Swiss employees not given enough support to act ethically, reveals Institute of Business Ethics' survey

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www.ibe.org.uk/userassets/surveys/2018_ibe_ ews 2018_sws_int.pdf

A fifth of Swiss employees say that their organisation does not provide any of the elements of formal ethics programme

23rd May 2019: The Institute of Business Ethics today publishes the results of a survey which asks Swiss employees their views of ethics in their workplace.

The IBE asked employees whether their organisation had the four building blocks of a corporate ethics programme, including having written standards of ethical conduct such as a code of ethics; mechanisms to report misconduct; procedures to obtain advice and the provision of ethics training.

It reveals that only 12% of Swiss employees say that their organisation has all four building blocks, while 20% say that their organisation offers no work ethics-related information, training or support channels.

The IBE's Ethics at Work survey is the only one of its kind covering Switzerland. It provides real insight into employees' views on ethics across all sectors and job roles, and offers a context for employee experiences across Europe. Over 6,000 employees were surveyed across Europe, including 756 in Switzerland.

This is the first time that the survey, first introduced in the UK in 2005, has been conducted in Switzerland. It asks employees how they experience ethics in their day-to-day working lives and how they perceive corporate ethical culture. It looks at whether they have witnessed misconduct; whether they have reported it; and what if anything stops them from doing so.

To understand employees' perceptions of their organisation's engagement with stakeholders, respondents were asked to comment on whether they believe that their organisation acts responsibly in all its business dealings with key stakeholder groups such as customers, clients, suppliers. Employees in Switzerland have some of the most positive views of all European respondents. Swiss employees are amongst the most likely to say that their organisation acts responsibly in all its business dealings (80%); lives up to its stated policy of social responsibility (69%) and that issues of right and wrong are discussed in staff meetings (58%).

However, Swiss employees are less positive about their organisation's honesty than the European average, with only 20% saying that honesty is always practiced in their organisations (vs 29% in Europe).

Yet too few employees who have been aware of misconduct at work raise their concerns. Only 58% of those who have been aware of misconduct said that they did so and only a third say that their organisation provides a confidential means to report misconduct.

Philippa Foster Back CBE, Director of the Institute of Business Ethics said: *"Providing a comprehensive ethics programme is an important way to encourage employees to speak up when they see something that might violate their organisation's ethical standards. The lack of support for Swiss employees is particularly worrying. Providing support for employees to do the right thing is vital in establishing a culture in which employees feel confident to raise their concerns.*

Not only does an ethics programme support employees to do the right thing; it also provides assurance to stakeholders – like investors and customers – that the organisation is operating sustainably, with business ethics in mind."

#ethicsatwork

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To obtain an advanced press copy of the report, or Op-Eds please contact Katherine Bradshaw, Head of Communications 07771 517700 k.bradshaw@ibe.org.uk

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Ethics at Work: 2018 Survey of Employees: Switzerland

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About the Ethics at Work survey

The IBE has surveyed British employees since 2005, but given that organisations are increasingly taking an integrated approach at the international level, we have expanded the number of countries included in the research to cover France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the UK within Europe.

The survey was completed by a total of 6,119 respondents across the eight European countries. It was comprised of a representative sample of about 750 working adults in each country who were aged 18+.

This report presents the findings of public research undertaken by ComRes on behalf of the IBE. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. The survey was undertaken between 5th and 25th February 2018, and full data tables for 2018 and 2015 are available at www.comresglobal.com

The Institute of Business Ethics

The Institute of Business Ethics, whose purpose is to promote high standards of business behaviour based on ethical values, is an important partner to any business wanting to preserve its long-term reputation by doing business in the right way.

For over 30 years, the IBE has advised organisations on how to strengthen their ethical culture by sharing knowledge and good practice, resulting in relationships with employees and stakeholders that are based on trust.

The IBE is a registered charity funded by corporate and individual subscriptions. www.ibe.org.uk @ibeuk

The IBE would like to thank our national partner the Stewardship Institute for their support for this project:

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The authors

Guendalina Dondé is Head of Research at the Institute of Business Ethics. She writes and researches on a range of business ethics topics for the IBE.

Before joining the IBE, she collaborated in developing the code of ethics for the Italian Association of Management Consultants and worked for a European CSR Business Network in Brussels. She holds a Master's degree in Business Ethics and CSR from the University of Trento in Italy.

She is the author of the IBE survey report Corporate Ethics Policies and Programmes: 2016 UK and Continental Europe Survey and co-author of the 2017 IBE report Setting the Tone: a New Zealand perspective on Business Ethics, the 2017 TEI & IBE Ethics and Compliance Handbook, the 2016 IBE Codes of Business Ethics: examples of good practice and of the French and Italian editions of the 2015 IBE survey Ethics at Work: 2015 Survey of Employees.

She is also responsible for reviewing corporate codes of ethics and related policies, benchmarking them against other organisations'.

Sophie Coughlan is an experienced researcher, with a strong interest in governance and stewardship, sustainability and education. A dual national of Switzerland and the US, she has worked at the Ecole Hotelière de Lausanne and IMD Business School, as programme manager, senior researcher for the IMD Global Board Center, leadership coach and facilitator. At London Business School, she was the Associate Director of the Aditya V. Birla India Centre and the Centre for Marketing, developing and managing donor relations and outreach activities. Sophie began her career in the area of environmental policy analysis at the International Academy of the Environment and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) in Geneva (working primarily in the area of climate change). She subsequently directed a European-wide project on integrating corporate sustainability into the business school curriculum for the European Academy of Business in Society (EABIS). Sophie holds a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education from the University of Nottingham (UK), an MA in Environmental Studies from Macquarie University (Australia) and a BA in Political Science from Swarthmore College (USA). She is also certified as a group facilitator with the Tavistock Institute.

Loïc Frank is Director of Operations at the Stewardship Institute, a foundation based in Switzerland. He co-created the IMD Global Board Center at IMB Business School. Over the past 10 years he has managed a large number of board education programmes, board evaluations and reviews. He holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration as well as a Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Project Management, Managing Information Systems and Economics for Business, both from Business School Lausanne.

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