



## Press Release

### **German Sustainability: 150 experts from economy and society discuss new approaches to attain corporate transparency**

**Berlin, 19.04.2016** – 150 leading German and European experts from economy, civil society, science and politics met up in Frankfurt to debate the chances of new sustainability dynamics – strengthened by the UN climate agreement from Paris, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the national implementation of the EU-CSR reporting obligation.

During a two-day forum, the experts spoke about disclosing information with regard to environment, society and governance. In nine workshops, they worked out which requirements market participants apply to quality and content of information and how precisely The Sustainability Code (Deutscher Nachhaltigkeitskodex (DNK)) can be advanced in order to promote a sustainable development. The key appears to be an increase in market relevance; thereby unfolding added value for companies and other users.

In addition, requirements and ways were evaluated as to how sustainability codes can also be initiated in other European countries. For example, the Greek Sustainability Code, which was developed and published based on The Sustainability Code.

The experts recommend: The Sustainability Code allows companies to efficiently manage and disclose the effects their business have on environment and society – under the condition that data and information are credible and comparable. The Sustainability Code is ideal for medium-sized enterprises to get started in sustainability reporting. The “Guide to the German Sustainability Code” is frequently used to jump-start. Medium-sized companies can use The Sustainability Code to show how they assume responsibility and better manage risks as a supplier in value chains.

Engaging in one’s own sustainability performance can furthermore have positive effects on innovations within the company and can motivate the staff. Companies should leverage these potentials by collecting and preparing information to reflect on their own core business. With a compliance statement according to the Sustainability Code companies can comprehensively describe their responsible management to their clients and staff as well as towards the public and financial market players.

Marlehn Thieme, Chairwoman of the Council for Sustainable Development sums up: „The competency of specialists from economy and society is indispensable for our work in the Sustainability Board. We actively call for these valuable experiences in our dialogues and gratefully include them in our specific projects. In Frankfurt we succeeded together in bringing relevant players into contact with each other and setting impulses for more and better information.“

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**The Sustainability Code** promotes corporate and social responsibility. Using 20 criteria, it measures the sustainability performance of national and international organizations and companies regardless of their size and legal structure. As of 2017, capital-market-oriented companies with more than 500 employees will be required to report on their sustainability activities. The EU Commission has praised the Code as a suitable standard for fulfilling the reporting obligation. Its area of focus and uncomplicated handling also make the Code an ideal tool for small and medium-sized enterprises.

<http://www.deutscher-nachhaltigkeitskodex.de/en/home.html>

**The German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)** was first called into being by the German government in April 2001. The Council consists of 15 public figures. Its tasks comprise developing contributions to implement the National Sustainability Strategy, specifying concrete areas for action and projects, as well as making sustainability an important public issue. Federal Chancellor, Dr. Angela Merkel, is continuing the National Sustainability Strategy and appointed RNE for a further three years on 1 July 2013.

<https://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/en/the-council/council-members/>

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