



ESBG Resolution on the Environment

September 2009



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The European Savings Banks Group (ESBG) is the voice of savings and socially committed retail banks in Europe. Together, ESBG members represent about one third of the retail banking sector in Europe with total assets of EUR 5,971 (as of 1 January 2008). ESBG members are modern and innovative providers of retail banking services. They make up a large and substantial component of their local and national economies and form an important part of Europe's pluralistic banking landscape.

ESBG members include savings banks, their descendants and other retail banks that subscribe to similar values. All banks and institutions represented by ESBG stand for socially responsible banking that brings a return to society. At the same time they are efficiently operated, competitive institutions. In broad terms, ESBG members are characterized by what we call the three "R":

Retail: they are active in providing retail financial services for individual consumers, households, SMEs and local authorities;

Regional: they are often organised in broad decentralised networks providing local and regional outreach and offer their services throughout their region;

Responsible: they have reinvested responsibly in their region for many decades and are one distinct benchmark for corporate social responsibility activities throughout Europe and the world.



ESBG members have a long history of socially responsible banking all over Europe. They have a strong commitment to sustainable development and have been addressing environmental issues at local and regional level for many years.

They recognise that the environmental challenge is becoming one of the main collective hazards ever experienced worldwide and wish to reconfirm their commitment to responsible business and their strong desire to contribute to improving the environment and addressing the challenges raised by climate change and global warming. This commitment comes as an expected part of the return to society that they embody and of their long-term commitment to the communities in which they operate.

Concretely, this will consist of assuming a position of leadership on environmental and climate change issues in their communities and supporting national and European actions to achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction targets by providing finance for energy efficiency projects and services as well as for climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

To this effect ESBG members are aware of the need to:

- Recognise the risks and opportunities caused by environmental issues for their business;
- Consider the impact of their business on the environment, both direct in terms of own operations and indirect in terms of customers and suppliers;
- Pay attention to the impact of the business on climate change and global warming and how climate change and global warming impacts on the business;
- Incorporate the environmental dimension in banking offers, operations and processes as well as in relations with suppliers, as appropriate;
- Promote products and services that respect social, environmental and sustainable development criteria.

In this respect, ESBG will work towards:

- supporting members in building significant capacity within their organisations to evaluate fully the exposure to environmental issues and to develop suitable business responses;

- evaluating how best corporates' general policies can integrate environmental aspects, including energy efficiency, recycling, waste reduction, transport/travel and building arrangements;
- developing and exchanging best practices on how to incorporate the environment dimension in retail banking offers, operations and processes and promote environment-friendly products and services with clients;
- exploring solutions on how to raise awareness on environmental concerns with clients, employees, suppliers, investors and other stakeholders and, especially for those operating at local level and in smaller organisations, to accompany them in strengthening their "green" capacity;
- engaging and developing dialogue relating to environmental matters with policy-makers and involved institutions, including civil society organisations, at national, EU and international level in order to develop an enabling framework to contribute effectively to the reduction of the business impact on the environment;
- assessing the opportunities for partnership with public authorities and private stakeholders, at local, EU and international level to develop practical, workable and long-term environment-friendly solutions, which can benefit the general public.

As part of the ESBG commitment to the United Nations Global Compact Principles, specific attention will also be given:

- to support a preventive approach to environmental challenges;
- to undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility;
- to encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.





ESBG – The European Voice of Savings and Retail Banking

ESBG (European Savings Banks Group) is an international banking association that represents one of the largest European retail banking networks, comprising about one third of the retail banking market in Europe, with total assets of € 5,972 billion (1 January 2008). It represents the interests of its members vis-à-vis the EU Institutions and generates, facilitates and manages high quality cross-border banking projects.

ESBG members are typically savings and retail banks or associations thereof. They are often organised in decentralised networks and offer their services throughout their region. ESBG member banks have reinvested responsibly in their region for many decades and are one distinct benchmark for corporate social responsibility activities throughout Europe and the world.



World Savings Banks Institute aisbl

Rue Marie-Thérèse, 11 ■ B-1000 Brussels ■ Tel: +32 2 211 11 11 ■ Fax: +32 2 211 11 99
info@savings-banks.com ■ www.savings-banks.com