1. **Tell us about the history of CSR at the CCBE.**

Ten years ago, the CCBE founded the **CSR Working Group** (“working group”), originally consisting only of around five members. I was one of the founding members. The working group acted as a path finder to explore the concept of CSR. We started to research its implications for bars, law societies and lawyers and monitored its development. We published the first informational CSR guidance for European bars. Later, the working group was upgraded and designated a “CSR Committee”. We invited our CCBE delegations to send more members to the CSR Committee in order to expand the diversity of the Committee. Today, we have colleagues from multijurisdictional law firms, medium-sized and small law firms on our Committee. We have a wide regional coverage including Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Since 2011, CSR has gained substantive economic and social momentum. In February 2013, we issued a guide entitled *“Corporate Social Responsibility and the Legal Profession” (“Guidance I”)*, providing information about the definition, the basic concepts and the international, EU and national initiatives regarding CSR. In February 2014, we published *“Guidance II”*, which follows up on questions concerning the legal profession raised in Guidance I, and provides specific recommendations and considerations for bars and law firms.

1. **Why lawyers should be involved in advising on CSR?**

CSR is law in a wider sense: the CSR movement is basically a reaction to the phenomenon of global business without global law. As the institutions and instruments of nation states are insufficient to deal with global phenomena such as a global economy, climate change and the internet, and as traditional international law cannot provide for timely and comprehensive solutions, new institutions and instruments have to be developed. New governance for the 21st century is required to answer these global challenges. Therefore, lawyers trained in national, EU and international law are best equipped to assist in the development of new governance regimes. We increasingly see international “soft law” approaches, partly intertwined with classical legal instruments. In addition, we see clients, in particular large multinational ones, expecting their lawyers to be competent also in soft law issues.

1. **What is the strategic value for lawyers / law firms / Bars to integrate CSR programs into their own business strategies?**

Lawyers and law firms are on one hand increasingly expected as suppliers of services to comply with their clients’ CSR policy. Often these policies contain requirements that are not adequate for the specific role and function of the lawyer/law firm. Thus, a law firm may prefer to develop its own CSR programme that corresponds to its size, risk profile and confidentiality requirements. More and more clients prefer law firms with CSR programmes in their tender procedures or when they staff their panels. CSR programmes provide a competitive edge in the war for talent. In addition, the European Commission explicitly stated in its [Strategy Paper of October 25, 2011](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sustainable-business/corporate-social-responsibility/index_en.htm), that it expects *all* businesses (including law firms and bars and law societies) to respect human rights.

1. **What are the potential risks / dangers for the legal profession if it fails to embrace CSR?**

If the legal profession does not embrace CSR in a proactive way, it runs the risk that CSR requirements will be imposed on the legal profession either by clients, as part of their supply chain management, or by political bodies, which may not be sensitive to the specific role and challenges of the legal profession.

1. **Does legal professional privilege (also known as client-lawyer confidentiality) play a part in CSR policies?**

Lawyer-client privilege and confidentiality rules provide lawyers with a unique advantage compared to consulting firms. In the implementation of a CSR policy or an audit, sensitive information may be at stake. The client may choose a lawyer due to the protection for confidentiality that exists.

1. **With regard to CSR policy, how does the “triple bottom line” impact the legal profession?**

The triple bottom line was one of the first attempts to conceptualise CSR with regard to its content. The triple bottom line or “People, Planet, Profit” provides a rough description of the substantive issues covered by CSR. See question 7 for its impact on the legal profession.

1. **What CSR trends do you see being adopted in the legal profession?**

The legal profession is still in its early stages regarding CSR. We see large multijurisdictional law firms reporting regularly on their CSR policies and developments. Some law firms have signed the UN Global Compact, some start to discuss human rights policies. We see increasingly that law firms are integrating CSR into their project finance and mining departments. We see law firms establishing human rights divisions or multidisciplinary teams dealing with CSR.

1. **What are the most important CSR questions for lawyers to ask when they are exploring a potential CSR-related situation?**

The lawyer has to clarify with his/her client whether the client expects the lawyer to provide advice, not only on hard law, but also on CSR soft law instruments. The lawyer should clarify as soon as possible with his/her insurance company whether advice on soft law is covered by its insurance policy, in particular, when it is not restricted to national or EU-instruments. In advising clients on CSR, the questions can be manifold and the situations complex, with regard to both the factual as well as legal side.

1. **What are the latest developments in the CSR field that affect, or could potentially affect, the legal profession?**

The latest development is the amendment to the Accounting Directive. It requests large companies to report on non-financial (CSR) factors concerning not only their own business but also their business relationships, including suppliers and law firms.

1. **How does pro bono work relate to CSR?**

**Pro bono is an element of CSR. On one hand, it is an issue concerning access to justice, while on the other hand it is part of the responsible leadership and behaviour of law firms in their respective communities.**