

## EDITORIAL

### SUSTAINABILITY: A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The dissemination of the awareness and attention towards a sustainable way of building in the present and the immediate future is one of the goals that the Vitruvio magazine intends to achieve through its articles and participations.

In recent years, sustainability has taken on a number of meanings that go beyond the compliance with environmental protection requirement, becoming a real moral obligation for every individual.

For this reason, we have several protocols and basic concepts as well as specific standards and laws, which enable us to apply good practices on sustainability. In the construction field, the above-mentioned protocols have such an overwhelming logic that it is natural to wonder why they have not been adopted yet fifty years ago at the beginning of European economic development.

Currently, the different aspects of sustainability, such as energy efficiency, natural resource safeguarding, etc, are spread across all technological projects of any nature. These issues have economic implications that often compromise the project feasibility, becoming just a merely statements of intention that will never be realized for lack of money, as often stated by all the politicians of the European states. Unfortunately, in more and more cases, sustainability issues are advertising slogans without a real benefit for the collectivity and for the companies, which by their nature make concrete things, the products.

At this point, it is reasonable to wonder whether companies can really contribute to the sustainable development of our society through targeted actions of social responsibility

The concept of social responsibility was introduced between the late 1950s and the early 1960s in the United States when the collectivity realized that the companies go beyond the production of goods and services and they are responsible for the health and safety of their workers and the generation of pollution of their production processes as well.

Concern for these social and environmental problems raises a demand for information that companies have to provide in a written document called Social Responsibility.

Between the late sixties and early seventies the first social balance sheets was drawn up for the external bodies to the company, essentially consumers, which in the US have had a special sensitivity and attention for this theme.

At the beginning, the information provided by the companies did not conform to a specific model. The need to use a single scheme for all companies that could both provide information and allow a comparison between their social performance dates back to the 1990s, when a resurgence of the concern for social responsibility was experienced. In this period, also the term "sustainability", which includes both economic, environmental and social concepts, began to be used. In 1987, the well-known Brundtland Report marks a real turning point by the definition of "sustainable development" able to reconcile economic development with social and environmental issues.

The publication in 2001 by the European Commission of the Green Book on Promoting a European Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility has begun a broad debate on how the European Union could promote corporate social responsibility at European and international level.

The above-mentioned Green Book aims to achieve one of the strategic objectives defined by the Lisbon European Council in 2000, that is "to become the country with the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion".

Nowadays, a growing number of companies recognize their social responsibility, considering it an integral part of their business. However, the technological advancements and the current forms of cross-sectoral work impose the adoption of a new social responsibility control model able to assess the role played by

multiple companies in a given production cycle. In addition, companies are transforming into complex manufacturing systems involving several experts in order to remain competitive. In this scenario, the social responsibility model focused on the analysis of a single product shows signs of fragility and obsolescence. Therefore, we should be looking for a new social responsibility assessment model that meets the current requirements of the production system in order to avoid having to repent in fifty years!

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