

eubelius

advocaten avocats attorneys

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

(2012 until 2017)



CONCEPTS

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is defined in a European Commission communication of 25 October 2011 (COM(2011)681/F2) as «the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society».

It continues:

«Respect for applicable legislation, and for collective agreements between social partners, is a prerequisite for meeting that responsibility. To fully meet their corporate social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders, with the aim of:

- maximising the creation of shared value for their owners/shareholders and for their other stakeholders and society at large;
- identifying, preventing and mitigating their possible adverse impacts.»

Sustainable development was defined in the Brundtland Report – Our Common Future submitted to the UN Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 (www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf) as «the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs».

The CSR concept is more relevant than ever. It is central to the UN's recent Sustainable Development Goals initiative from September 2015 (www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment), which sets seventeen targets to achieve by 2030 to create sustainable prosperity around the world.



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PREFACE

Our responsible attitude and contribution to a more sustainable world is not just being driven by more and more Eubelius clients; it also comes from within the company. In its initiative, Eubelius has focused in particular on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

This year, Eubelius is reviewing the implementation of its CSR policy (introduced in 2012) and targets achieved during the 2012–2017 period.
This report presents the progress made.



Marieke Wyckaert
Partner



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Office Manager

I. PRESENTATION OF THE EUBELIUS CORPORATE MODEL AND ACTIVITIES

A. EUBELIUS

Eubelius was founded in 1994. It is now one of the biggest independent law firms in Belgium. Eubelius has 21 partners, 15 (senior) counsels, almost 100 associate attorneys and 50 staff members (all known as «Eubelians»).

Many of the firm's attorneys have a large academic workload, helping them adopt a sustainable and inclusive approach to assisting clients.

1. Activities

Eubelius attorneys specialise in assisting and representing clients across Belgium and globally in relation to Belgian and European Union law. They work closely with eminent independent law firms in other countries and contribute to international matters involving Belgium.

Together they provide unique expertise and experience in all areas of business law, primarily to Belgian and foreign companies.

2. Corporate Social Responsibility

In late 2010, Eubelius created a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) analysis and action team. The initiative is led by an enthusiastic team of attorneys and staff members.

Action is taken in three areas: (i) the environment, (ii) Eubelians' wellbeing and (iii) contribution to the social and cultural communities that Eubelius supports. Although reducing the Eubelius ecological footprint was considered urgent, social initiatives have also been successfully developed.

A small group manages the day-to-day implementation of the CSR policy within Eubelius and meets regularly to set new directions and identify solutions to issues arising from everyday activities. All interested Eubelians are invited to a CSR meeting twice annually, and many Eubelians oversee the development of particular initiatives. Pro bono services are provided in line with the expertise of the specialist partner and his/her team. Often, a pro bono case involves several teams.

In 2016, the CSR-team and the Eubelius partners adopted a charter presenting the values that govern the Eubelius CSR policy.

In 2017, Eubelius organised a seminar on non-financial reporting in sustainable development, in collaboration with several companies that shared their management and communication experience and expertise in this area.

B. RELEVANT AREAS AND PRIORITIES CHOSEN BY EUBELIUS FROM THE SDG

1. Areas affected by Eubelius service

Who are the stakeholders affected by Eubelius services? They include our clients, our colleagues, our employees and the cities where we are based (Brussels, Kortrijk and Antwerp).

Like all law firms, Eubelius provides various intellectual legal services (argumentation as part of negotiations or legal defences, creativity through contributions to the implementation of contracts, innovative services and legislative and regulatory work, expertise on clients' strategic choices, etc.). To deliver these services, Eubelius has offices and makes significant use of IT equipment, communication tools, paper and ink. How they are used determines the size of our environmental and social footprint.

2. The commitment of the Eubelians

Eubelius seeks first and foremost to motivate its colleagues and staff to deliver excellent services in optimal timescales. It knows that this requires major commitment and energy from Eubelians. We strive to ensure that we work in sustainable conditions, as much for Eubelians as for our clients and society as a whole.

Eubelius has analysed sustainable development from its inception. It has recently incorporated this analysis into its corporate social responsibility policy.

3. Chosen opportunities by Eubelius regarding the SDG's

Since 2012, Eubelius has been developing two priorities along one principal axis: the health and wellbeing of its co-workers (SDG 3) and contributing to a healthy and dynamic lifestyle. The main axis for the development is «Eubelius supports young talent».

In 2007, one of our partners became the founder of WILL – Women in Law and Leadership, which is a collaborative venture between a dozen law firms. The goal of this initiative is to improve and support the careers of talented women within these firms. Each year, two young co-workers are given the chance to participate in this scheme (SDG 5 – equal opportunities).

At this stage, Eubelius does not have sufficient performance indicators or statistical data to measure the impact of its activities and contribution to sustainable development. The firm is currently focusing on supporting several initiatives in the social, cultural and philanthropic domains in relation to environmental and health matters.





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II. CULTURAL INITIATIVES

Sustainable development is not possible without a strong, shared culture which enables all members of society to experience and share the beauty of the world.

A. CONCERT OLYMPIQUE – VICTORIA CONSORT – PHOTOGRAPHY

Between 2012 and 2016, Eubelius joined other companies in supporting the Olympique Concert (www.leconcertolympique.eu/en), an initiative led by Prof. Jan Caeyers to promote knowledge and experience of the works of Beethoven. The experience continued until 2016 and was accompanied by many concerts, particularly at Flagey, which Eubelians and Eubelius clients attended.

In 2012, Eubelius was asked by Aart De Zitter and Erik Van Nevel to help the Ghent-based ensemble Victoria Consort release its first CD, «Speciosa», featuring songs from the famous Franco-Flemish School.

Photographers Bieke Depoorter (2014) and Sébastien Van Mallegheem (2015) have received substantial financial support for their projects («I am about to call it a day» and «Prisons» respectively).

LE CONCERT
OLYMPIQUE
CONDUCTOR JAN CAEYERS



Victoria Consort

B. ARTARA



In 2012, the Artara theatre company led by Fabrice Murgia signed a three-year partnership agreement with Eubelius, enabling it to rent an office in Brussels and create a communication infrastructure. In exchange, Eubelians had access to Artara shows and Artara participated in certain Eubelius events to reiterate the importance of performing art in our cities. From 2015, Artara received a grant for its work in Belgium, and Eubelius continued to support its international development until 2017.

Artara isn't hindered by language barriers. It's active throughout Belgium. The company has the courage to highlight failings in our society and the ambition to trigger change. Fabrice Murgia skilfully maximises all the power of the stage using the most modern techniques.

The Eubelius partnership with Artara was recognised by the 2016 «Caius du mécénat à Bruxelles» awarded by the charity Prométhéa (www.promethea.be).

C. THÉÂTRE NATIONAL



In 2017, Fabrice Murgia was appointed director of the National Theatre. Eubelius wanted to continue collaborating under his direction to promote young performing artists in Brussels, both French-speaking and Dutch-speaking. The National Theatre has a «Studio» structure in which it specifically hosts young artists. At the start of the 2017-2018 season, Eubelius supported the first show of the young director Justine Lequette («*J'abandonne une partie de moi que j'adapte*»). It explores how people adapt to a constantly changing society.

For 2018, Eubelius is keen to contribute to socially conscious productions in Brussels, in both language communities.



Artara/Fabrice Murgia

« We were lucky enough to come across the law firm Eubelius, which is keen to support emerging artists (across all sectors). Our activities, artistic convictions and involvement in cultural venues in the country's two language communities led to our meeting. We do not choose a 'sponsor'; there are meetings that happen and people who, at a given time, have the same convictions. There's a shared understanding of the issues facing our society. That's what brought Eubelius and Artara together. »

Fabrice
Murgia



III. SOCIAL AND PHILANTHROPIC INITIATIVES

A. SAINT NICOLAS DAY IN HOSPITALS

Every year on Saint Nicholas Day, the group of receptionists brings toys to hospitalised or disadvantaged children on behalf of Eubelius.

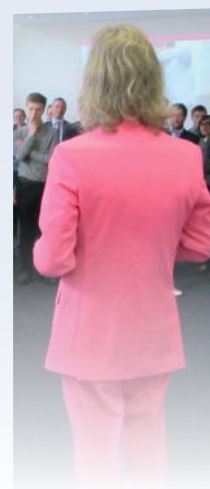
In November 2017, the firm supported the charity «Souffle de vie», which was founded in 1987 and provides long-term support to women and couples who are struggling with pregnancy.



Johanna
Paredis

Think Pink

« The very first Think-Pink campaign was a huge success thanks to the participation and generosity of all Eubelians. Alongside my bike ride for Think-Pink, there were lots of other initiatives, including a hairdressing day when long hair was collected, an introductory yoga class, the sale of pink boobies and pink cupcakes, and the famous little pink ribbon. An incredible amount of money was raised and I always look back fondly on that campaign. »



B. DE WARMSTE WEEK

Every year, Eubelians organise a Christmas market where everyone is invited to bring in tasty homemade treats and perhaps exotic culinary creations. It provides an opportunity to support one of our projects by hosting a series of fundraising events during the week. The Eubelians and the firm itself have been incredibly generous.

In December 2017, De Warmste Week raised over €8,500, which has been allocated to a project of the Rikolto/Vredeseilanden charity (www.rikoltoclassics.be).

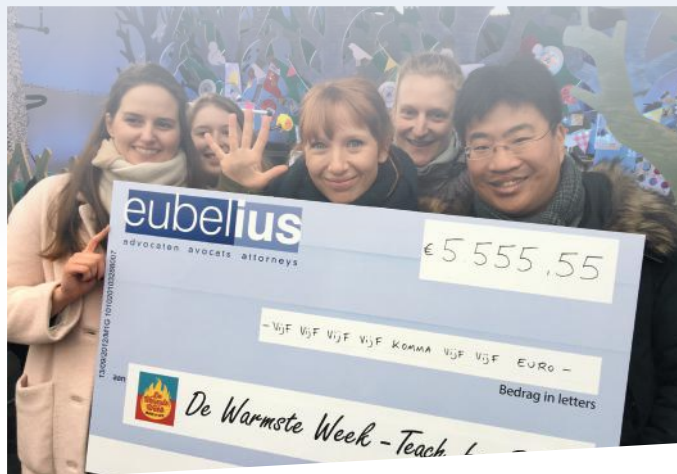
Alongside this, the 2017 Christmas market was staffed by volunteers from the charity Serve the City, to which Eubelius donated IT equipment for its work (www.servethecity.be).



De Warmste Week

« De Warmste Week gives all Eubelians the opportunity to show that they have a generous heart.

Every year in late December, an enthusiastic team of Eubelians organises a series of activities as part of Studio Brussel's 'De Warmste Week' to benefit charities. Proceeds from the 2017 Warmste Week went to the charity Rikolto. Our partners in Kortrijk, Philippe Mulliez and Wim Goossens, will take part in the 2018 Kilimanjaro Classic in September 2018, cycling around mount Kilimanjaro with other entrepreneurs from the West Flanders region to benefit local projects in Tanzania.



During the action-packed 'De Warmste Week' (a feast of lasagnes, tombola during the Christmas party, Ugly Christmas Sweater Day with fair trade hot chocolates and pastries and a real Christmas market with homemade treats), we not only raised nearly €8,500 for Rikolto, we also strengthened the bond between Eubelians. In 2016, we raised €5,555.55. »



Runa
Vander Eeckt



Anneleen Van de
Meulebroucke

C. BLOOD DONATION

Every quarter, Eubelius organises a lunchtime shuttle bus service to take volunteers to St Pierre Hospital to donate blood or plasma.



Elieen
Van Dyck

Blood donation

« This Eubelius initiative is a great way to make Eubelians aware of the shortfall between the huge number of people who receive a blood transfusion at least once in their life and the small number of blood donors. This year again, thanks to the blood donation initiative, several colleagues have overcome their reluctance or fear and made their first donation. Often, Eubelians volunteer to donate again at the next opportunity. »

D. PARTNERSHIPS

1. Samman

In 2011, Eubelius was approached by SAMMAN, which works to bring together companies and non-profit organisations, particularly by helping the organisations adopt an effective business model for their activities and fundraising. SAMMAN and Eubelius successfully cooperated between 2011 and 2016, with Eubelius providing legal support to SAMMAN and related organisations and SAMMAN helping Eubelius develop its partnerships and corporate social responsibility policy more generally.

SAMMAN is now self-sufficient.



2. Handicap International

In 2013, Eubelius was approached by the charity Handicap International and decided to enter into a two-year partnership based on financial support, pro bono legal assistance and reciprocal volunteering. Eubelians volunteered at one of Handicap International's «Solidanza» afternoons and Handicap International volunteers led a Eubelius Family Day at Pairi Daiza.



3. Teach for Belgium

In 2015, Eubelius signed a two-year legal and financial partnership with the charity Teach for Belgium, which was already active in the French-speaking part of the country, to help it expand into the Dutch-speaking part. Eubelius contributed to SDG 4 (education) by helping to recruit young graduates to spend the first two years of their working life teaching in schools with low socioeconomic status.



TEACHforBELGIUM

4. Refresh

In 2015, Eubelius helped a charity in the Ixelles area, Refresh, with the roll-out of its services. Refresh is a social enterprise working to develop sustainable food catering services alongside local support and education on healthy eating. Its primary aim is to prevent food waste by working with unsold products, salvaging, using vegetables from the garden, etc. The enterprise could bring major environmental, social and economic benefits. Eubelius brought SAMMAN and Refresh together and financed an analysis of potential Refresh partnerships with companies that could contribute to its success.

5. Other partnerships





IV. ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

Although Eubelius provides intellectual services, the firm is careful to manage its environmental impact in the following areas: mobility, energy usage, paper usage, catering... to help reduce some of the impacts on our natural environment.

A. ECO-DYNAMIC ACCREDITATION

In 2014, Eubelius formed a working committee to apply for «Eco-dynamic» accreditation by Brussels-Environment (www.environnement.brussels/news/label-entreprise-ecodynamique-voici-les-nouveaux-laureats). This accreditation recognises the efforts made by Brussels-based enterprises to manage and improve their ecological footprint.

Raising awareness is our focal point, because we are convinced that actions which are supported will have more impact. Eubelius communicates about the use of resources in a way that encourages everyone to do better.

Eubelius obtained «first star» accreditation in June 2014. The Brussels Region has recently updated its Eco-dynamic label scheme, and we are working hard on the dossier we plan to submit in 2018.



Conny
Grenson

Eco-dynamic accreditation

« We are aware of the fact that, individually and as a law firm, we have a significant impact on our environment. We are committed, amongst others things and step-by-step, to reducing our ecological footprint. We hope that we have made sufficient progress for the Eco-dynamic quality-label in order to obtain a second star in 2018. »

B. AWARENESS

2017 focused on sustainable development, starting with the screening in March of the 2015 French documentary film by Cyril Dion and Mélanie Laurent, Tomorrow (<https://www.de-main-lefilm.com/>). A series of awareness-raising projects were then developed over the year with the motto 'tomorrow is today.'

C. MOBILITY POLICY

The Eubelius mobility policy is starting to take shape. For years, «Mobility Week» has provided an opportunity for various activities facilitating mobility with a small ecological footprint.

Electric terminals have been installed in the car park and are now widely used. Public transport is recommended for travel to the city for meetings, and transport passes are available from reception for that purpose.

Eubelius is proud to have over ten daily cyclists in Brussels in spring, summer and autumn. Some brave souls continue to cycle in winter. We encourage the use of bicycles.



Sabe
De Graef

Mobility Week

« During the Mobility Week in September, Eubelius is always on the move, with activities including a walking tour of an unexplored part of Brussels with food and drink provided, a bike ride, breakfast with colleagues who came by public transport or bike, physical activities, and a healthy lunch to end the week. During this week, we strengthen our partnership/CSR links with our suppliers. »

D. SUPPLIES AND CATERING

Eubelius strives to use consumer goods with a small ecological footprint. It monitors the quality of the printers, ink and paper that it uses and tries to reduce its paper usage, which, as often at law firms, remains high and can be reduced with the right policy. Eubelius wants to make progress in these areas: double-sided printing is the default setting, and documents can only be printed by physically going to the printer, preventing needless print jobs.

Food products are, as far as possible, fair trade. Fruit and soup available to Eubelians come, as far as possible, from local producers.

In Brussels, an agreement has long been in place with a transport SME to take surplus food to the charity Poverello in Saint-Gilles. This SME provides these services as part of its own CSR.



Robin
Meylemans

Fair Trade Day

« A Fair Trade Break was organised on 12 May 2017: two members of the CSR team visited every Eubelian to offer them delicious Oxfam fair trade biscuits and drinks. Eubelians could then enjoy a treat in exchange for a financial contribution of their choice. The CSR team took the opportunity to distribute information leaflets on Oxfam's initiatives and values. »



IV. HEALTH AND WELLBEING INITIATIVES

A. HEALTHY EATING

As mentioned above, Eubelius promotes a healthy diet. It encourages Eubelians to eat fruit daily and serves soup every Wednesday. The initiatives have been a huge success.



Claire
Fornoville

Meat-free Days



« The Meat-free Days initiative has raised awareness within the firm of the ecological footprint associated with our consumer choices. As several vegetarian lunches have been served and delicious recipes swapped on the firm's intranet, Eubelians have discussed the benefits of changing their lifestyles at lunchtime. With the vegetarian lunch, Eubelians learned that 'vegetarian' can also mean 'tasty'. Collectively, Eubelius has reduced its environmental footprint by 3,911 m2. That represents 4,376 baths and 4,502 km by car in terms of greenhouse gases. With these figures, Eubelius is 22nd among the 176 participants in the medium-sized companies category and the highest rated law firm. So our first participation was an incredible success. »



Sofie
Mombaerts

B. SPORT

The Eubelius football team has realised some impressive performances. Moreover, Eubelius subsidises membership of Basic Fit sports centres.

Many Eubelians enter three races, one per city: Ten Miles in Antwerp, 20 Kilometres in Brussels and Bruggenloop in Kortrijk.

Cycling fans aren't forgotten. Every year, a Eubelius Cycling Challenge brings together cyclists who want to explore our «flat country» in several areas of Belgium. From experience, our country isn't so flat – but that's another story!

Bruggenloop

« Our firm encourages its staff to take part in various fun runs that are organised during the year. On Car-Free Sunday in September 2017, no fewer than sixty enthusiastic Eubelians took part in the beautiful race along the canal in Kortrijk and across the various bridges over the Lys. Then all the participants and supporters enjoyed a barbecue on the Ahoi boat. »

C. YOGA

A weekly yoga session is available to Eubelians on-site.

D. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES INVOLVING EUBELIANS

Celebrating happy events has always been in the Eubelius DNA.

1. Family Day

Two Family Days have been organised (at La Ramée near Jodoigne and Pairi Daiza respectively) to bring together Eubelians' families and celebrate our commitments together. In Jodoigne, we celebrated the launch of our CSR policy. In Pairi Daiza, we celebrated our partnership with Handicap International.



2. Saint Nicholas Day

Every two years, Eubelius celebrates Saint Nicholas Day. It's an opportunity for the grown-ups to dress up as Saint Nicholas or one of his sidekicks and for the little ones to join the performances and activities organised in the Brussels office.



3. New Staff Weekend

At the start of each legal year, our younger attorneys organise a weekend that gives them the opportunity to get to know each other and bond better.



Brunhilde
Van den Haute

New Staff Weekend

« This year, the 'New Staff Weekend' Committee, comprising seven young enthusiastic and dedicated attorneys decided to take the New Staff Weekend in a new direction by choosing Warsaw as our destination. It was an unforgettable event, a weekend filled with energy, enthusiasm and team spirit among fifty young attorneys. »

4. **Shortski**

Every year, a shortski weekend is organised by some of the firm's younger members (partners of the firm also attend). The warm and relaxed atmosphere has led Eubelius to support the event, while remaining mindful of its environmental impact, particularly via pooled transport.



Sabe
De Graef

Shortski

« Every year, a large group of Eubelians travel to a ski resort in Austria or Italy for three full days to enjoy the fresh mountain air, sun, snow, wellbeing and unmissable après-ski. For newcomers to the firm, it's a great way to get to know their colleagues in a relaxed environment; for senior Eubelians, it's a chance to show off their (après)ski skills, and it's an opportunity for everyone to create happy memories. »



Marie
Waucquez





VI. OUTLOOK

Eubelius knows that adopting and implementing a sustainable development policy will enable it to perfect its excellence model and maintain a unique place on the legal services market, providing very high quality legal services whilst contributing to sustainable development goals by the constant commitment of all its members.

The report that you are reading is only the first step in a move towards accountability within recognised frameworks, which will allow stakeholders to track Eubelius' progress in this area. At this stage, we are identifying our contributions to SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing), 5 (gender equality) and 11 (sustainable cities and communities) in particular.

We believe that a law firm as large as Eubelius should also identify its contribution in many other areas, such as SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals). Some of these goals have already been mentioned in the report that you are reading, but there has not yet been specific reporting on them.

The Eubelius contribution to sustainable cities has been the main objective of the 2012-2017 period. The contribution has largely consisted of commitments to promoting culture and support for Teach for Belgium in 2016 and 2017.

The Eubelius contribution to health and wellbeing has been another key area, as well as the partnership with Handicap International and the promotion of physical and relaxing activities. The focus on healthy eating is part of this contribution, as is blood donation.



ABOUT EUBELIUS

Eubelius is Belgium's largest independent law firm, with offices in Brussels, Kortrijk and Antwerp. Our 21 partners, 15 (senior) counsels and almost 100 associates offer counselling and representation on Belgian and European law.

We have privileged working relationships with outstanding independent law firms in many foreign jurisdictions. Our practice has a strong national and international focus, and a significant proportion of our work is cross-border (both inbound and outbound). We serve a very diverse client base, ranging from Fortune 500 multinationals to local entrepreneurs, a large number of companies with public law status, and numerous Belgian companies which are part of large international groups. We represent all Belgian language communities and handle matters in English, Dutch, French and German.

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