



## Press release

**International CSR and Sustainability Conference in Cologne shows that the sustainability discussion is facing a paradigm shift**

**Today the 8th International Conference on Sustainability and Responsibility comes to a successful end in Cologne. During the three days of the conference, more than 500 guests from business and science took part in panel discussions and interactive workshop sessions on core topics such as "Responsible Leadership", "Digitization" and "Sustainable Management" and, true to the title of the conference, learned about "Responsible Leadership in Times of Transformation".**

Cologne, 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2018. The eighth CSR and Sustainability Conference was held for the first time in Cologne from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2018 as an international platform for the topic of sustainable management. More than 500 experts and change makers accepted the invitation to exchange ideas, network and inform themselves about CSR, sustainability and responsible leadership in the English presentations, workshop sessions and panel discussions. Prof Dr René Schmidpeter, Chairman of the conference and Head of the Center for Advanced Sustainable Management at the Cologne Business School, summed it up: "The old sustainability paradigms did not achieve the results we had hoped for. Let us rethink old sustainability concepts together and, if necessary, throw them overboard. Only by thinking of the present from the future can we initiate a fundamentally sustainable change".

Forward-thinkers like John Elkington have already begun to critically question their own concepts, such as the Triple-Bottom Line. It is time to jointly develop new ideas so that sustainability is consistently pursued as the norm in business. Patrick Bungard, Head of the Center of Advanced Sustainable Management, added: "The old dichotomy between profit maximization and sustainability does not help. Digitalization and global exchange offer an opportunity to completely rethink the topic of sustainable management".

### **Lively participation in lectures and workshop sessions**

With over 60 agenda items, the lead conference for sustainable management in Europe once again offered a varied program for conference participants this year. The top CSR experts John Elkington, R. Edward Freeman, Wayne Visser, Lize A.E. Booyens, Ernst U. von Weizsäcker, Robert G. Eccles, Georg Kell and John Spengler inspired the audience with their lectures, where they presented new perspectives on CSR, sustainability, and questioned old theories.

Monika Kolb, CSR conference coordinator of the Center of Advanced Sustainable Management, drew a positive balance of the symposium: "We were very pleased that our CSR and Sustainability Conference could offer a stage to all those who challenge the status quo. The feedback from the workshops and the quantity and diversity of the visitors confirmed how relevant this platform is for the joint development of global challenges in business and society".

### **Outlook on the 9th International Conference on Sustainability and Responsibility**

In 2020, the CSR and Sustainability Conference will take place for the second time. The English-language conference was held for the first time in 2004 as a “platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue” at the Humboldt University in Berlin. Every two years since then, it has brought together scientists, executives, political decision-makers, entrepreneurs, and committed citizens to discuss key economic issues and the associated social and ecological challenges.

More information on the 8th International Conference on Sustainability and Responsibility at: [www.international-csr.org/](http://www.international-csr.org/)

### **About the Center for Advanced Sustainable Management (CASM)**

Since its founding in August 2016, the Center for Advanced Sustainable Management (CASM) at the Cologne Business School has been led by lecturer Patrick Bungard and the holder of the Dr Jürgen Meyer Endowed Chair for International Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility - Prof Dr René Schmidpeter. CASM deals with issues of corporate social responsibility, international business and corporate ethics, sustainability and social innovation. These areas are firmly anchored in the study programs and various business administration departments of the Cologne Business School. With this integrative approach, CASM is taking on an innovative pioneering role in the German educational landscape.

Further information can be found at: [www.cbs.de/en/university/research/sustainable-management/](http://www.cbs.de/en/university/research/sustainable-management/)

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