

UN Global Compact Communication on Progress 2016



Contents

Legal advice	3
Social and environmental responsibility	4
Employee satisfaction	4
Women & their careers	5
Environment & climate	6
Pro bono	7
Supporting the local community	9
How we implement Global Compact	11

THE MANAGING PARTNER AND THE CSR PARTNER TAKE STOCK

As a leader, we take responsibility

There is a connecting thread between our provision of the best possible legal advice in the largest and most complex cases and our Corporate Social Responsibility work aimed at making the greatest possible positive difference. Plesner's CSR programme is one of the most far-reaching programmes in the industry. Through the programme we have committed ourselves to provide legal advice in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards, to operate our firm in a socially and environmentally sound manner, to provide free legal advice and to support the local community in general. We still see really positive developments in all these areas.

Earlier this year we were named Nordic Law Firm of the Year by the recognised international law journal *The Lawyer*. It is the first time a Danish law firm has received such recognition. Naturally, the reasons for the recognition primarily cite the quality of our legal work but Plesner's dedicated work in respect of sustainability and social responsibility is also noted. *The Lawyer* emphasises Plesner's school project as an initiative that deserves special recognition. Both for making a positive difference in selected schools with many pupils who are children of immigrant parents and for the way the schools and Plesner collaborate to motivate and inspire the pupils to understand the importance of education.

Our strategy is collaboration. We contribute to the protection of the surrounding environment but we also place great emphasis on taking care of the internal environment. It is our highest priority for Plesner to be a workplace where employees flourish and are given opportunities to expand and continue to develop their skills. To that end, we will continue to attract the best talents and to be the natural place for the best and most forward-looking employees. During the past year, we have become even better at working across traditional professional boundaries and we work as a team in everything we do because it creates the largest added value for our clients when we combine our joint expertise in our advice and our legal solutions.

In our last CSR report we set a number of goals and supporting activities for the coming period. We have met all our goals for the period. Furthermore, the activities have provided insight and inspiration for new goals for the coming year and it is a pleasure to report to the UN Global Compact.

We want it to be meaningful to work at Plesner. We believe in continuous development and we believe that it is always possible to improve.



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Managing Partner



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Copenhagen, June 2016

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Legal advice

As a leading Danish law firm we hold a special position in a community founded on the rule of law. Our aim is to attract and retain clients requesting the most informed and specialised legal advice in the market. That is why our partners (the owners of the firm) have committed each other to provide legal advice of the highest ethical and professional standard.

We only employ people who are the best in their fields and we strongly believe in continued professional and personal development. We do this by setting up highly professional specialist departments and teams. We also maintain close international ties with leading law firms in all relevant countries.

One of our partners has been appointed compliance officer and his primary task is to see to it that external rules governing our profession are transformed into internal rules and to ensure compliance with these rules. It goes without saying that we comply with the Danish Act on Measures to Prevent Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism. We have also laid down restrictive rules for our partners' and employees' business activities outside the firm. And we have set up internal procedures to prevent insider trading. Our compliance officer reports directly to the board of directors.

The past year

Plesner's ambition is to be a market leader in providing legal advice in the most challenging and complex cases. During the past year our work has once again been noticed and we have received several international top rankings, primarily based on interviews with law firms and clients. Chambers Global, Chambers Europe, Legal 500 and International Financial Law Review (IFLR) place Plesner in the highest category (Band 1) in a number of legal practice areas. In the spring of 2016, Plesner also became the first Danish law firm ever to be named Nordic Law Firm of the Year by the recognised international law journal *The Lawyer*.

Plesner is extremely restrictive when it comes to preventing and avoiding conflicts of interest. Our systems have been designed to catch and prevent any conflicts as early as possible. We have further developed the procedures which help us ensure that there are no conflicts of interests or loyalty when we accept assignments. Before committing to an assignment, we also assess whether the client and the specific task comply with Plesner's ethical standards.

An important element of our CSR policy is that our working methods match the high reputation of the legal profession. We therefore find that it is both right, natural and responsible to offer our services to the General Council of the Danish Bar and Law Society, the supervising authority of the Danish law profession. In June 2015, Plesner Partner and Attorney Peter Fogh was elected as the new chairman of the General Council for the Danish Bar and Law Society for a period of four years. It is an important position of trust that requires hard work, and it has an impact on the entire legal profession.

The coming year

During the coming year we will work on taking up and reinforcing our position as a market leading law firm in key legal practice areas. It is important to us that we continuously strengthen our ability to provide business-focused, value-adding and ethically unassailable legal advice to our clients. We will continue to work for human rights and corporate governance and fight corruption, supported by a number of newly developed tools to make compliance in these areas easier for businesses. Money laundering and the financing of terrorism are generally subject to increased focus both in Denmark and internationally. The growing regulatory requirements for documentation pose an increasing challenge to the business community.

Social and environmental responsibility

The **well-being** and development of our employees are important focus areas in our CSR programme. Our employees are driven by the possibility of continued development. We believe that there is a direct connection between the development of our employees, their well-being and our ability to deliver top performances when we collaborate with our clients. We therefore continuously focus on how we organise ourselves, how we grow as individuals and as a team, and how we best strengthen the working environment and well-being in everyday life by continuously providing training to the heads of the various practice areas.

We make a determined effort to develop all our talented employees and their careers. At the same time we make a special effort to ensure that **female talents** receive the necessary support to consider future careers as partners, for example through special programmes and mentoring schemes.

As a socially responsible firm, we also want to contribute to improving the **environment**. In our continued efforts to limit Plesner's environmental impact, we concentrate on four areas: reducing our energy consumption and carbon emissions, making environmentally sound purchases, managing waste with focus on recycling and using as many organic products as possible in our staff canteen.

Employee satisfaction

The past year

We want our employees to be among the most satisfied employees compared with those of our peers. Accordingly, we constantly work on improving our corporate culture and our collaboration culture across practice areas and specialist fields. We do this by ensuring an open dialogue, recognition and constructive feedback. During the past year we continued the intensive work related to obtaining high quality feedback provided by the heads of our departments in connection with performance assessments.

Strong collaboration across genders, generations, professional competences and personalities is one of the fundamental values that is to help us reach our strategic objective. That is why we have worked intensively with the Jungian Type Index (JTI), a typology tool used for the development of both leaders, employees and teams, during the past year. Through the active use of JTI we gain insight into the differences and dynamics that are in play when we solve problems, make decisions, establish relationships and communicate with each other. In that way we train and develop our ability to collaborate, and differences actually turn into strengths. At the same time the individual employee becomes more aware of the areas in which he or she may potentially grow; all for the benefit of both the collaboration culture in the organisation and our ability to provide high quality solutions.

A strong culture is crucial for collaborating effectively across practice areas. During the past year social and professional activities such as soccer, Friday afternoon staff get-togethers, the DHL Relay Race, a wine club, an arts society, a Plesner Day and professional training and education have contributed significantly to our teamwork and well-being.

The coming year

We will continue giving priority to social and professional events in order to support the special Plesner culture.

The next natural step to ensure the general well-being will be to focus on how our increased self-insight and strengthened collaboration relations will enable us to further develop team collaboration in future. We have appointed JTI ambassadors in all departments. The ambassadors are to ensure that the tool is implemented in everyday life and that it enables us to provide even better service to our clients.

Women and their careers

The past year

Our mentoring scheme for women lawyers has existed for two years. It has been the objective to provide our mentees with the necessary inspiration and support to consider careers as partners through mentoring and advice on development, training and career. Today, most of the women lawyers in the target group have been through mentor coaching and the response has generally been favourable.

As part of our work related to developing and retaining our female talents, we also organised semi-annual panel discussions about relevant topics during the past year.

In that context, Plesner's own role models have been important guides to the career as a partner. In the autumn of 2015, seventeen women lawyers took part in a panel discussion with three of Plesner's top women lawyers who told them about their way to becoming partners and how to handle any challenges on the way. The partners' personal and professional stories formed a good basis for the subsequent discussion. Many questions centred on work-life balance and the extent to which it is possible to combine career dreams with a family life. The participants also asked about the partners' own career planning and the priorities women need to address when they choose a career as a partner. The discussion also focused on the advantages and disadvantages of being a woman partner in a business dominated by men, and the necessity of forming professional, inspirational and mentoring networks.

The responses to this type of meeting were positive and in June 2016 it was followed up by a similar panel discussion. Three male partners shared their stories about career choices and how to ensure a sound balance between work, leisure and family. The focus was also on the work involved in developing an independent business, including how to attract and retain clients. For instance, the participants inquired about the work required by the three partners, their good and bad experiences and how they have been supported by Plesner's organisation during the process.



Women & their careers

- 58 partners – 9 of whom are women
- 62 attorneys – 28 of whom are women
- 57 assistant attorneys – 23 of whom are women

The coming year

Our evaluations show that the mentoring scheme for women lawyers has been a success and we therefore have a strong wish to continue the scheme. However, a permission from the Danish Ministry of Justice is required to continue such an initiative beyond a two-year period and we do hope that our application will be granted. We are also still working on ensuring the participation of relevant profiles from the Danish business community to be able to make the best possible mentoring available to our mentees.

During the coming year we will continue organising panel discussions about topics that will appeal to and inspire our female talents. We are also considering other initiatives that will inspire our woman lawyers to become Plesner partners.

Environment and climate

The past year

Our energy consumption is comparable with that of last year and that is consistent with our goal for the period and must therefore be described as satisfactory. Retaining this level is a result of several energy-saving initiatives taken in recent years, including replacing most light sources with LED lights and optimising all technical plants.

During the past year, we have reached our goal to reduce our paper consumption by 5%, primarily as a result of an active effort to reduce the number of printouts .

As far as waste is concerned, our business partner Stena Recycling has advised that we have reached our goal, i.e. maximum recycling of the total quantity of waste. The result has been reached through consistent sorting and handling of our waste.

The coming year

We will continue to monitor our energy consumption closely and aspire to use the technically most energy-efficient solutions. We will also work actively to ensure further improvements by changing people's behaviour. Even if the effect may seem negligible, we believe that additional energy may be saved during the coming period when we will focus on completely shutting down computers at night and turning off lights when we leave our offices.

As far as purchases are concerned, it is our goal to continue the positive development and to reduce our paper consumption by another 5% during the coming year. It is also our goal to continue the positive development in the area of waste management in order also to ensure maximum recycling of the total quantity of waste during the coming period.

It is our goal to increase the percentage of organic products served in our canteen and at meetings and obtain the silver badge issued by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration. In order to do so, we constantly have to use 60-90% organic raw materials and other products.

European award for encouraging careers

For the third year running Plesner has been named the best Danish law firm in the category "Europe Women in Business Law 2016". We consider the award from the leading international financial journal Euromoney to be a significant recognition of our efforts to motivate talented women lawyers to become partners.

Pro bono

As a central element of our CSR work we have committed ourselves to use our core competence, legal knowledge, for charitable work in our local community. The primary goal is clear: to support a good cause in our local community by offering to provide free legal advice to selected charitable organisations, focusing in particular on helping children and young people as well as people who are seriously ill.

Our provision of legal advice goes hand in hand with charity and developing the skills of law students. As the only law firm in Denmark we provide pro bono advice in collaboration with the Legal Debate Society at the University of Copenhagen. The purpose of the collaboration, known as Student Volunteers, is for law students, supported by lawyers from Plesner, to get an opportunity to become involved and strengthen their legal skills through practical work experience and at the same time to discover how rewarding voluntary work can be. Accordingly, this is a pro bono collaboration that creates value for all parties.

The past year

During the past year Student Volunteers has also undergone a positive development that benefits charitable organisations as well as law students and Plesner employees. Today, we provide pro bono advice to seven charitable organisations (see the box) and they all indicate that they consider it a very valuable and professional collaboration. Both students and our own employees take pride in the help they are involved in providing on a voluntary basis.

Within the framework of Student Volunteers we receive very diverse legal work from the charitable



Selected organisations

Student Volunteers provide advice to the following Danish charitable organisations:

- Bryd Tavsheden (Break the Silence - a Danish non-governmental organization for individuals exposed to domestic violence)
- Børns Vilkår (Children's Welfare)
- Julemærkefonden (The Christmas Seal Foundation)
- Red Barnet Ungdom (Danish Child Rights Ambassadors)
- Scleroseforeningen (The Danish Multiple Sclerosis Society)
- Make-A-Wish Ønskefonden (The Make-A-Wish Foundation)
- Muskelsvindfonden (The Muscular Dystrophy Foundation)

organisations. It makes demands on the professional skills and qualifications of the law students selected every six months to join the collaboration. All work is performed in close cooperation with experienced Plesner lawyers and it covers all important aspects of commercial law.

The collaboration includes everything from small assignments on an ad hoc basis such as drafting and quality checks of contracts and agreements to large and more complex issues requiring legal expertise. Examples of Plesner's assistance to the organisations:

- Drafting and/or reviewing rental and leasing agreements
- Drafting and/or reviewing employment and collaboration agreements
- Handling disputes with third parties, including matters concerning the infringement of intellectual property rights
- Closing down charities and other organisational changes
- Providing advice on legal matters in relation to the organisation of charitable events

Twenty students have provided advice as Student Volunteers during the most recent reporting period. More than forty Plesner assistant attorneys, attorneys and partners have spent more than 1,000 hours on pro bono project work. To this number should be added a significant number of hours invested by secretarial and administrative staff.

The coming year

We continuously work on optimising and making the Student Volunteers project more professional in order to be able to provide the best possible service to the charitable organisations involved. Due to the extensive coordination involved in screening and allocating work between the many parties involved in the Student Volunteers programme, we will also focus our attention on minimising the time spent on administration and coordination in order to free extra time for legal work. During the coming year we will work specifically on optimising our internal work procedures. It is expected that this will enable us to provide even quicker service to the present organisations, and to enable us to offer advice to an even larger number of charitable organisations.

Supporting the local community

We believe that it is a fundamental human right for everyone, regardless of their backgrounds, to have fair and equal access to education. Some people do, however, grow up in environments that do not fully appreciate or give priority to education. We wish to make a positive difference by supporting the start-up of school projects.

The object of the school project is to encourage the pupils to understand the importance of school and education and to motivate them to focus on the many job opportunities and the choice that may become available through further education.

We have decided to enter into long-term collaborations with selected lower-secondary school classes at two schools at Nørrebro in Copenhagen, Nørrebro Park Skole and Blågård Skole, where many pupils face both linguistic and social challenges. The collaboration also includes persons who have typically broken the established models for children of immigrant parents and who act as role models for the pupils by sharing their personal stories about breaking a negative social legacy.

Today, the projects at the two schools take a very structured form and a Plesner lawyer is project coordinator at each school. In close collaboration with the schools we have, since 2011, followed selected pupils from the 7th grade until they leave after their 9th grade exams. The role models meet with the pupils once a month for events, alternating between discussions in the classrooms and visits to selected companies where the pupils get first-hand impressions of the many educational and job opportunities.

We are convinced that the school project makes a positive difference by opening the pupils' eyes to the many educational and job opportunities and by helping them decide which direction they wish to take.

The past year

In June 2016, we completed our second school project at Nørrebro Park Skole when 40 pupils from two 9th grades passed their final exams. The pupils' grades have risen steadily during the period of the project and most of the pupils obtained very satisfactory examination results. Furthermore, the form teacher has reported that the pupils involved in the project have shown much greater interest in life and careers after school.



Dialogue and discussions with persons who have broken the established models

Around 40 present and former pupils from Nørrebro Park Skole participated when Plesner, in November 2015, invited all participants in the school project to a whole day of presentations, discussions and guided tours of the firm. It was a successful event with many dedicated pupils who were eager to ask the various speakers questions. The pupils listened to Naser Khader who is a member of the Danish Parliament, an officer of the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), the journalist Nagieb Khaja and Kabeer Takiar of the Copenhagen Police. The day provided an opportunity to train debating culture with the pupils and to teach them how to speak and listen respectfully to each other in spite of differences of opinion.

Shaina Jabbar, a Plesner Partner and Attorney, who is responsible for the school project and herself a former pupil at Nørrebro Park Skole, was very happy with the event that might be repeated as an annual tradition.

All 9th grade students have decided to continue their education; the majority continue in the 10th grade or in upper secondary school, while others have opted for vocational training. During recent years, we have worked with communication and presentation techniques as a part of the pupils' personal development. The pupils have been trained to stand up in front of their classmates and introduce themselves in a safe environment where they have received affectionate and constructive feedback from role models and classmates. The pupils have shown great courage and commitment in accepting the challenge and have become better prepared for oral presentations.

At a special final event in May 2016 we received very positive responses from both pupils and teachers, who all indicated that the project, and particularly the visits to companies, had been of great importance.

Last year we parted company with the 9th grade pupils at Blågård Skole whom we had been following for the last three years.

All the pupils involved in the project also decided to continue their education, most of them continued in the 10th grade, in upper secondary school or higher technical examination programmes. The teachers at Blågård Skole have no doubt that the school project has been important to the pupils' development and well-being.

In August 2015, we started collaborating with a new 7th grade at Blågård Skole. The first year is a running-in phase where we and the role models get to know the pupils through monthly meetings and visits to companies and work on building mutual trust and respect. This year we were again pleasantly surprised by the pupils' ability to develop, come up with ideas and on the whole take a genuine interest in the project.

The visits to companies are and will be a central element of the school project and the business community is increasingly aware of the project. Many companies wish to contribute by asking the young people to pay them a visit as part of their own CSR work aimed at children, young people and vulnerable people. At the same time the companies have an interest in opening their doors to pupils who will become the employees of the future in a few years.

The school project is also an inspiration abroad and in the course of the year we were contacted by a Norwegian law firm that wanted to learn about Plesner's experiences as a possible basis for starting up a similar project.

Berendsen Textil Service, Berlingske Media, Hass-Meincke, McDonald's, the Danish Broadcasting Corporation and the Danish Parliament are among the companies the pupils have visited during the past year. The pupils have been welcomed everywhere and have received first-hand impressions of a normal day at various workplaces through introductory presentations by many different employees.

The coming year

In the autumn of 2016, we will start our third collaboration with two new 7th grades at Nørrebro Park Skole. At Blågård Skole, the project continues with the pupils who are now starting in the 8th grade. We still have semi-annual status meetings with the school management and the teachers at both schools where we evaluate the project and regularly adapt our expectations to each other.

Even if the general framework is rather firmly fixed and largely works, we continue working with new ideas that may develop and improve the school project.

In the projects we have completed until now, we have parted company with the pupils after the 9th grade. However, we would like to learn about their progress after they have left the lower secondary school, and the pupils very much want to stay in touch, both with each other and with us. During the coming year we will therefore work more actively on monitoring the young people, for instance by using social media and by planning an informal annual reunion where we will learn how they are doing in respect of education or jobs.

During the past year some of the role models, who are all busy people with demanding careers, have been replaced. Therefore, it has been important to get new role models on board, and during the coming year we will make an effort to improve the collaboration and strengthen the relationships in the group. As a new initiative, we will introduce regular meetings for the role models. Partly so we and they can get to know each other better, partly to promote the development of new and creative ideas in order also to be able to inspire and motivate the pupils in the school project in future.

Plesner's school project recognised by The Lawyer

In March 2016, Plesner was named Nordic Law Firm of the Year by the recognised international law journal The Lawyer. It is the first time a Danish law firm has received such recognition. The reasons for the award of course single out Plesner's dedicated effort to be placed among the top five Nordic law firms in terms of legal advice. However, our dedicated work in terms of sustainability and social responsibility was also noted. The school project is described as an initiative that deserves special recognition. Both for making a positive difference in selected schools with many pupils who are children of immigrant parents and for the manner in which we collaborate with schools to motivate and inspire such pupils to understand the importance of education.



The school project newspaper feature, January 2015

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We would also like to thank Mette Koch for being a fantastic teacher who is extremely helpful and always supportive. Not only about school issues but also when it comes to personal issues. And we would really like to thank Plesner for this fantastic project. For giving us the opportunity to visit companies and for opening our eyes to future job opportunities. Thank you so much for letting us be part of your project. We are really grateful.

Fathma, 9th grade, Nørrebro Park Skole

The pupils in the school project express genuine enthusiasm for and joy at being part of the project. A pupil mentioned the school project in a spontaneous speech at the school-leaving ceremony at Nørrebro Park Skole.

How we implement Global Compact

The UN Global Compact's 10 principles

Human Rights:

- Our firm should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights within its sphere of influence
- Our firm is to make sure that it is not complicit in human rights abuses

Employee rights:

- Our firm should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the employee's right to collective bargaining
- Our firm should support the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour
- Our firm should support the effective abolition of child labour
- Our firm should support the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

The Environment:

- Our firm should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges
- Our firm should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility
- Our firm should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

Anti-Corruption:

- Our firm should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery

Plesner's CSR initiatives

Human Rights:

- Student Volunteers
- The School Project
- Further and supplementary training of employees
- Leadership programme

Employee rights:

- Employee satisfaction surveys
- Women and their careers
- Employee performance reviews
- Quarterly reviews of assistant attorneys and legal interns

The Environment:

- Reduction of energy consumption
- Reduction of paper consumption
- Electronic processes
- Environmentally labelled products
- Environmentally correct removal of waste
- Organic products in the staff canteen

Anti-Corruption:

- Policy implemented – constant compliance with legislation