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Conclusion



The first Report of the Observatory of the SDGs in Portuguese companies offers a view on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the world, in our country, and in Portuguese companies. It aims to be the first public access instrument, among others that will follow it, in fulfilling this project's main mission, which is speeding up the Portuguese private sector's contribution toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

This report explored themes as wide-ranging as the importance of these goals, their evolution on a global and national scale, and their adoption by Portuguese companies. It was concluded that, mainly, the companies being studied have a high alignment with the sustainable development principles proposed by the 2030 Agenda. However, there is still a long road ahead, mainly in implementing the SDGs.

Through questionnaires and interviews made with 163 Large and Small and Medium-Sized Portuguese Companies, it was possible to conclude that the private sector's motivations for their involvement with the SDGs are varied. They are related to intrinsic motivations of impacting the industry as a leader in sustainability and developing the business and extrinsic motivations, such as complying with legislation. The main obstacles identified are associated with a lack of knowledge of the SDGs, their operationalization, the SDG report, and the lack of resources for their application. For this reason, the great majority of the Portuguese companies in this

study mention they "are not where they would like to be" when comparing their ambition to the level of implementation of the SDGs.

Although the Portuguese Large Companies show considerable involvement with the SDGs and reporting, the Portuguese SMEs' journey is still in its early stages. This reality is also a consequence of a more active attitude from the Large Companies concerning the 2030 Agenda, mirrored in a more significant strategic alignment, a bigger commitment of the Executive Commissions and CEOs, and a greater knowledge of the SDGs in these companies. Notwithstanding, the SMEs' motivation for a greater alignment with the SDGs is clear, despite the smaller amount of legal pressure that these companies suffer with these issues. Scientifically exploring the dichotomy between Large Companies and SMEs can be a future matter of interest.

The analysis of the information gathered over the project's first year allows us to see that, despite the different levels of involvement with the 2030 Agenda, both Large Companies and SMEs have challenges concerning the implementation of the SDGs. These conclusions open up a vast landscape of scientific and practical work needed for the SDGs and sustainability to be an integral part of our country's managerial strategies. In this sense, we start the second year of this project with the incentive to develop a closer work with Portuguese companies: not only so they can be leaders in sustainability in Portugal for the Globe,

but also so that they develop successful businesses, confident that creating value for society is their best business strategy.

In times of current instability and uncertainty concerning the future of the Globe's economy and geopolitics, the companies will undoubtedly face unexpected challenges. In addition, the proof that exploring natural resources has limits opens doors to new ways of living and business management. In these trying times, the leaders stand out for their ability to dream and bring about a better world, which we all hope to have. This better world, where no one is left behind, where companies thrive in harmony with society (SDG#8 and #9), where everyone is equal before the law, respecting individual dignity (SDG#10), where we respect the planet and all that is on it (SDG#13, #14, #15), is already laid out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, agreed upon between countries, companies, and civil society in September 2015.

For this reason, the SDG Agenda is a global agenda for humanity. It is based on principles agreed upon by all and allows for individual liberties to be respected, the government serves its citizens, businesses are financially healthy and create value, and the main principles for a fair and prosperous society are promoted. In this way, the Observatory of the SDGs in Portuguese companies commits to work together with Portuguese companies so that the latter can aspire to manage with a purpose aligned with sustainable human development principles.

To that end, the Observatory will assure the continuity of this study and will provide practical and effective support for Portuguese companies on the sustainable development journey. Hoping this first step may be helpful and instructive to them, we count on them all toward a future where companies can be responsible leaders in a society in which we are all proud to live!