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DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN TRADE UNDER CONDITIONS OF MARKET GLOBALISATION[2]

Abstract

Under contemporary business conditions, market globalisation has become inevitable. Such relationships on the market make trade companies use different means to acquire and maintain long-term competitive advantage. One of them is the concept of corporate social responsibility, which is, under conditions of globalisation, seen as a redesign of the classic marketing concept. The aim of this paper is to highlight the development of corporate social responsibility in trade, in the context of market globalisation. In doing so, the concept of corporate social responsibility is seen from two angles. First, it is viewed as a moral obligation of companies and the element of marketing strategy in contemporary business conditions. Second, corporate social responsibility is regarded as one of the integral elements of harmonisation of our trade and corporate policies with the EU.

Key words: *corporate social responsibility, globalisation, marketing, trade policy*

JEL Classification: L80, M21

РАЗВОЈ КОНЦЕПТА ДРУШТВЕНО ОДГОВОРНОГ ПОСЛОВАЊА У ТРГОВИНИ У УСЛОВИМА ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИЈЕ ТРЖИШТА

Абстракт

У савременим условима пословања глобализација тржишта представља неминовност. Такви односи на тржишту утичу да трговинске компаније користе различита средства за стицање и одржавање дугорочне конкурентске предности. Једно од њих је и концепт друштвено одговорног пословања који се у условима глобализације посматра као редизајнирање класичног маркетинг концепта. Циљ рада јесте да укаже на развој концепта друштвено одговорног пословања у трговини, у контексту глобализације тржишта. При томе, у раду се цонцепт друштвено одговорног пословања посматра из два угла. Прво, као морална обавеза предузећа и елемент

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маркетинг стратегије у савременим условима пословања. Друго, друштвено одговорно пословање посматра се као један од саставних елемената хармонизације наше трговинске и корпоративне политике са ЕУ

Кључне речи: *друштвено одговорно пословање, глобализација, маркетинг, трговинска политика*

Instead of introduction: under conditions of market globalisation, national economies become “affiliates” of multinational companies

The global “virus” of consumption is expanding to all market niches. International retail chains are eliminating the last barrier among the local, regional, and global markets. The products that they offer are becoming global, which leads to the globalisation of consumers. This is illustrated by Jürgen Elsässer (2009), the author of “The Nation State and Globalisation”, who, when asked what globalisation is, replies: “These are cheap flights to Seychelles, kiwi in the supermarket, Volkswagen’s advertisements on the Red Square” (p. 18).

Robert W. Cox, a prominent Canadian professor, sees globalisation primarily as trend in the internationalisation of production, internationalisation of financial markets, new international division of labour, new migratory movements from South to North, new contesting and competitive environment that accelerates the process of internationalisation and transforms states into agencies of the globalised world (Plevnik, 2003, p. 23). A sort of “entanglement” of flows of goods and services, capital, labour, technology, innovation, and information occurs. New information and communication technologies promote the concept of electronic commerce, electronic financial markets, electronic stock exchange, virtual supply chain, and other novelties, which gives the economy the epithet global. The development of traffic and new models of freight transport has given an opportunity to bridge the gap between the concentrated production and globally dispersed demand. Trade flows of goods and services are becoming internationalised. The capital is making even bigger “step forward”, by paving the way for the “financial corridor”, being under the command of Washington, i.e. the IMF (Krugman, 2010, p. 100). Strategic alliances integrate business systems from different economic sectors, on the one hand, and different geographical areas, on the other hand. Unique “contracting-voluntary” production-trade chains are created. The transfer of technology, know-how, and marketing management skills are becoming binding thread of the business systems inside strategic alliances. Electronic business documents have been developed in parallel, “travelling” ahead of goods, linking producers, trade, and consumers in the globally integrated marketing information system (Ćuzović, Sokolov Mladenović & Ćuzović, 2012, p. 955). Innovation brought by scientific and technological progress is becoming globalised, without leaving aside any national economy, the participant on the global market. Electronic procurement, sales, electronic money, in a word, electronic markets of goods, services, and capital, which were in the nineteen-eighties mentioned as a vision, are becoming a reality (Turban, Mc Lean & Wetherbe, 2003, p. 168).

Trade is going on, without business partners seeing each other. This is, in addition to the application of electronics and computer science, the result of international quality standards (ISO 9000, ISO 14000, HACCP, ISO 26000, ISO 27000, CE mark) (Ćuzović, 2010, pp. 4-6). The trade in goods is carried out without the presence of goods, with reference to the quality standard. Trade is performed without “linguistic, technical, and physical" barriers. The national market is thus integrated into the global. On the other hand, business on the global market cannot happen haphazardly. This means that any company that plans to "compete" on the regional and global market needs to develop a concept of corporate social responsibility, as an added component of competitive visibility and strengthening business performance.

Bearing in mind the above presented facts, on the one hand, and contemporary theory and progressive practice, on the other hand, the aim of this paper is to analyse the marketing management skills of trading companies in mastering the secrets of corporate social responsibility under conditions of market globalisation.

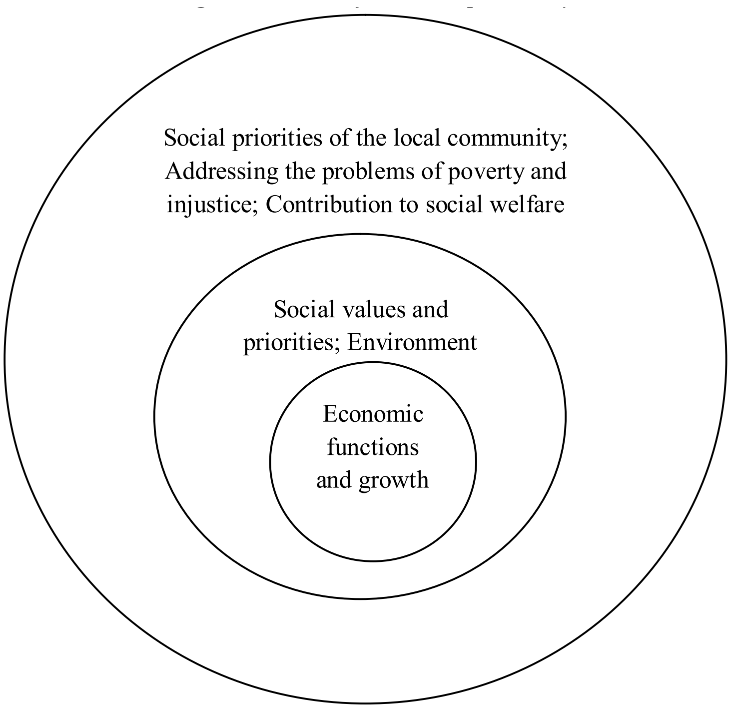
Theoretical aspects of corporate social responsibility

Research on the topic of corporate social responsibility starts from the fact that the sustainable growth and development of the national economy is derived from corporate social responsibility practices, used by companies to achieve competitive recognisability and superior business performance. However, compared with other factors that influence the competitive positioning and superior business performance of companies, empirical research that directly examines the impact of corporate social responsibility on company performance and sustainable growth and development of the national economy is still scarce. The intriguing question is whether corporate social responsibility has a greater or lesser impact on the business performance of companies and macroeconomic recognisability of the national economy in comparison to the impact of other factors, and it represents a challenge not only for the companies and the national economy, but also for all other stakeholders (owners, managers, employees, business partners, and society at large). In addition, corporate social responsibility is an important element in the harmonisation of institutional preconditions for regional and global integration of (post)transition countries. Theory and practice agree in their assessment that the growth and development of the national economy on the basis of corporate social responsibility are some of the key criteria for membership in the European Union. Without the implementation of corporate social responsibility in the marketing strategy of business and trade entities, there is no step forward to the EU market. It should be noted that corporate social responsibility is an important factor of competitive recognisability and business performance of the national economy, on the one hand, and business systems, on the other hand. In a word, corporate social responsibility affects the macroeconomic and microeconomic competitiveness.

Social responsibility implies that a company plays a vital role in the society and achieves economic goals, thus giving constructive contribution to social welfare in the long term. A few decades ago, many authors considered that the primary responsibility of the company lies in maximising profits, within the framework of legal regulations (Schlegelmich, 1998, p. 20). According to them, social welfare was the responsibility of the state. However, subsequent interpretations and concepts have gone much further (Mintzberg, 2000, p. 70). The prevailing opinion is that an increasing number of companies are behaving socially responsibly, in the sense that they focus their activities on maximising profits, while taking into account social welfare and interests of stakeholders, whose rights must not be compromised. Key stakeholders of trading, as well as other companies, are: owners, employees, suppliers, customers, and the local community (Ghauri, Cateora, 2006, p. 470). Taking into account their interests, the company runs socially responsible business.

Therefore, social responsibility refers to the voluntary responsibility, which fully corresponds to the economic and legal responsibility of a company. This means that the company is ready to "sacrifice" part of the profits for the benefit of its stakeholders. This can be defined as corporate behaviour to the extent that is consistent with prevailing social norms, values, and expectations (Sethi, 1997, p. 65). These responsibilities can be displayed at different levels, as can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Levels of social responsibility



Source: Ghauri, P., Cateora, P. (2006). International Marketing. McGraw-Hill. New York, p. 468.

The inner circle in the figure indicates the minimum responsibility of the company relating to the effective realisation of economic functions. The second circle indicates the awareness of the change of social values and priorities regarding the environment, safety of employees and customers, and relations with employees. The third circle indicates the new priorities which companies must comply with. This includes improving the lives in the local community and assistance in addressing problems such as poverty and injustice (Ćuzović, Sokolov Mladenović, 2008, p. 112).

In addition to corporate social responsibility, trading companies have the obligation of ethical behaviour. This behaviour is a direct consequence of increased consumer awareness regarding (un)ethical behavior and positive or negative publicity. Ethics itself points to a set of standards or rules of conduct, based on moral duties and obligations (Ghauri, Cateora, 2006, p. 472), which means that these standards are based on values, beliefs, society, and legislation.

Consumer – starting and ending point of corporate social responsibility under conditions of market globalisation

The business strategy of trading companies under conditions of market globalisation requires market research of host countries. Information on the global market can range from general indicators of the level of economic development of the host country, to the specific, such as: who are the customers, what do the customers buy, at what time do they buy, what are their perceptions, what affects their choice when buying (price, quality, services), what is their relationship to products and services of competitive firms, are their preferences dominated by exclusive products or products of unusual style, how much are they able to follow the fashion trends, and the like. Intensive economic growth and significant structural changes in the era of the "new economy" have led to the reengineering of marketing in a global society. Revolutionary changes are based on the development and application of new technologies in production and trade.

Marketing changes under conditions of "new digital web economy", on the one hand, and global market, on the other hand, are, based on the meaning and intensity, compared with the industrial revolution, which played a key role in the overall social, economic, and cultural changes of the national economies and the global economy. Today, certain parallels can be seen in terms of marketing trends in the "new economy". The fact is that global marketing has become the subject of plenty of discussions, which is a direct consequence of the numerous technical, technological, social, and economic changes, but is at the same time their direct instrument (Ćuzović, Sokolov Mladenović, 2013, p. 33).

The development of marketing has made a significant contribution to the dominant role of trading companies on the global market. Theory and practice agree in their assessment that the investment in marketing is the most profitable investment of any company. This is logical if one takes into account that there is no success, no production, and no trade without strategically designed marketing activities. Along with that, the management of trading companies recognise marketing as a tool for conquering foreign markets. It often happens that the company has the equipment, capital, and labour, but that it is unrecognisable on the global market. Analysing the potential causes of failure, researchers most often refer to inferior marketing compared to the competition, on the one hand, and consumers, on the other side.

Starting from these observations, the question is – what is specific about the global marketing? (Keegan, Worren, 1989, p. 1) In literature, many authors have tried to contribute to a more precise definition of the term international marketing. We emphasise the interpretation provided by Keegan (1989), the authority in the field of marketing. He replaces the concept of international and multinational marketing with the notion of global, noting that "global marketing is the process of directing resources and goals of the company to the global (world) market" (p. 2).

Generally, it can be inferred that globalisation and marketing are in close dialectical correlation. It is certain that the central place in the global marketing belongs to the consumer. Consumers are the starting and ending point in the policy of range of goods and services that the global market prefers. The logical question that arises in this study is: which marketing programme can be used to compete in the global marketplace? This perspective opens up an additional question: can global marketing be standardised?

The answer to this question will be looked for in the attitudes held by Buzzell (1982, p. 55) and Sorenson (1984, p. 15), the representatives of the two schools representing different views. Buzzell assumes that human needs are all similar, whereas Sorenson argues that different cultures usually open different needs, though some basic needs have universal expression on a global scale. It is true that the global market, with all its economic, technological, cultural, and sociological characteristics, offers a number of examples which support both views. Therefore, in the meantime, a conciliatory theory has appeared, promoting “subglobal” or “adaptable” strategy. The emphasis is on “the standardisation of prototypes”, i.e. “the framework-partial standardisation”. In the general debate on the question, many theorists and practitioners believe that it is not important whether it is possible to standardise all activities in the global marketing, as it is important whether a strategy for the implementation of the global marketing programme is standardised. Levitt, a theorist, got involved into the debate as well, and made a significant contribution and gave a special tone to the debate on this question (Hovell, Walters, 1992, p. 22). Theoretically, according to Levitt, the strategy of standardisation of global marketing programme involves identical marketing mix (of products and services, prices, channels of distribution and promotion) in all countries (Hovell, Walters, 1992, p. 23). The other extreme would be a complete localisation of marketing programmes in line with the diversity of consumer demands of the host country. Therefore, it is more appropriate to speak of a standardised and adaptable marketing strategy on the free market. In further elaboration of this thesis, Levitt points out that the only successful global companies are the ones that are able to offer consumers globally standardised range of goods and services.

This does not end the debate on the topic of standardised and adaptable marketing programme of the companies participating on the global market. Papavassilou i Stathakopoulos (1997, p. 45) deepen Levitt’s attitude, supporting it at the same time. According to them, the benefits of standardised marketing programmes on the global market are reflected in the following: a) they provide the opportunity for the company to build a globally recognisable corporate image, b) standardised marketing programmes make the consumer aware of the global recognisability of the company and its products worldwide, c) standardised marketing programmes contribute to the economies of scale of production and marketing, and d) they save on resources for promotional and communication mix. On the other hand, supporters of adaptable strategy only partially support Levitt’s views, noting that it is impossible to implement the standardised marketing strategy on the global market, because there are differences at macro and micro level of individual national markets.

Wrapping up the discussion on this topic, it can be concluded that there is no universally accepted marketing strategy regarding the performance of companies on the global market. The benefits of standardised strategy can be the defects of adaptable strategy and vice versa. It is obvious that the elements that make up the marketing strategy can be standardised, and management of globally oriented companies will pursue the policy of adapting individual elements of the strategy to the selected market segments.

The most common objections to global marketing

In recent years, theorists and practitioners, advocates of the concept of sustainable development, are beginning to “reproach” the marketing managers whose companies operate on the global market. Their objections are articulated in the form of questions, such as: does the marketing concept, as the cornerstone of a consumer-driven society, only rhetorically or substantively cares about environmental protection? Does marketing concept take care of the geological non-renewable resources? Does marketing concept take care of the reduction of poverty? What is the position of marketing managers regarding growing social stratification? Is profit the only measure of success of marketing management? Does the realisation of marketing objectives contribute to social welfare?

The most serious criticism of the marketing concept refers to whether it can bridge the gap between meeting short-term desires of consumers, on the one hand, and long-term responsibility (caring) for society as a whole, on the other hand. Customers may want powerful cars, refreshing and other types of drinks in non-returnable containers, but the question that arises is: what implications will this have for society in the long run? (Kotler, 2011, p. 30) In such a situation, it is likely that the society will have to pay a “price” for the pollution of working and living environment and packaging that cannot be recycled. These situations have led to demands for new concepts of marketing and business. Among the many proposals, “humanistic marketing”, “environmental marketing”, “socially responsible marketing” have appeared. All these suggestions for “redesigned marketing” refer to different aspects of the same problem. Kotler (2011) proposed the “concept of socially responsible marketing”, whereas macroeconomic experts proposed “corporate social responsibility” (p. 31). Today, this new concept includes the concept of “socially responsible corporate governance” (Petrović, 2008, p. 84). What is common to all these concepts is a business strategy based on ethical, economic, and environmental principles.

Therefore, under conditions of globalisation, the term corporate social responsibility involves the redesign of the classic marketing concept as a business process. This new “redesigned” marketing is focused not only on making profits, but also on increasingly pronounced benefits realised on the basis of ethical, environmental, and social principles. It follows that the corporate social responsibility is the strategy of permanent commitment, based on ethical and social principles, of economic policy makers, macro-management and marketing management of companies to the achievement of economic growth and development of the economy, on the one hand, and improvement of social and economic status of all employees and society as a whole, on the other hand.

Corporate social responsibility – “moral obligation” of companies

It could be argued that corporate social responsibility is the “moral obligation” of companies, including trading companies, which the management implements into the business strategy with the goal of increasing the social welfare, by meeting the interests of all stakeholders (Kantino, 2007, p. 25). In such circumstances, the market developed countries implement the concept of corporate social responsibility in the marketing strategy of the company. In doing so, the concept of socially responsible companies and socially responsible institutions is affirmed. This concept is built and maintained through an ongoing commitment of the business systems to ethical behaviour in the realisation of economic growth and development, while contributing to the welfare of all employees and society as a whole. In other words, corporate social responsibility is the introduction of a new way of thinking into the company management. Changing ways of thinking can positively affect: performance, risk management, risk reduction and risk avoidance, performance improvement, making a profit and leaving risk far behind. It is a corporate philanthropy, which strikes a balance between economic objectives and the company’s involvement in society. It is believed that socially responsible companies are the ones that are responsible to (Lewis, 2006, p. 11):

- Employees, by respecting their basic human rights, such as health and pension insurance and working hours,
- Business partners and competitors, by complying with good business practices,

- Consumers, through the production and sale of high quality products (safe in terms of technical, technological, and environmental factors) at reasonable prices,
- Communities in which they operate, through environmental protection, social care, responsible use of natural resources.

The benefits of corporate social responsibility are most commonly referred to:

- Protection and improvement of existing resources (human capital and the environment),
- Increase of business and financial performance of companies by reducing operating costs,
- Creation of new business opportunities and new markets,
- Preservation, development, and improvement of the company image, especially in relation to consumers,
- The company becomes attractive to investors, educated, and motivated workers.

Marketing managers from post-transition countries in the process of mastering the secrets of corporate social responsibility

Starting from the stated benefits of corporate social responsibility, this concept is imposed as increasingly present requirement under conditions of regional and global integration. As we have already noted, an integral part of the concept of sustainable development is business ethics, which becomes an integral part of the marketing strategy of all business systems and institutions, and a unique kind of behaviour (Lajović, 2013, p. 50). It has gained in significance under conditions of internationalisation of business of trading companies. However, in the process of doing business on the global market, trading companies are faced with the question of whether their ethical principles are uniform and homogeneous. Practice has shown that what is considered ethical behaviour on one market (country) is unethical in another. A striking example of this is bribery or corruption. In some countries, such as Hong Kong, Russia, and Indonesia, bribery is a formal way of doing business, whereas in others it is informal and viewed as a way of violation of ethical principles[3]. In order to prevent the occurrence of bribery in business relations, many countries have signed the convention against bribery, which, on the other hand, does not fully guarantee that this illegal and unethical activity will not occur[4].

In addition to bribery, (un)ethical behaviour is especially pronounced in the implementation of marketing activities of international trading companies (Blythe, Zimmerman, 2005, p. 361). Implementation of these activities focuses on the target group of consumers. Starting from the scientific expert opinion that consumers are "the lifeblood of companies", ethical behaviour towards them is of utmost importance. Otherwise, the trading company "pays the price" of negative publicity and will need a lot of time and effort to reposition itself on the market.

[3] The trading companies mostly face the practice of (not) giving bribes when obtaining permits for the construction of their facilities, if they use the strategy of foreign direct investments.

[4] The countries that have signed the convention against bribery are: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA.

The types of (un)ethical behaviour of trading companies in conducting marketing activities on different international markets can be seen in Overview 1.

Overview 1: (Un)ethical conduct of international trading companies

Marketing activity	(Un)ethical behaviour
Positioning	Positioning of low-quality product as high-quality product Positioning a product that performs functions that are not true (e.g. food that reduces cholesterol) Blackmailing the consumer that if they do not use a certain product, they will be hurt in some way
Product	Product that can hurt consumers (e.g. toys for children) Product with the risk of violating safety of the user (e.g. electrical appliances) Product that may cause distortion of consumer's health When consumers are not fully informed about the composition of the product
Prices	Price cartels, i.e. when two or more companies determine a price that is higher in relation to the competition Unreasonable price increases without providing additional benefits Application of monopoly prices Illegal payments (bribes) or giving gifts for the purpose of increasing sales volume
Promotion	Promotion of false characteristics of products through advertisements Incomplete information to consumers through differentiated communication Using inappropriate language in advertisements Using discriminatory or degrading slogans Illegal payments (bribes) in order to promote the product range
Distribution	Discriminatory distribution, i.e. forcing suppliers to discriminate between customers (i.e. to whom they will deliver the products) Looking for illegal payments (bribes) from the suppliers in order for their products to be found on the shelves of retail stores of trading companies (Not) taking responsibility for after-sales services (e.g. service and installation of parts of complex technical products).

Source: Ghauri, P., Cateora, P. (2006). International Marketing. McGraw-Hill. New York, p. 478.

Previously described (un) ethical behaviour faces trading companies with a number of dilemmas and challenges. First of all, (un)ethical behavior is directly proportional to the volume of sales and overall company image. Changing business conditions lead to the fact that it is no longer enough just to provide consumers with high-quality products and services, but that it is essential to leave an impression of a "good corporate citizen".

However, for the trading company to be called a "good corporate citizen", it is necessary to respect consumers' demand for environmental products. In this context, consumer movements and other organisations are becoming louder in their demands for eco-labelled, natural, and healthy products. Dirty technologies are moving from developed countries to less developed countries. In countries with developed environmental awareness, the principle "polluter pays" is introduced. Eco-products and eco-packaging are becoming subinstruments of marketing mix of multinational companies.

In former transition countries, such as Serbia, in the past, most companies satisfied the consumers' needs without taking into consideration the exploitation of current and future environment. Many of them realised the consequences of environmental damage that has already been made when they started the process of joining the EU. Acid rain, ozone depletion, toxic pollution of air, soil, and water are "the balance" of socially irresponsible business. Theory and practice recognise the vulnerability of the environment as a long-term problem that will confront marketing managers and economic policy makers in the next several decades. In the past, most companies calculated the costs of environmental pollution into the price that was paid by the consumer. This is now changing. The strategy for sustainable development and Agenda 21 are becoming a binding document for all EU member states, as well as countries that are negotiating to become candidates for EU membership. Our country has not ratified Agenda 21, but has adopted the Strategy for sustainable development, which aims to (Ministry for the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment of the Republic of Serbia, 2002) "bring into balance the three key factors, or the three pillars of sustainable development: sustainable economic growth and economic and technological development, sustainable development of society based on social equality, and environmental protection through rational management of natural resources, combining them into a single unit, supported by appropriate institutional framework".

Environmental codes, as important determinants of corporate social responsibility, are "accompanied" by the codes of ethics (principles), which has already been discussed. Ethical principles promote: general ethical principles of business, ethical standards between management and employees, ethical standards between companies and other stakeholders. The concept of socially responsible corporate governance is affirmed. Although the ethical principles and codes of corporate social responsibility are not legally binding, it does not mean that they should not be applied. On the contrary, as a "moral obligation" of companies, they remind marketing managers to act in the spirit of ethical principles. For example, after large-scale disturbances that led to the collapse and series of scandals in companies Enron, WorldCom, Global Crossing, Tyco, and others, corporate social responsibility found itself on the agenda of UNCTAD in Geneva (on 23 January 2006).

How to reconcile the interests of different stakeholders in the system of corporate social responsibility

In addition to the "standards" of corporate social responsibility, other elements of ethical behaviour also deserve importance, such as: relationship between owners and managers, owners and management board, management and employees, and management and shareholders. Critical reviews on disrespect of ethical principles have also come to the fore, such as: information asymmetry and the achievement of corporate control over the work of managers. It is no accident, then, that the agenda of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) in 2006 included ethical codes of management, owners, and employees that need to be “standardised” (Baćović, Simić, 2010, p. 25).

The working group ISO/TMB/WG SR (ISO/Technical Management Board/ Working Group for Social Resonsibility) begins preparations for the adoption of standards of corporate social responsibility, also known as the standard ISO 26 000 (Ćuzović, Sokolov Mladenović & Ćuzović, 2011, p. 420). The adoption of this standard was planned for the end of 2010. However, due to the global economic and financial crisis, this standard got its place in the technical documentation of the Institute for Standardisation of Serbia (IST), but it is still insufficiently applied in the marketing strategy of Serbian companies.

In some EU countries, corporate social responsibility is institutionalised in the form of codes. True, they are not legally binding, but it does not mean that they do not apply. A good example is the United Kingdom, which, among the European countries, has the longest tradition in the implementation of corporate social responsibility, and its narrow segment, socially responsible corporate governance. Socially responsible corporate governance in the EU has taken on the “binding” character after the great global financial and economic crisis. This practice came to light after the global financial crisis which started in 2008. Developers of financial markets and managers of financial institutions are aware of the existence of: Law on Securities, Law on Stock Exchange, and other laws which further regulate this segment of business. However, ethical principles and the principles of corporate social responsibility are not left aside. This is understandable if we recall the words of Valtazar Bogišić, saying “that for all the laws, we sometimes do not see justice”.

In Serbia, the Law on Companies (2004) prescribes the minimum content of the code of corporate governance: standards in terms of level of education, accountability of directors, determining the compensation of directors, procedures for appointing members of the board of directors, procedures for appointing members of the management board, election and dismissal of chief executive officers. The law provides for the obligation of the management board to adopt a code of corporate governance, which is desirable, but not legally binding. Realising the seriousness of this segment of harmonisation of our economy with the EU requirements, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia in 2005 adopted a document entitled (www.pks.rs) “Code of Business Ethics”, which is a kind of code of corporate social responsibility. These examples show that our corporate social responsibility is gradually becoming harmonised with the requirements of trade and corporate policies of the EU.

Conclusion

Globalisation is the process of spreading the interdependence of countries and regions as a consequence of the dynamic development of economic, cultural, environmental, political, and other relations, and, thus seen, stands for an issue that has been on the agenda of scientific community in the last 10-15 years. What happens is the entanglement of flows of goods and services, capital, labour, technology, innovation, and information. Under such circumstances, the consumer gets the epithet global. Trading companies compete on how to best meet the needs of globally oriented consumers. However, their business on the global market cannot happen haphazardly. This involves developing the concept of corporate social responsibility, as an added component of competitive recognisability and enhanced business performance. The aim of this study has been to examine different aspects of corporate social responsibility of trading companies under conditions of market globalisation. The analysis has started with the consumer, as the starting point of corporate social responsibility. Furthermore, the focus has shifted to the changes in marketing under conditions of new digital economy and the needs of development of global marketing. In particular, the necessity of the application of business ethics in the marketing concept of modern companies is highlighted, as well as the problem of reconciling the interests of different stakeholders in the system of corporate social responsibility. One of the positive examples is the adoption of the standard ISO 26000, which defines corporate social responsibility as a moral obligation of companies. In addition, in certain EU countries, corporate social responsibility is institutionalised in the form of codes. When it comes to the Republic of Serbia, the Law on Companies provides for the minimum content of the code of corporate governance. Activities of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia in the process of adopting the “Code of Business Ethics” refer to the fact that our country is in the process of gradual harmonisation of corporate social responsibility with the demands of trade and corporate policies of the EU.

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