent what employees can do to earn the possibility of a salary increase.



### 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 on a regular basis. By using the NXT LVL system, we promote communication and provide useful feedback on development, but also individual performance, which facilitates better working relationships. This is done by having several conversations with employees throughout the year. Continuous feedback of employee performance is an important aspect in retaining a good work environment and ensure employee development.

### Planet (environment)

Our "Green Purchasing Policy", in which environmental considerations are essential, has been normative for all our 2017-2019 purchases. New initiatives that supplement the environmental considerations stated in "Communication of Engagement from 2017 are:

- Further focus on recycling, e.g. the recycling of badge holders and lanyards from conference-, continued legal education-, meetings, etc. held at our facilities.
- Fazer Food Services is reducing the use of plastic. Fazer no longer uses plastic bags, plastic cutlery, straws and plastic tops for coffee.
- Developing new digital processes to minimize the use of printers and 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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 advokatKODEKS - "Lawyers Code", a social responsibility code for the legal profession. The voluntary code prescribes that 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. The number of signatories to the code has grown, so that 50 percent of the lawyers in law firms in Denmark work in law firms that have signed up to follow the principles of the code. Every second year we publish a rapport showing the progress and initiatives of the members.

For further information see: [www.advokatkodeks.dk](http://www.advokatkodeks.dk).



In order to inspire law firms to do more within the context of the code, the Association every second year presents an award to a law firm who has initiated one or more exceptional projects. Njord Law Firm received The Lawyers Code Award in 2018. Njord Law Firm received the award for having done extraordinary work concerning digital infringements, especially related to online sexual harassments. Their work is related to helping victims of digital crimes, both legally and digitally, but also lobbying government for better regulation. Miriam Michaelsen, who is a partner at the law firm Njord, has furthermore founded the association "Digital Responsibility". Miriam and Njord regularly encourages other law firms to do more pro bono work and to focus on digital infringements.

## 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, e.g. when answering public consultations.
- The Association is investigating whether digitalisation and LegalTech can increase access to justice in society. We have thus applied for funding to produce an app or similar to solve a concrete access to justice related problem.
- The Association of Danish Law Firms regularly produce articles on pro bono work to increase our members’ awareness on the value and effect of pro bono work and social responsibility. The Association of Danish Law Firms has researched the accumulated amount of pro bono work done by the members. In 2018, lawyers in Denmark used a total of 90.000 hours on pro bono work, which is free legal advice worth more than 20 million euros.
- In collaboration with Justitia, a Danish judicial think tank, we launched the “Justitia Academy” for law students with an interest in the state of law. With this project, we aim over a course of nine days, to promote the students’ interest in the rule of law, democracy, fundamental human rights to create a culture of awareness and debate amongst law students. The Justitia Academy is now running for the third time and the academy has been nothing but a success. Every semester we receive twice as many applications as there are law students accepted into the Academy.



### Profit (anti-corruption)

- The Association of Danish Law Firms carefully follows the professions obligations in preventing money laundering and corruption. We regularly update our compliance-toolkit in order to secure that our members have concurring anti-money laundering policies.

### Lately we have:

- Provided an easily accessible whistle-blower service to our members through the firm: <https://gotethics.com>
- Applied for funding to produce a board game about ethics in the legal profession. The aim is that the game will help the profession discuss and understand the societal responsibilities, which they are subject to, whether legally or in the perception of society.

## 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.



Today one of the employees of the Association of Danish Law Firms has a seat on IBA's "Diversity and Inclusion Council". The council sets up diversity and inclusion policies and advises IBA's management board to enhance inclusivity and diversity within the IBA.



## 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 historically 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.

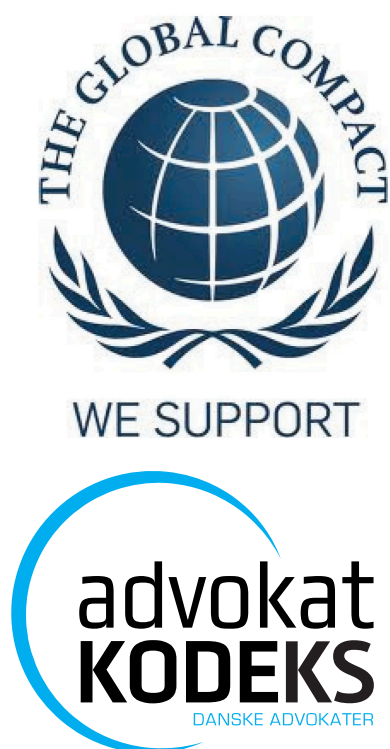
The second rapport on the status of the “Lawyer Code” will be published at the end of 2019. In this rapport, the law firms based on a “comply or explain” principle, monitor and rapport their progress on the 6 elements stated in the Code. The association of Danish Law Firms hopes that the awareness and knowledge of the various initiatives of other law firms, will inspire others to new initiatives.



## 4. Future initiatives

In 2020 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 and motivation
- 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 produce stories of its benefits to the public through our newsletters, videos and social media.
- Produce more compliance guides directed to law firms. The Association is working on a new digital online universe with a large number of guides and tools helping our members to comply to the large amount of regulation, which all law firms must adhere to.
- Work together with the non-profit association; Levende Menneskerettigheder - Human Rights in Action. The Associations of Danish Law Firms young lawyers network “NYMA” will collaborate with “Human Rights in Action” producing teaching materials about human rights, which is free for all schools to obtain.
- Focus on the SDG goals.







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