

# Contraste Europe SA

## COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS (COP)

February 7, 2022

Period covered by this Communication on Progress (COP) Up to: February 2022

### **1. STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (OWNER OR PRESIDENT IN THE CASE OF SMALL BUSINESSES)**

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that Contraste Europe 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 annual Communication on Progress, we describe our actions to continually improve the integration of the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations. We also commit to share this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

Benoît Pirotte

Chief Executive Officer

Contraste Europe

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS

### Human Rights

Please use the box below to describe **actions** your company has taken in the area of human rights.

Examples include:

- ☐ Ensure workers are provided safe, suitable and sanitary work facilities
- ☐ Protect workers from workplace harassment, including physical, verbal, sexual or psychological harassment, abuse or threats
- ☐ Take measures to eliminate ingredients, designs, defects or side-effects that could harm or threaten human life and health during manufacturing, usage or disposal of products

As Contraste Europe is operating in Belgium, Luxembourg, France and Switzerland, we comply with the very high standards of human rights protection that are applicable in these four countries. Our work is fully executed in office areas, at our own premises or at Customers' premises. There is no work performed in industrial environments, or any potentially health-harming conditions. Sanitary conditions are optimal, being in modern, well-equipped buildings, as our Customers are themselves keen to give a positive image to their own clients. Our Customers are mostly financial institutions, insurance companies, public authorities (national, regional), Gas/Electricity Utilities, Telecom Providers, Education institutes etc. Their own standards of quality of life and of security are very high. They believe that our consultants will be good at their job if and only if they are themselves (our consultants) fully protected and secure in their job and work environment.

All our employees are covered by:

- A decent salary, never under the minimum salaries defined by national laws
- Social security: health insurance, hospitalisation insurance
- Retirement compensation

Work hours are declared: we have all formalities and coverage in place when somebody starts working for us.

We also employ subcontractors and freelancers. Per law and per our corporate commitments, we make sure that all these people are correctly covered by social security (e.g. in Belgium: LIMOSA procedure). We sign framework agreements with these resources, that define all the necessary conditions for proper collaboration.

Human rights are at the centre of our way of working: work must be stimulating and satisfactory, and not a forced chore. This is in line with the need in our business to employ people who bring added value and creativity to our Customers. This requires these people being generally satisfied with their working conditions, salary, health protection, human rights etc.

Our employees are eligible for participating in trade unions, and to use the services of those trade unions.

We maintain people in charge for health and well-being at work, harassment (sexual, moral), security (fire etc), GDPR-relating supervision (Data protection and privacy), and generally all law-required roles. The law frameworks in Belgium, Luxembourg, France and Switzerland are among the most advanced worldwide, and satisfy UN Global Compact expectations.

We foster diversity among our staff, and we effectively employ people of both genders, of a variety of origins, religious beliefs, people with physical weaknesses, people of all ages from young school-leavers up to retired people. We also give a chance to people without academic record, to build a career within our group, by learning through work. This is what we call the Contraste Europe

Academy, where quite a number of young people have made a start and are now well on track as skilled professionals.

We strongly oppose harassment of any kind against our employees. To date, we have no report or complaint concerning harassment performed by some of our staff. It may happen that our employees perceive harassment at Customer's site, in which case we always take action. We speak openly to our Customers about this, and they are always very keen to correct the situation in their own organization. It has happened though that we pull one of our employees from a Customer's site if the employee continues to feel uncomfortable with the situation. We always give priority to our employee's perception. A positive evolution in the European society or Western Society in general, is a strong conscience about getting rid of all the old practices of harassment and power-linked pressure: those attitudes are no longer accepted and are quickly brought up to visibility.

We are a very active company in terms of social events, organized and paid for by the company. There is on average 2 events per month, covering all possible professional areas of interest. These events hit several objectives:

- They allow for our staff to mix and meet in a friendly atmosphere, outside work pressure
- They provide interesting professional information, and potential for career upgrade to our employees: since our domain of activity is of a very high level of technicity, learning new concepts and technologies is key to making a career
- They allow our staff to be speaker and develop soft skills and recognition from their peers

Besides these corporate events, our staff is also organizing their own activities (week-end trips, participation to marathons, etc), and we actively foster and support these spontaneous initiatives, by providing logistics and funding.

We also operate a division of software development and maintenance located in Tunis (Tunisia). Clearly, the general standards of living, security and job protection in the Tunisian society are lower than those in Europe. However, as it is a guarantee for us that our team members will be more productive and happy at work, we make sure that in our Tunisian branch, all team members enjoy the same rights as in the rest of our group. Especially remarkable is the high number of women employed in our Tunisian branch. This is something that we are proud about, and will keep fostering in the years to come.

During the Covid-19 crisis, the rule has been to work mostly from home (telework). This had certainly good effects in terms of avoiding to travel everyday to/from office in crowded transport or roads and allowed many of our employees to organize their family life in a more serene way. However, this very special situation also created isolation: our team members can't meet and can sometimes experience difficulties with motivation for the work. We have been addressing this through various actions: regular communication from the management, regular contact from the team leaders, service delivery managers, squad leads, local client referents, mentors etc. We have also organized afterwork e-parties and e-games, towards keeping friendly contacts between people. A special gift was sent to all payroll employees at the end of 2021, and a number of actions were devised wherever possible to maintain contact and motivation in the teams.

## **Labour**

Please use the box below to describe **actions** your company has taken in the area of labour.

Examples include:

- ☐ Ensure that the company does not participate in any form of forced or bonded labour
- ☐ Comply with minimum wage standards
- ☐ Ensure that employment-related decisions are based on relevant and objective criteria

We state that our company does not participate in any form of forced or bonded labour. This is anyway practically impossible in countries where we operate (Luxembourg, Belgium, Switzerland and France), as it is illegal. Also in Tunisia, where labour practices are not as well-supervised as in Europe, we do maintain the same level as in our European operations.

More than this, our type of business activities would make it counter-productive to use forced labour, as we basically need motivated, creative and open-minded people. Forced people would not present those characteristics.

Minimum wage standards are complied with, and this is confirmed by auditors. We have never undergone any kind of complaint or been condemned for anything like that.

Our staff is appraised on a regular basis, on objective criteria, on which both the employer and the employee agree. Objectives are identified in a joint session between the employer and the employee, and documented in such a way that if the manager changes, the defined objectives are accessible and understood by the following manager, thereby protecting the employee's interests.

Again, forcing irrelevant criteria would be damaging for our business, as this would cause frustration among our employees and make them less creative for their job.

We have always displayed a strict respect for laws and rules that protect individuals' rights for choosing to leave our company for another employer. Our motto is : comply with applicable laws and rules. No pressure has ever been made on any of our employees for renouncing to their personal objectives (which must not be confused with our right to enforce commercial obligations resulting from contracts and agreements signed with Customers, Suppliers, or Business Partners).

Contraste is sponsoring various sport events, supporting initiatives from our personnel. For example, we have supported financially, logistically and by our encouragements the setup of a runners' team for the Brussels 20km race. From 2020 and continuing in 2021, with the Covid-19 crisis, our financial support has been more in the form of bonuses, and prizes for e-games organized at a distance with team members.

Our recruitment policy has always been fully open to all individuals, independently of their gender, race, philosophical beliefs or anything similar. Our sole purpose has always been to support individuals who either had strong skills or had the will and energy to develop them.

Thus not only will you find confirmed experts in our staff, with high school education tracks, but also profiles who started with us for a first job, learning from the start, and progressively evolving along their own career path (among other through Contraste Europe Academy as described above).

For those employees who suffer from aching back, while working hours in front of a screen, we are providing adapted ergonomic chairs.

## **Environment**

Please use the box below to describe **actions** your company has taken in the area of environment.

Examples include:

- ☐ Avoid environmental damage via regular maintenance of production processes and environmental protection system (air pollution control, waste, water treatment systems, etc.)
- ☐ Ensure emergency procedures to prevent and address accidents affecting the environment and human health

☐ Minimize the use and ensure safe handling and storage of chemical and other dangerous substances

Our work environment consists in office space. There is no production plant or industrial environment.

At the level of office space, we do all we can, and all what is legally required, to provide for a safe environment. We foster the use of smaller, less polluting cars, with a move to electric drive. Air and water are regularly checked for compliance with health rules.

We apply and regularly test the emergency measures (fire etc). Procedures are documented and available to all.

In the context of office space, there is no usage of dangerous products, such as chemicals.

We renew regularly the computer screens, so that the latest technology, less harming for the eyes, is applied.

For those employees suffering from back-ache or hand-ache, due to day-long sitting at a computer, we provide upon request special equipment, such as ergonomic chairs and adapted ("bumpy") keyboards.

In 2021, with the Covid-19 crisis, we have coped with a double issue:

- Make the office space as safe as possible to avoid our staff to get hit by the virus;
- Help people working from home to organize their work environment as conveniently as possible.

For the office space, we took as from February 2021 a set of strong measures meant to reduce the risk of infection:

- Encourage our team members to work from home, and implement all decisions made by the authorities of the countries where we operate;
- Install garbage cans with a foot-driven lid, so that masks and other stuff can be disposed of without touching the can, and contamination is reduced thanks to the lid;
- Organize one-way tracks thus avoiding people to cross in the walkway;
- Enforcing the rule of wearing a mask at all times except in a closed, one-person office;
- Spreading the people over the office surface so that there is as much distance as possible between them;
- Installing hydroalcoholic gel distributors all over the office space;
- Implementing quarantine for all employees displaying Covid-19-like symptoms, until a physician confirmed that they are no longer contagious;
- Enhancing the daily office cleansing rules.

For the telework, we checked with our employees that telework was feasible in acceptable conditions.

For environmental purposes as well as for good corporate citizenship, we dispose of our old material by giving it for free to schools, who badly need it, in particular with the Covid-19 where many students must work from home. Many of them, in poor areas, do not have a PC and are happy to receive one from us.

For ecological matters, we do participate in actions for recycling plastic garbage

### **Anti-Corruption**

Please use the box below to describe **actions** your company has taken to fight corruption. Examples include:

- ☑ Assess the risk of corruption when doing business
- ☑ Mention “anti-corruption” and/or “ethical behavior” in contracts with business partners
- ☑ Ensure that internal procedures support the company’s anti-corruption commitment

Corruption is fully forbidden in our business practices, and it is equally forbidden by our Customers, who are keen to keep their image and reputation clean on the market. Any offence at this level would be punished by a ruinous image for our company on the market, and our access to the Customers would be barred for long or forever.

Most of our Customers will not accept gifts, even small items for Christmas time. They suggest that we use any free budget for helping social or environmental associations. We do effectively act as a good corporate citizen, by supporting financially organizations such as WeForest, that plants thousands of trees in areas of Africa to counter desert extension.

We do not deal with countries or business activities where corruption takes usually place. For example, we have no business with arms-producing companies.

### **3. MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES**

In the box below, please include the most relevant indicators to **measure outcomes**. Examples include:

- ☑ Demographics of management and employees broken down by diversity factors (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age, etc.)
- ☑ Rate of occupational diseases, injuries, and absenteeism
- ☑ Percentage of recycled materials

Diversity:

- We employ men and women: in our business domain, which is IT, it is known that the proportion of men is higher than women, however, we strive for increasing the proportion of women, and encourage women to aim for more responsibilities.
- We are happy that in our Tunisian operations centre, the proportion of woman is 50% of our employees, which is quite an accomplishment.
- We employ people from all racial origins, with a variety of religious beliefs, and a variety of sexual preferences. We ask our employees to cooperate to a harmonious living-together, by holding their personal preferences for their private life, in such a way that they do not create conflicts with their colleagues.

Absenteeism is definitely a good indicator of the happiness of employees at work. We strive to improve this indicator. For our employees working in our own premises, we are very successful.

However, for our employees working at Customer's premises, this is more difficult to control, as they are confronting a more challenging environment. For those employees, we maintain a dialog with our Customers to try to reduce the pressure on our employees. The good news is that our clients have engaged for most into proposing very nice work environments, spacious and clean.

As we are not operating factories producing goods, there is no big issue with material recycling. In our case, it is mostly about recycling old PCs, screens etc, and for this, we have a contract with a recycling company that we believe does a good job. We keep alert anyway on all possible ways to improve our ecological print.

--- END OF REPORT ---

Feb. 7, 2022.