

Sharing Ideas and Best Practices in Business Ethics **20-21 January 2005 in London** **Conference Report**

Following on from last years first ever European conference for ethics and compliance practitioners, *Sharing Ideas and Best Practices in Business Ethics*, the 100 delegates voted overwhelming in favour of having another conference in 2005. The event organisers were again the Cercle D'Éthique des Affaires - Cercle Européen des Déontologues (CEA-CED) of France, the Ethics Officer Association (EOA) of the United States, the European Business Ethics Network (EBEN), and the Institute of Business Ethics (IBE) of the UK. In 2004 a number of people asked to register for the meeting after it was fully subscribed, this year because of both demand and the venues capacity, over 120 corporate ethics practitioners from nine European countries*, the U.S., and Japan attended the one and a half day event.

The event started with a cocktail party on the eve of the conference kindly sponsored by Baxter Healthcare. This acted as an 'ice-breaker' and an chance for delegates and organisers alike to be meet informally.

The conference provided an opportunity for ethics and compliance practitioners to meet their counterparts, share ideas and best practices, and form the basis for a continuing dialogue among ethics and compliance professionals in organisations. The participants came from a range of industries, including information technology, telecommunications, mining and extractive, defence, banking and insurance, utilities, automotive, tobacco, and pharmaceutical.

The conference was designed to allow maximum time for discussion, debate, and networking. A plenary meeting was held at the start of each day. These were followed by a series of breakout sessions. Each of these were introduced with a case study by the speaker(s). A *rapporteur* (reporter) to presented a summary of the group's discussion during subsequent 'report back' sessions. This approach ensured that all attendees could heard and discussed the main points from each of the workshops.

The opening plenary on the first day discussed ways that companies can build a culture of integrity and the challenges that large multi-nationals face. Presentations were made by representatives from BP, L'Oreal and Baxter International. The second days plenary addressed the recent developments in UK, EU and US legislation. The panel included representatives from Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw.

The breakout sessions addressed a number of key business ethics issues facing today's organisations, with the four main themes emerging as: cross-cultural behaviours; the legal implications with regard to ethics in organisations; making it work: embedding ethics in organisations; and a number of 'recurring issues' that practitioners experience. There were twelve breakout sessions this year, four more than last year.

* Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

The breakout sessions were as follows:

Day 1 Morning

- Bribery & Corruption: Grand corruption
- Influencing the Company's behaviour
- Making it work: Training and embedding
- Recurring issues: Conflicts of interest

Day 1 Afternoon

- Whistle blowing – where are we today?
- Cross-cultural issues: Donations – the power of patronage (political and philanthropic)
- Making it work: Communicating internally and externally
- Recurring issues: Supply chain/use of agents

A dinner was held in the evening for all delegates at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and kindly sponsored by BP. The guest speaker, introduced by Philippa Foster Back, Director of the IBE, was Sir Alistair Graham, Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Day 2

Breakout sessions were as follows:

- Doing Business in difficult countries: Facilitation payments
- Cross-cultural issues: Discrimination & diversity
- Making it work: measuring and auditing ethical performance
- Recurring issues: workplace ethics

Breakout session speakers were from BAA, Bertelsmann, BG, BOC, Boeing, Cabinet Coudert, Dow Corning, GE Health Care, GSK, HSBC, Lloyds TSB, Merck, Philips, Statoil and Total. *Rapporteurs* were from Baxter, BP, the Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation, Colgate Palmolive, EDF, Eisai, MeadWestvaco, mmO2, Northrop Grumman, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Severn Trent.

In discussion at the conclusion of the conference, delegates voted for another meeting of this sort to take place in 2006 and made suggestions through the feedback form about what they would like addressed at the next meeting.

For further details, please contact:

Yvan Biefnot
Patrick Du Besset
Lee Essrig

CEA/CED
CEA/CED
EOA

yvan.biefnot@chello.be
pdubc@noos.fr
lessrig@eo.org

Philippa Foster Back
Heidi von Weltzien Hoivik

IBE
EBEN

pfb@ibe.org.uk
heidi.hoivik@bi.no