SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE SMEs, CONTRIBUTORS TO REGIONAL COMPETITIVNESS

IMM RESPONSABILE SOCIAL, FACTOR AL COMPETITIVITATII REGIONALE

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Abstract: *The theme of corporate social responsability (CSR) is included within the larger context of amplificating the holistic and integrative interdisciplinary research where the economic dimension is essential. CSR is a concept that drew the attention of reserchers and practitioners, having a great resonance within the world economy, in the context of extending the studies related to globalisation.*
This paper is essential in understanding the role of the responsable behaviour of small and medium enterprises in the contemporary society.

Key words*: CSR, SME,regional economic development, responsible behaviour*

INTRODUCTION

The debates regarding the responsible behaviour mainly focused on multinational companies. At the same time, it grew famous among SMEs, both as supplier for international companies and as recipients of funds and key elements of the economic vitality and health in the developped and the developping countries.While SMEs have beed recognised as important economic players in the developped world, their contribution is growing especially because of the challenges faced in the process of economic development and of world economic integration.

The theme of small enterprise responsability has recently appeared in the specialised academic researches, such as: Castka in 2004, Jenkins in2006, Murrilo & Lozano in 2009, Lynch-Woo in 2009, Morsing & Perrini in 2009. Studies suggest that SMEs do not only differ in size, but also in their nature towards larger enterprises. SMEs use the tools less than the

larger ones, have less formal strategies, less resources to invest and they are less likely to report their activity. Nevertheless, it is much more likely that SMEs involve in their local community by supporting local events, creating jobs, development and provision of inovations. Generally, it is more difficult for SMEs to have programmes, alloted budgets, than for the large enterprises, especially because of some problems related tp the manager's abilities, who many times is the owner of the business and therefore, does not grant enough time to all problems, some other times also the lack of resources and the problem of maintaining control over standard legal obligations, all of them making this concept become an important field which is to be given attention, is to make part of the business strategy of small companies, too.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPOSABLE ENTERPRISES

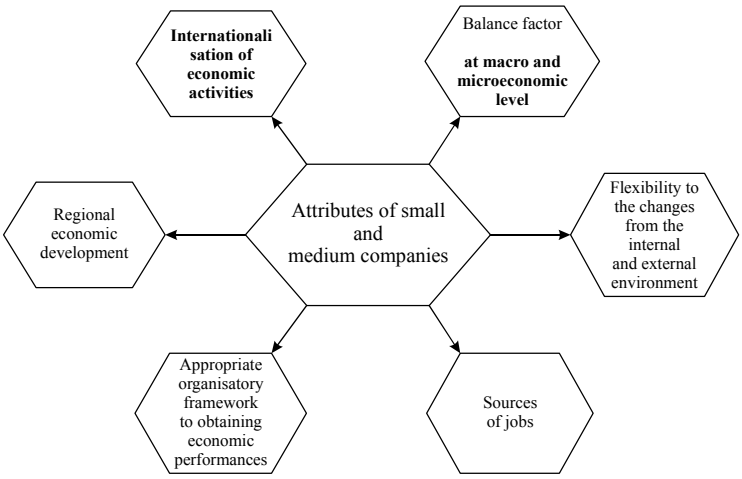
The SMEs represent a balance factor at micro and macroeconomic level. The economic balance is the starting point and, at the same time, the finality of the economic theory and practice. The economic balance reflects into the equality between offer and demand. TheSMEs actively contribute to the balance of the existing structures in economy. A powerful SME segment also ensures an appropriate distribution of the economic power.

The practical activity proved that, in the competitive ecomonies, the high degree of economic concentration has long-term unfavourable effects. Corresponding to the middle class in the society, the SMEs counteract the monopolies and the oligopolies, by reducing the capacity of large enterprises to control the market. The main attributes of small companies can be summarized as a chart (Figure no. 1).

A main attribute of the small and medium enterprises is that these represent an important source of jobs. About two thirds of the newly created jobs are due to the small and medium sector.

The costs related to creating a job in a small or medium company are more reduced, compared to those involved in creating a job in a large company. The small and medium organisations depreciate the fluctuations which are on the labour market, by decreasing the unemployment rate, one of the serious problem of the contemporary economy.

Fig.no.1.Responsable SMEs characteristics



Under the conditions of a permanently changing economic environment, the SMEs have a great capacity to adjust, *a high degree of competitivity and great resistance during crisis periods.* Due to reduced sizes and to simpler organizational structures, they can go through strategic organizationalchanges allowing them to *operate under the conditions of economic efficiency*. *Their innovative potential in the technical, technological and managing plan* is an advantage. The SMEs permanently create and innovate a wide range of products and services to meet the increasing needs of the clients. They are closer to the market and *allow a better adjustment through quantity, but also through the quality of those quantities.* In essence, innovation has two forms: product innovation and process innovation. The product innovation is an answer of the company to the competitive pressures whose effect is the strengthening of the position acquired on the market, while the process innovation leads to conquering new markets.The activity carried out in SMEs, solving some real problems they face, contribute to increase the organizationalefficiency**.** The driving role in the contemporary economic progress is given by the neo-factors of production containing the new communication and information technologies, as well as the modern managing methods. The regional economic development is an expression of economic decentralization and at the same time a component of sustainable development, SMEs having an

important role in implementing the local and regional policies. On the one hand, these companies have access to new markets, to high quality raw materials and can employ highly trained work force, with less salary costs. The other opportunities refer to purchasing new and modern technologies, performing transfers of managing know-how in all activities (production, research-development, commercial etc.) and to creating strategic partnership and alliances.

CONCLUSIONS

The socially responsible companies offer a new vision where the finality is not just to obtain profit, but to find a balance between the heterogenous and contradictory interests of all interested parties. *A responsible company supposes a long-term approach of its objectives, strategies and benefits, allows the creation of an institutional environment to perform its economic activities,* depending on the economic context, on the their size, location (ruban/rural area), type of products, suppliers, managers and importance of the field of activity.

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