

Business Ethics in a European Perspective

A Case for Unity in Diversity?

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The vision of a united Europe resulted in a historically unprecedented period of peace that has now lasted for almost 70 years in the countries taking part in the unification process. In recognition of the various histories, cultures and traditions, universal values like freedom, democracy, equality and rule of law as well as the inalienable and inviolable human rights constitute the core of a development which has strengthened solidarity between the nations and resulted in economic, social and ecological progress. The transfer of state power to the European level through supranational institutions and economic integration are key parts of the political process leading to a united Europe. The economic and political success of the European Union is recognized and serves as a role model for many regions in the world.

However the euro crisis has dramatically revealed many mutual dependencies and liabilities. It has also made clear how vulnerable and fragile the newly won solidarity and unity among the European nations really are. It raises the question whether economic integration without progress in political integration is even possible? Is there something like a “European Culture” with a balance of identity and diversity? How is this reflected in concepts of European Business Ethics? The question as to whether Europe should limit itself to a common economic area based on reciprocal economic benefits or whether it should also seek a political and cultural union is controversial and still unsolved. The uncertainty is no surprise, considering its political and cultural diversity and the various welfare and regulatory systems rooted in national traditions. Political and strategic visions for a united Europe are still rare whereas a tendency to envision a renaissance of the nation-state is becoming more and more obvious.

European integration was accompanied by technological progress and rapid developments in communication and information technology which, together with diverse demographic dynamics and political developments, resulted in an enormous change in the world. Many of today’s problems like the financial crisis or global warming cannot be solved solely on a national or a European level. Due to multifaceted interdependencies, there is a need for global solutions, yet an applicable political framework providing for such is still lacking. Outside the political sphere, civil society and corporations are expected to contribute their part to the problem-solving processes.

From a business ethics perspective we have to ask which conclusions can be drawn from the process of European integration. Where do its potentials and areas of conflict lie? And how can experiences from the past be transferred to today’s challenges?

What were and will be the role(s) of corporations and civil society organizations in influencing the European development?

Are the old National and European governance-models of politics, economy and civil society still adequate in the face of global challenges? How would new inter-sectorial models look? What is the relation of diversity and identity in the European cultural space? Are there specific European answers for how to solve the tensions between freedom and justice?

In order to deal with these and the many other questions interlinked with the ethical implications of the European unification process and its current ethical challenges, the major aim of the EBEN annual conference 2014 is to look critically at recent developments in the field of business ethics both from a theoretical and a practitioners' perspective. Therefore, topics may include but are not limited to:

European Culture(s) and Values

- European values in business: what are they and how do they contribute to global business ethics. Is there a specific European business culture and how does it differ from other cultures?
- Cultural diversity and identity: Facts & Challenges in East, West, North and South Europe
- Cultural diversity is a key element of Europe: what was/is the business contribution to safeguarding it and nevertheless achieving peaceful development?
- European business between USA and China: what about Africa and the Arab world?
- Europe in global business: How to learn from others?
- What are the European interpretations of human dignity and human rights and what are the feasible solutions for overcoming intercultural conflicts in business that are associated with it?
- Which conclusions can be drawn from the current debate about Europe's traditional idea of privacy?

Political and Corporate Governance

- Corporations in multi-level-governance systems: roles and obligations of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogs
- European Multi-Level-Governance: strength or soft spot in global business?
- "Lessons learned": Financial crisis, the Euro and the role of the financial market
- What is the ethical potential of the implementation of the „social market economy“ on a European or even wider level?
- What could a European code of good corporate governance look like and how could it be applied in global business?

International Leadership and Sustainability/Values Management

- Is the European way of leadership applicable in other regions of the world? Are there best practices to cope with cultural and religious differences?
- The challenge of value-management: Shall we become global companies or find our position as European companies in global business?
- What is the common basis of national tools, e.g. German ZfW Value Management System or Greek Business Ethics Excellence Model for fostering a value orientation in companies and how can it be implemented worldwide?
- In which sense is the German concept of the “honourable merchant” a role model for international business people and what are his/her core characteristics?
- Integrity Management – European standards and global realities
- What can be learned from applying the EfQM model as a specific European approach to Sustainability Management?
- What are differences and commonalities in the European and American “Stakeholder-Dialogues”? How do the different stakeholders perceive their role in different societies and what are the implications for dealing with their demands?

CSR and Corporate Citizenship Theory

- Adaption of the US-concept of “CSR” in Europe: How does the idea of CSR fit with the European understanding of corporate responsibility?
- Theoretical and philosophical foundations of CSR: Are there specific differences between European and Non-European philosophical traditions?
- Interrelationship between CSR and CC
- CSR as business strategy in different organizational contexts, e.g. multinational enterprises, small and medium enterprises, non profit organizations or cooperatives
- The impact of CSR and ethics on rebuilding trust in the financial and economic system
- CSR and the problem of cultural diversity
- Poverty alleviation and multinational enterprises
- Business ethics and CSR in the public sector

Normative Foundations in Business Ethics

- Business ethics and its philosophical basis
- The role of values in economic and business life
- Universal ethics and cultural diversity in business
- Corporate values and their effective integration in managing organizations

- Religions as a source of values for business and leadership
- The ethical basis of the stakeholder theory
- Reason, legitimization and functioning of stakeholder dialogue
- Ethical values and social responsibility in SMEs

Theoretical, managerial and empirical contributions from both the academic and practitioners' sides are welcome. We will highly value contributions which open up a new perspective on CSR and that foster critical discussion on this topic.

PAPER SUBMISSIONS

1. Full papers (or alternatively detailed abstracts in Word format of about 1000 words) with 5 keywords have to be uploaded onto the EBEN 2014 conference website (www.eben2014.de) by **February 20th 2014**. For those who want their full papers to be considered for further publication in the special issue of the Journal of Business Ethics, please indicate "JBE" on the cover page. For more information about the document formatting, please refer to the JBE website ([section](#): Instructions for authors - Manuscript Presentation).
2. Since full papers will be subject to a peer review process, please make sure that the paper does not contain any information regarding the authors on any page. On the cover page start with the title, a 6 digit reference code (see below), include a short abstract of 100-200 words and use Times Roman font, 12 pt, double spacing and follow the JBE's style guidelines for your references (e.g. Author, 1st and 2nd Author: 2007, 'My EBEN paper', Journal of Business Ethics 99(1), 21-32).
3. Each submission has to be accompanied by a "Submission Form", which contains all information about the author(s), the institution(s) and the 6 digit reference code. The Submission Form can be downloaded from the conference website.
4. By March 31st 2014, you will receive notification of whether or not your contribution has been accepted for the conference.
5. Note for the "*JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ETHICS SPECIAL ISSUE*": After the conference authors will be informed about papers accepted for the review process for possible publication in a special issue of the Journal of Business Ethics. Only submitted full papers are eligible for consideration.
6. For any questions regarding the paper submission process please send an e-mail to eben2014-papers@dnwe.de