



Commitment to society in small and medium-sized enterprises in Poland
– **Current situation and future development**

This study was produced on behalf of the EU Commission
by GILDE GmbH / Detmold and Incubator of Enterprise Ltd / Ruda Slaska.

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Index of contents

- 1. Introduction..... 3**
- 2. Methodological approach 4**
- 3. CSR activities of SMEs in Poland 5**
 - 3.1.1. Companies by branch 5**
 - 3.1.2. Number of employees 5**
 - 3.1.3. Commitment to employees..... 6**
 - 3.1.4. Commitment to the environment 7**
 - 3.1.5. Commitment to society..... 8**
 - 3.1.6. Knowledge and relevance of CSR 9**
 - 3.1.7. Relevance of CSR to SMEs and their stakeholders..... 10**
 - 3.1.8. Development of CSR 12**
 - 3.1.9. Obstacles to the implementation of CSR..... 13**
 - 3.1.10. Reasons for the implementation of CSR..... 14**
 - 3.1.11. Communication of CSR 15**
- 4. Conclusion 16**

1. Introduction

With corporate social responsibility (CSR) long having been a concept that was adopted by large companies, more and more small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are now also discovering this concept for themselves so as to secure and improve their competitiveness.

In order to find out how widespread CSR already is in SMEs in Poland, what reasons there are for its introduction and obstacles to it and where future development is heading, this study was carried out within the framework of the EU “Mainstreaming CSR among SMEs” programme by the Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft der Stadt Detmold GILDE GmbH from Germany in cooperation with Incubator of Enterprise Ltd / Ruda Slaska from Poland.

2. Methodological approach

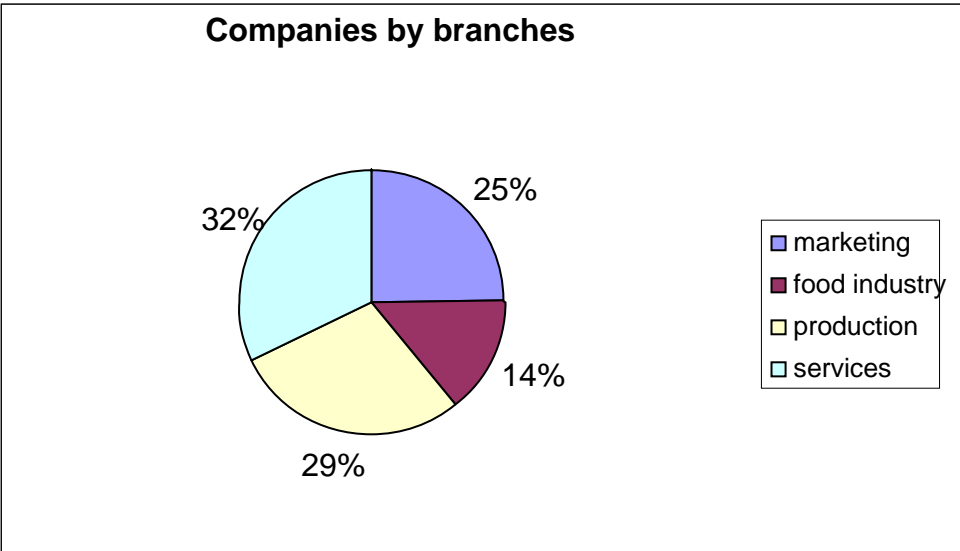
The results of this study come from a telephone survey of owners and managers of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Poland with up to 500 employees who were asked about CSR. A total of 28 companies took part in the survey.

The core questions to be answered are:

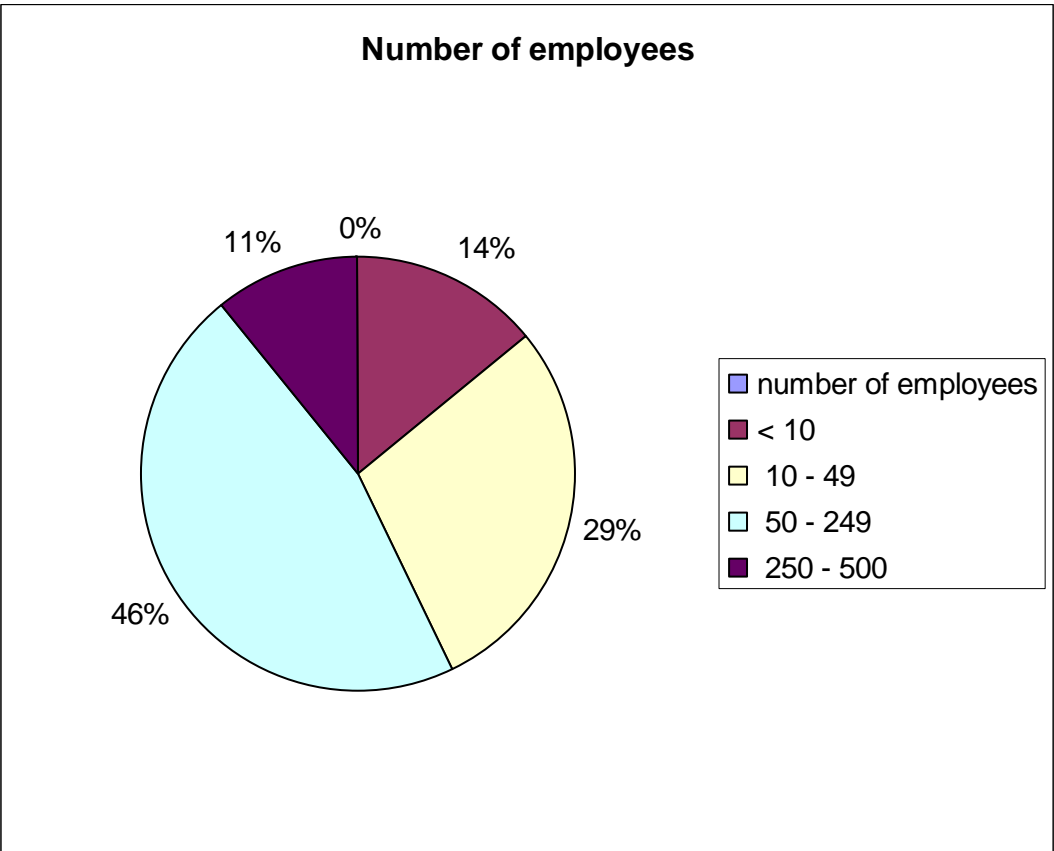
- **How widespread is CSR in medium-sized Polish enterprises and what is the nature of the expected development?**
- **What factors do SMEs see as reasons for implementing CSR or obstacles to it?**

3. CSR activities of SMEs in Poland

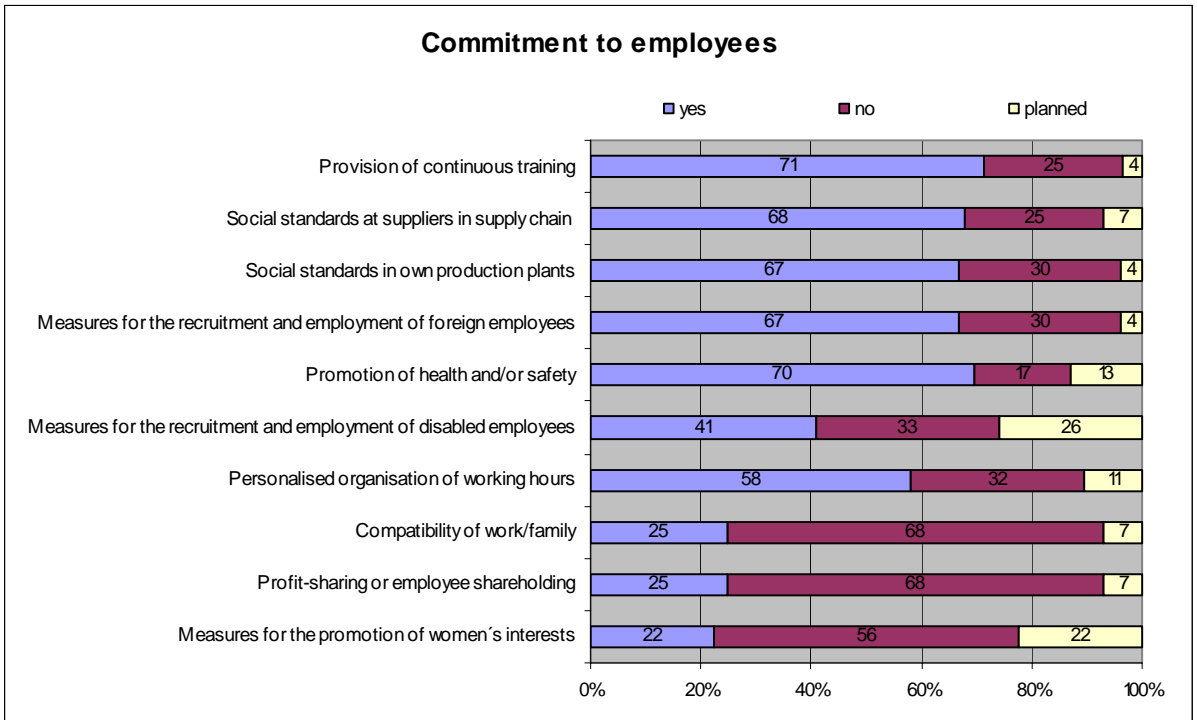
3.1.1. Companies by branch



3.1.2. Number of employees



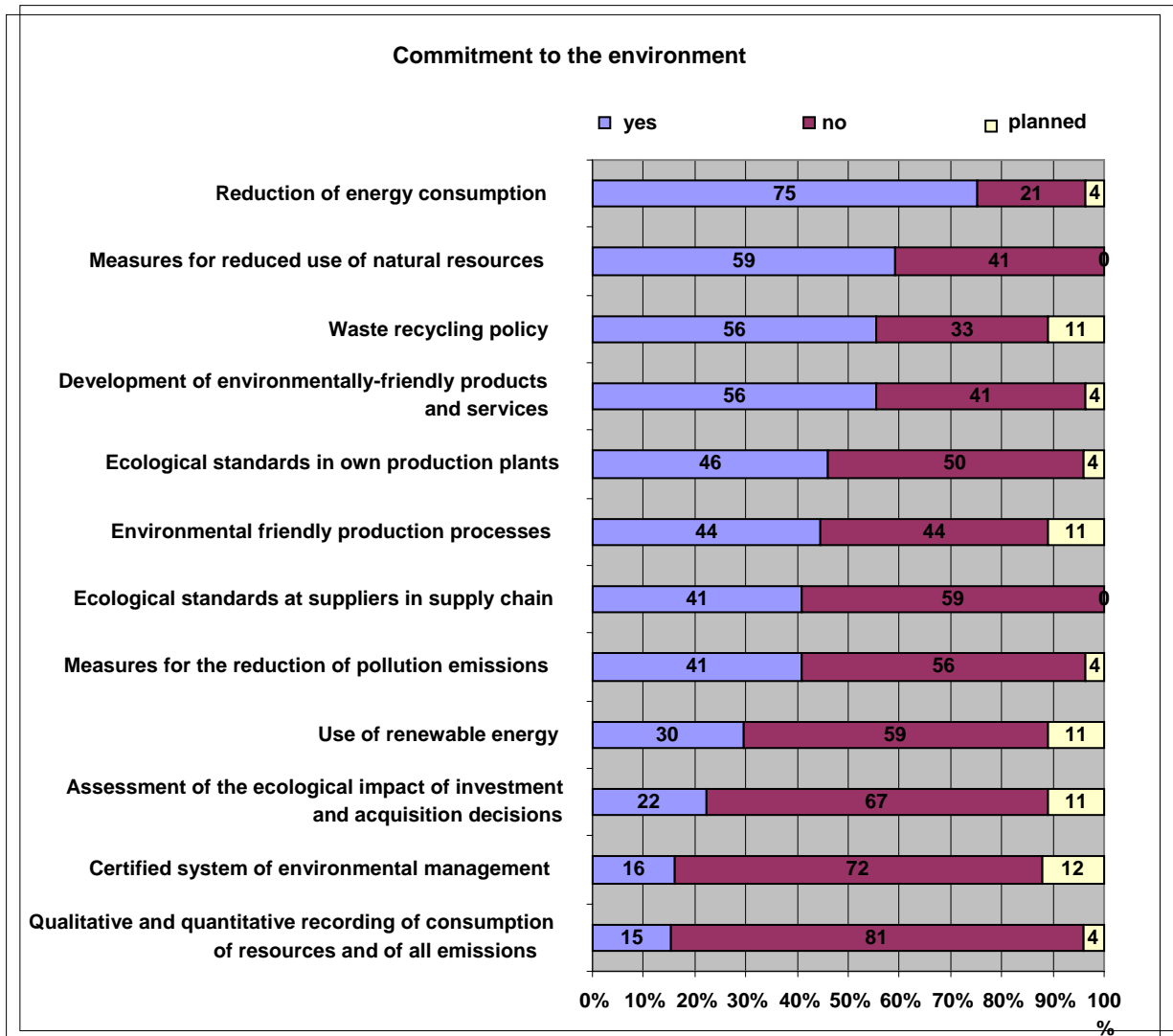
3.1.3. Commitment to employees



At 71% the most frequently mentioned CSR measure for employees is training and development provision, closely followed by measures to promote health and safety at work (70%), the observance of minimum social standards by suppliers (68%) and on the companies' own production sites (67%). 67 percent also implement measures for the equal treatment of foreign employees and applicants. Then flexible working hours are mentioned at 58%, with 41 percent for the equal treatment of physically handicapped employees and applicants. One quarter of the companies support work-life balance and offer employee participation. The smallest number of companies (22 percent) state that they support women.

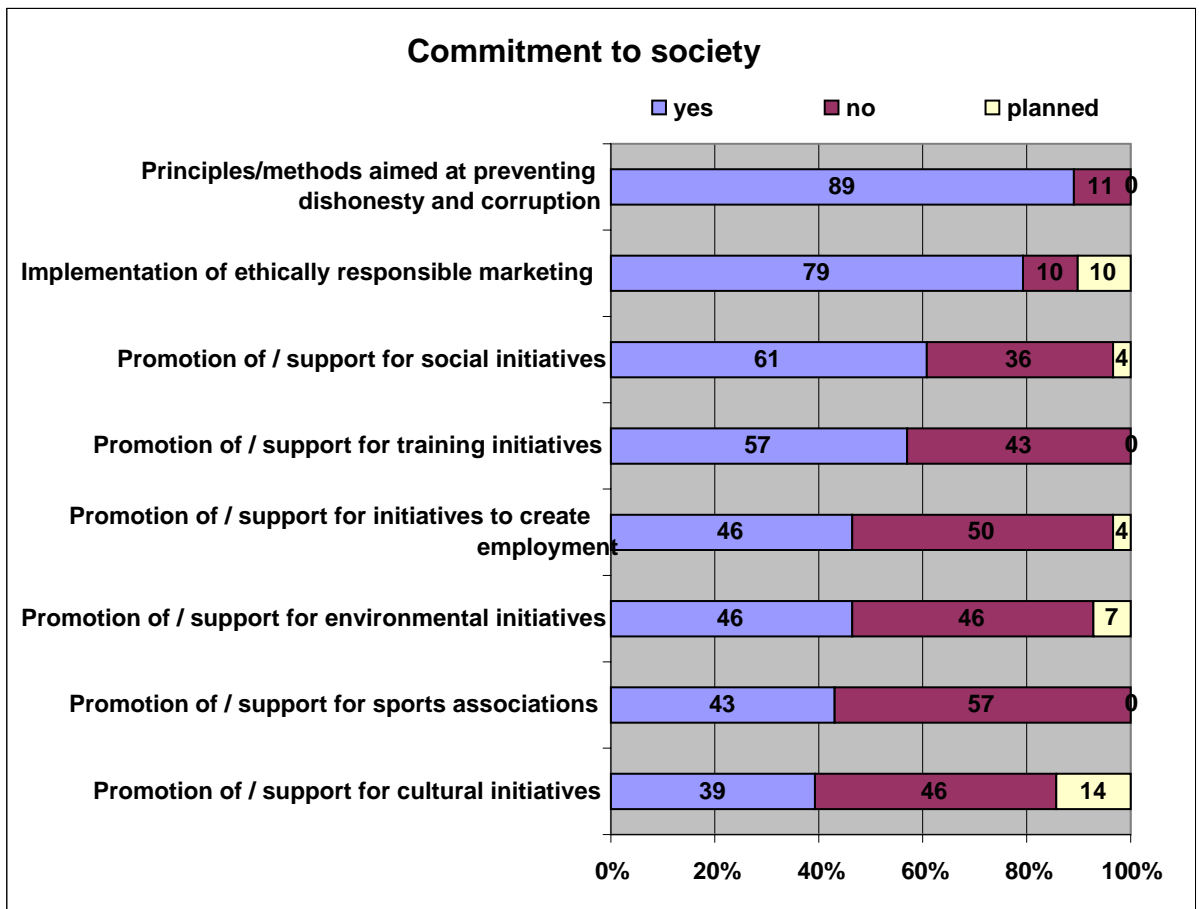
For the future the subjects of equal treatment for physically handicapped employees and applicants (26%) and support for women (22%) are most frequently planned for these SMEs.

3.1.4. Commitment to the environment



In the area of environmental protection most of the SMEs state that they are reducing the consumption of energy and resources (75%) and the use of natural resources (59%) and that they have recycling management (56%). Another 56 percent state that they are developing environmentally friendly products and services and observe environmental standards on their own production sites (46%). Environmentally friendly manufacturing processes are used by 44 percent of SMEs. 41 percent of these companies observe ecological standards with their suppliers and also take measures to reduce emissions. One third use regenerative energies (30%) and 22% conduct an ecological evaluation on investment and purchasing decisions. The smallest number of companies have a certified environmental management system (16%) and record their qualitative and quantitative consumption of resources (15%).

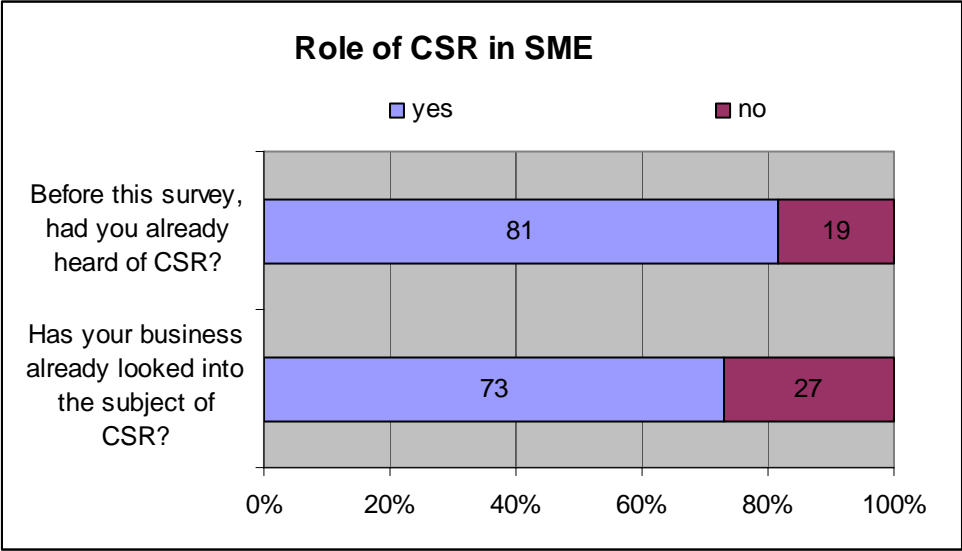
3.1.5. Commitment to society



SMEs commit themselves socially most frequently with combating corruption (89%) and observing the principles of ethically responsible marketing (79%). 61 percent also state that they support social facilities and training initiatives (57%). Fewer than half (46% in each case) commit themselves to job market initiatives and to environmental initiatives. Companies commit themselves most rarely to supporting sports (43%) and cultural initiatives (39%).

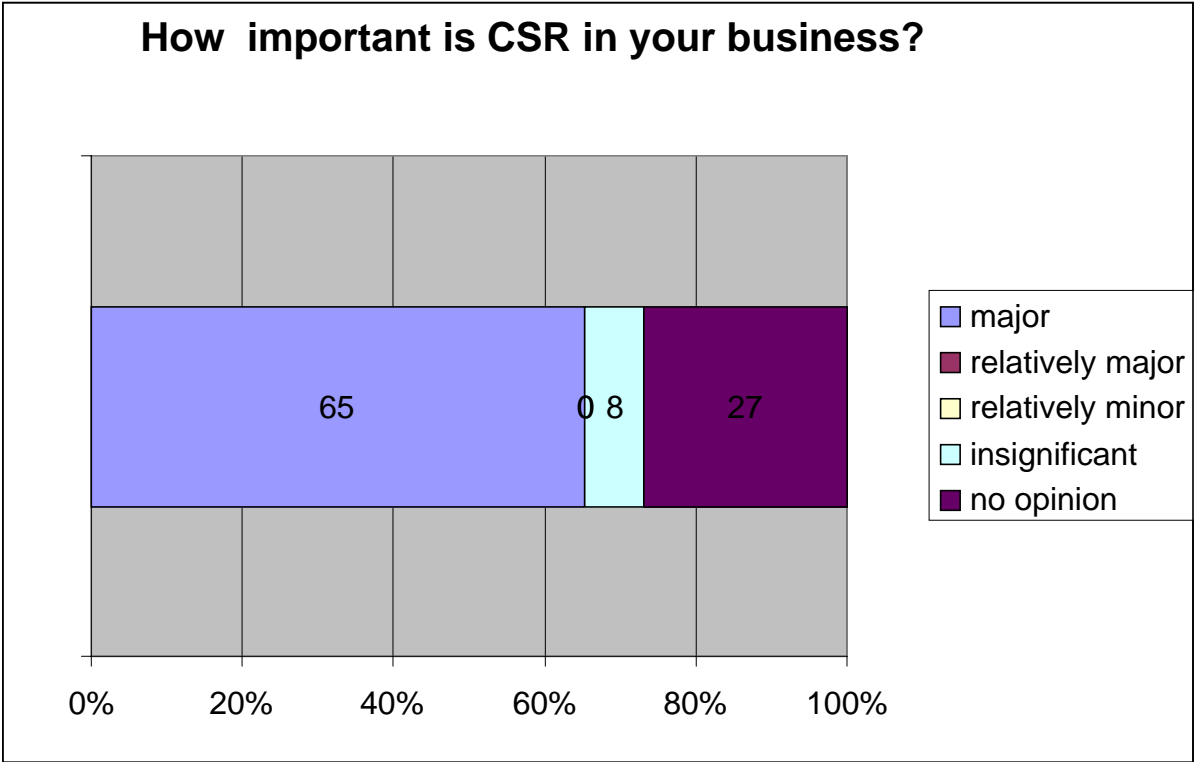
The cultural activities that have received the least support to date will in future be supported by most companies at a 14 percent level. As the second most frequent issue, more companies (10%) will observe ethical guidelines in their marketing activities and seven percent intend to support environmental initiatives more often.

3.1.6. Knowledge and relevance of CSR



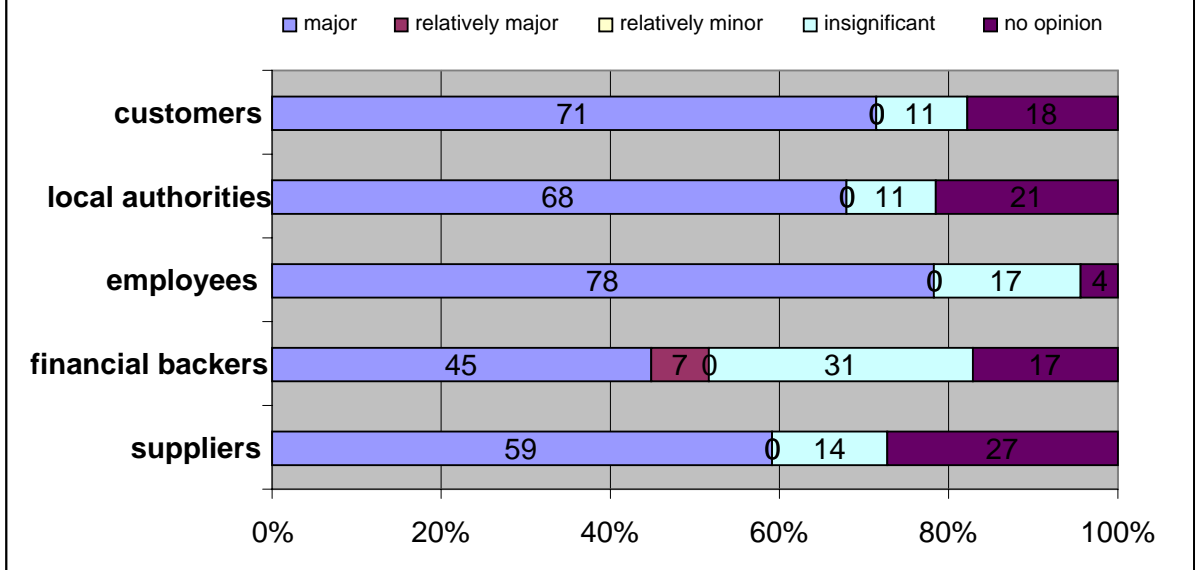
At 81 percent most companies had already heard of CSR before this survey and 73 percent have already tackled this subject in the company.

3.1.7. Relevance of CSR for SMEs and their stakeholders



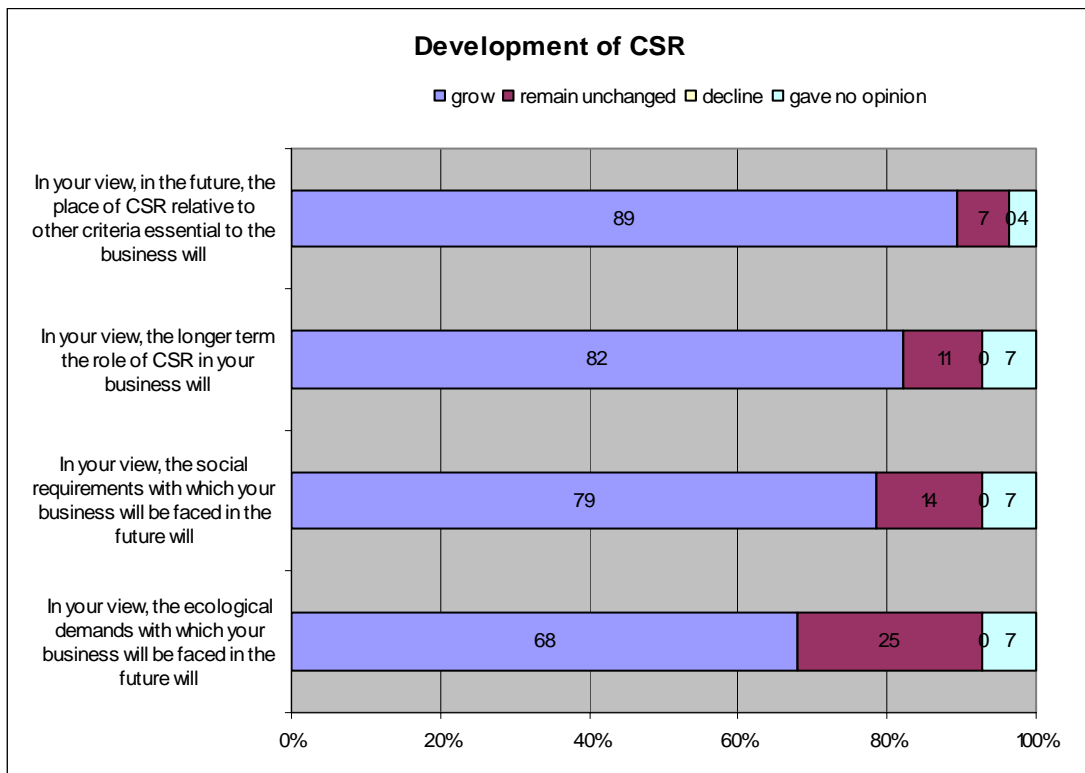
The majority of SMEs (65 percent) state that the subject of CSR is very important to their company. This is contradicted by only eight percent who say that the subject of CSR is relatively unimportant. 27 percent have no view on this.

In your view, what is the importance of CSR to your:



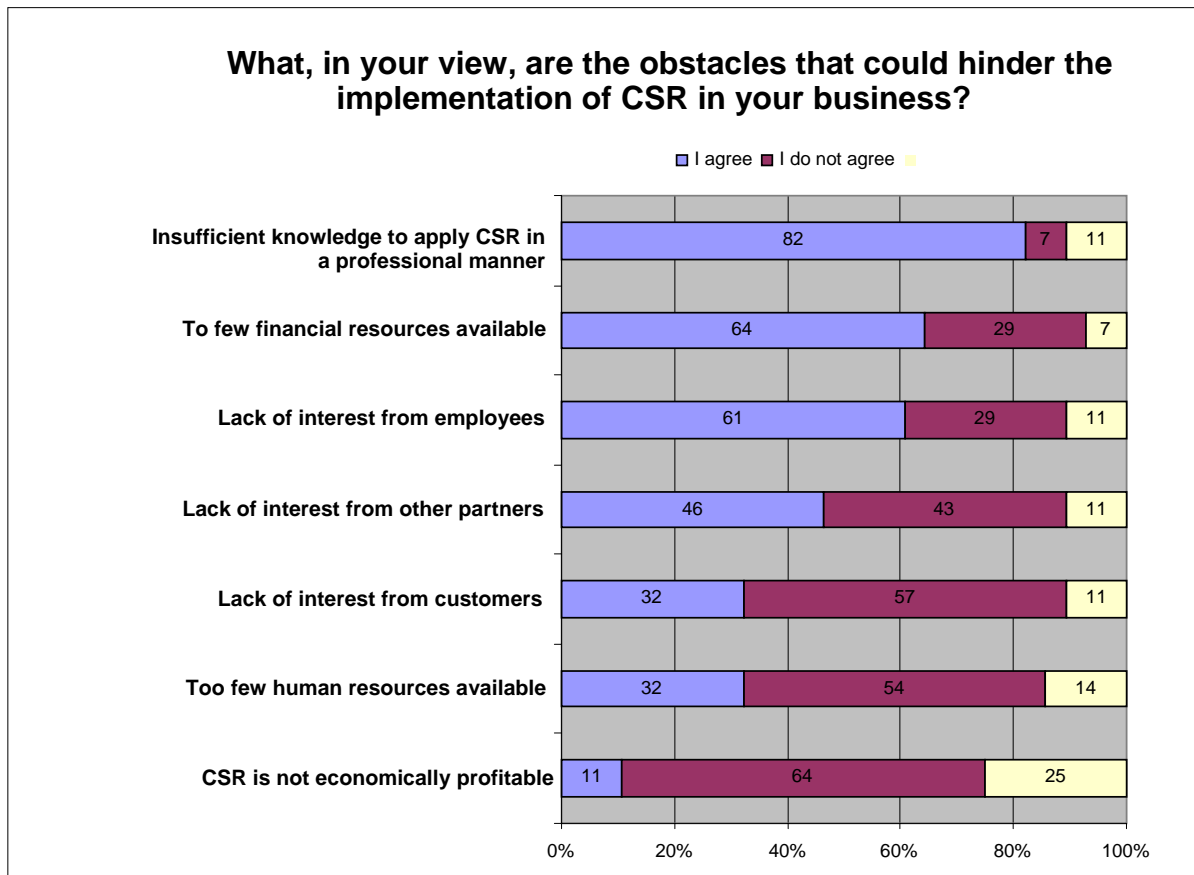
At 78 percent most of the SMEs see their employees as their most important stakeholders who make “CSR demands” on the company, followed by customers with 71 percent and the local authority/state with 68 percent. Then suppliers at 59 percent and investors at 45 percent are mentioned.

3.1.8. Development of CSR



82 percent of all companies believe that the importance of CSR to companies will increase in the medium to long term. Social demands (79%) in particular are becoming relevant, followed by ecological demands at 68 percent. Most companies (89 percent) even believe that CSR is of increasing importance compared with other issues that are relevant to their company.

3.1.9. Obstacles to the implementation of CSR



The major factors that prevent introduction of CSR are stated to be firstly the lack of know-how (82%) for the implementation of this concept, too few financial resources (64%) and then at 61 percent, the low interest of employees in this subject. It is only after this that the lack of interest of other stakeholders is mentioned (46%) like that of customers (32%). Too few staff resources at 32 percent are also given as the reason. What is noteworthy here is that only 11 percent of the SMEs are of the opinion that CSR does not pay for itself economically and over two thirds (64%) of companies dispute this.