



**Association for Independent
Corporate Sustainability &
Responsibility Research**

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New body launched to champion quality CSR research

Corporate Sustainability Research (CSR) organisations from across Europe have come together to form the Association of Independent Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility Research (AI CSRR).

The corporate sustainable and responsible research sector continues to expand due to increasing popular interest throughout Europe. At the same time pressure on CSR research groups to raise quality and be transparent and professional has grown. AI CSRR, therefore, has been created to develop and promote high professional standards for organisations in the field.

Matt Christensen, Executive Director at Eurosif, Europe's Social Investment Forum said *"Both the Voluntary Quality Standard and the launch of a trade association of the Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility Research Groups are milestones for the sector in Europe and beyond. The work of AI CSRR is a splendid and welcome supplement to the Eurosif Transparency Guidelines for investment funds"*.

Herwig Peeters, the Association's Chairman said, *"In the fast changing world of CSR research co-operation on a sector level and engagement with companies and asset managers is essential. Together, we will develop better tools and understanding and improve the social impact of SRI."*



Transparency, openness and accountability have always been central to the CSR agenda; the formation of AI CSRR continued this tradition. AI CSRR will provide the independent verification needs the sector requires in order to maintain and enhance its quality and credibility through the management of the Voluntary Quality Standard scheme (CSRR-QS 1.0, or "The Standard").

The Standard has had the financial and strategic support of the European Commission. Dominique Bé, deputy head of The Employment and Social Affairs DG of the Commission, said *"CSRR-QS 1.0 will contribute in furthering the CSR debate in Europe. It will help address the issue of accountability of CSR analysis and enhance the leverage effect of SRI. It is also a significant step towards more convergence and transparency in the field of SRI. The European Commission is pleased to have provided support to the development of this standard."*

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Notes to editors

1. **Founding members** of the trade association are:

- Avanzi SRI Research S.r.l. (Italy);
- Centre Info S.A. (Switzerland);
- CFIE, Centre Français d'Information sur les Entreprises, Association Loi 1901 (France);
- Dutch Sustainability Research B.V. (the Netherlands);
- Ecodes, Fundación Ecología y Desarrollo (Spain);
- Ethical Investment Research Services (EIRIS) Ltd. and EIRIS Foundation (United Kingdom);
- Ethibel V.Z.W. (Belgium);
- EthiFinance S.A. (France);
- GES Global Ethical Standard Investment Services International AB (Sweden);
- imug Beratungsgesellschaft fuer sozial-ökologische Innovationen mbH (Germany);
- oekom research Aktiengesellschaft (Germany);
- Pensions & Investment Research Consultants Ltd. (United Kingdom);
- scoris GmbH (Germany);
- SERM Rating Agency Ltd. (United Kingdom);
- SIRI Company, Sustainable Investment Research International Ltd (Switzerland);
- Stock at Stake S.A. (Belgium).

2. **CSRR-QS 1.0[®]** is a quality standard comprising guidelines and rules, commitments and proofs on the transparency and quality and on the accountability and verifiability of the processes involved in Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility Research.

CSRR-TM 1.0[®] is a Transparency Matrix that will consist of a series of verifiable, calibrated statements regarding the transparency and implementation of CSRR processes. Most of the statements are closed (not open end). **CSRR-TM 1.0[®]** will contain all the needed CSRR-QS statements. Conformity with the requirements need to be proved by those CSRR Groups going for the **CSRR-QS Certificate** and will be verified. **CSRR-TM 1.0[®]** will give supplemental information - on a voluntary basis - of CSRR process features that are particular to each group and that are beyond the standard requirements. This information will also be calibrated and verified.

Additional Guidance Documents will be provided: **CSRR-GD 1.0[®]**.

During 2005-2006, based on pilots, stakeholder consultation and expert input these instruments will be upgraded to versions **2.0[®]**

3. The **mission** of the Association is:

- to defend and promote the interests of the independent CSRR sector;
- to represent the CSRR sector – inside and outside Europe - to professional users, public authorities and the SRI community and the general public, by way of direct communication, open dialogue and transparency;
- to develop, promote and maintain high professional standards, expertise and codes of conduct for the CSRR sector;
- to contribute - where this is in the interest of its Members - to the attainment of the European Union's aims in the field of CSR/SRI;
- to provide the EU and EC authorities and institutions and national governments and authorities (including those beyond Europe) with means for ascertaining the quality and integrity of CSRR products and services;
- to strive to present co-ordinated views on appropriate policies and other issues to regulatory bodies, governments and other institutions relevant to the CSRR professional sector;
- to secure international validation and acceptance of the qualifications of CSRR professionals;
- to encourage the harmonization or development of concepts, definitions, norms and standards in the domain of SRI and CSRR, if and only when this serves its members and their clientele and when this improves the quality and credibility of the CSRR profession;
- to protect the ownership of the quality standard "CSRR-QS" and its related technical instruments for accountability and verification, to (co)manage its development and to promote it to and within the SRI community;



- to be a network and venue for exchanging ideas and expertise and for discussion between professionals;
- to improve co-operation, consultation and collaboration among the members of the association;
- to collect information and study any matter which concerns its members;
- to provide services for its members (information, advice, training, ...);
- to cultivate and obtain reciprocal relations with kindred associations whether of a national or an international nature;
- to organise all activities and other initiatives needed to achieve the objects mentioned above.

The Association will abstain from all commercial activities of any nature except those, which may serve to fulfil the mission of the Association.

4. The **Board of Directors** consists of:

- Herwig Peeters, Chairman
- Stephen Hine, Treasurer (Ethical Investment Research Services)
- François Jérôme (EthifFinance)
- Robert Hassler (oekom research)
- John Howchin (GES Investment Services)
- Kirein Franck (imug)
- Martial Cozette (CFIE)
- Stéphane Genilloud (Centre Info, SiRi Co)

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