



Corporate Civic Responsibility





How can companies play an active role in strengthening democracy?

A case for Corporate Civic Responsibility

November 2024



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Dear mission-driven leaders,

This report is not another directive telling you what to do. It presents an opportunity for your company to shine and make a positive mark in this world.

I firmly believe that impact businesses have a crucial role to play in protecting our democracies. In return, our democracies will repay the favour by making our companies stronger, more resilient, more trustworthy, and more sustainable.

In the run-up to the 2024 EU elections, our company Civocracy, together with excellent partnerships and the participation of 250 companies across Europe, set a first strong example of corporate civic engagement. Together, we reached over 25 million citizens. It wasn't another publicity stunt by a few big brands. Rather, it was the magic of many small and medium-sized companies joining forces.

It all began in January 2024. During one of my sleepless nights as an entrepreneur (sometimes these prove useful), I was searching for a way to motivate millions of Europeans to go out and vote in the coming elections. I knew mission-driven companies could be the key.

Why impact companies? We communicate daily in our networks, we understand marketing codes, and we aim to design solutions to societal issues. This gives us a great responsibility to convey the right messages to the people who buy and trust our solutions. Democracy cannot remain a blind spot in our business strategy.

This is how the idea emerged: we craft a single message of democratic hope and channel it through hundreds of mission-driven companies and leaders across Europe. With this one slogan we motivate our colleagues, customers and fellow entrepreneurs to vote. This was the unique mechanism of our Vote Anyway campaign.

The campaign has since traveled through France and Austria, and will soon be seen in other countries for the next elections. By promoting democracy and through the mechanism of cooperative marketing, we have made ourselves visible to thousands of companies and millions of citizens in Europe, proving that you can beautifully combine business and civic purpose.

Today, I invite you to co-create this concept of Corporate Civic Responsibility. Let's explore concrete and collective actions for all your stakeholders to nurture our democracy.



Introduction

Context and scope

In anticipation of the European Parliament elections on June 9, 2024, Civocracy and its partners launched the 9o6 movement. The initiative was rooted in shared democratic values including freedom, social justice, equity, solidarity and citizen empowerment.

The primary goal was to form a coalition of European companies that would pool their marketing efforts to maximise voter turnout during the elections, by encouraging people to go vote. Recognising the reach of brands nowadays, we were convinced that corporations can significantly contribute to enhancing civic engagement among their employees and consumer base, particularly in situations where traditional political initiatives fall short in motivating citizens to exercise their right to vote. This led to the creation of the ***Vote Anyway campaign***, a non-partisan campaign to increase voter participation led by private actors throughout the European Union.

As France approached its own unexpected legislative elections as a consequence to the EU election results, we adapted and replicated our campaign. Building on the success of Vote Anyway, which engaged 250 companies, we extended the initiative for the French parliamentary elections in June and July 2024. The objective remained the same: to demonstrate that companies can play a vital role in promoting citizen engagement and supporting democracy by fighting abstentionism. The On Vote campaign successfully united hundreds of committed companies in France to collectively promote voting.

In total, approximately 350 companies participated in either or both campaigns, prompting us to leverage this momentum to explore the concept of Corporate Political Responsibility (CPR). You will notice later in this report that we started to question the term itself through our research. While it is challenging to quantify these campaigns' direct influence on voter turnout, the substantial interest from companies in this pro-democratic initiative is noteworthy. In response to the changing political landscape across Europe, it seems that an increasing number of business actors are stepping up to strengthen our democracy.



Meet the partners

For the two campaigns, Civocracy teamed up with a few organisations with complementary expertise and unique perspectives on democracy and community engagement.

- ✓ Glow Communication and GOPA Com. contributed their communicative creativity and ability to design attractive, differentiating campaigns with a European reach. Their expertise in crafting compelling messaging and visuals helped us effectively engage with diverse audiences across the continent.
- ✓ The NGO A_Voté brought its activist expertise and deep understanding of democratic best practices to the campaign. Their experience in grassroots organising and voter mobilisation proved invaluable in ensuring our democratic principles.
- ✓ B Lab Europe played a crucial role in mobilising its community of B Corps and applying its transformative approach to the economic system. Their involvement helped us connect with purpose-driven companies and highlight the intersection between systems change and democratic participation.
- ✓ The Advens for People and Planet Foundation demonstrated its commitment to protecting our democracies by joining the campaign. Their support added weight to our message about the importance of civic engagement in safeguarding democratic institutions.
- ✓ Earth4All, an initiative co-convened by The Club of Rome, lent legitimacy and a systemic vision to our efforts. Their involvement helped us frame the importance of voting within the broader context of global challenges and long-term sustainability.
- ✓ Finally, Civocracy, as a creative agency and civic tech platform expert in citizen engagement, aims for a future where governments, businesses, and citizens collaborate to tackle society's most pressing challenges. We served as the coordination hub, providing the participation platform and operational know-how in citizen engagement.

The power of this coalition has made a significant difference in the execution of the campaigns and in promoting democratic participation.



Objective of the report

Following the campaigns, from July 8 to September 20, 2024, Civocracy conducted a survey with two main objectives: first, to gather feedback on the Vote Anyway campaign and identify ways to refine similar initiatives in the future; second, to collaborate with European business leaders and explore how economic actors can strengthen democratic practices. The starting point for our examination was the existing concept of “Corporate Political Responsibility”. However, while analysing the survey, it became clear that the term Corporate Civic Responsibility was better suited to express the values and ideas of the mission-driven business actors who participated in the survey.

The following chapters outline the results of the survey through both qualitative and quantitative lenses. Additionally, we examine the origins of various forms of political engagement by companies and open up a discussion on possible practical applications.

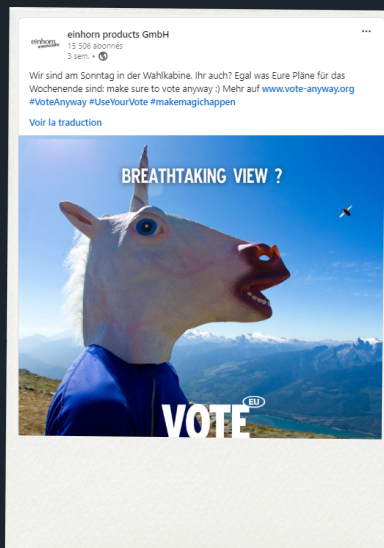
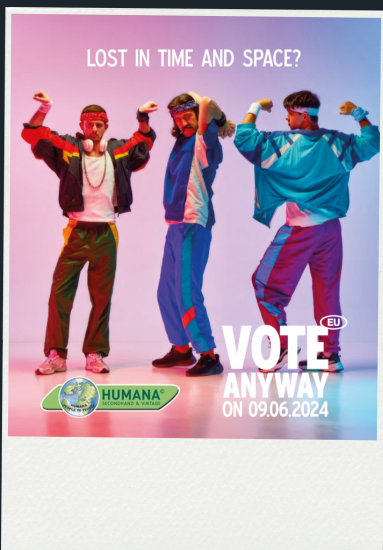
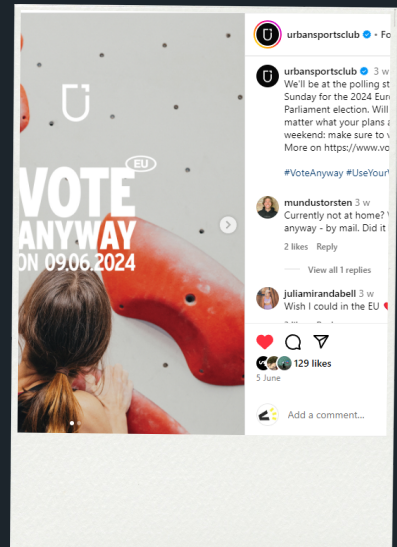
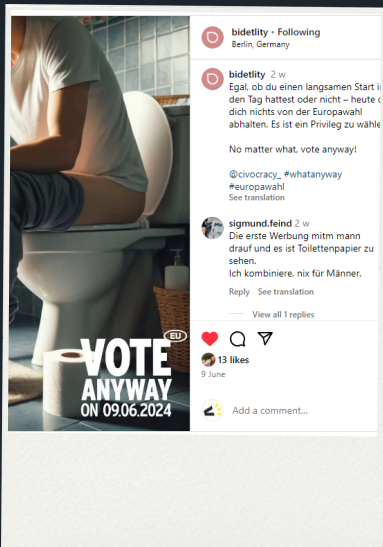
The primary goal of this report is to provide insights to several key questions:

- *How can businesses effectively engage in promoting political or civic engagement?*
- *What role does the political and civic engagement of companies play in strengthening democratic participation?*
- *How can insights from the Vote Anyway and On Vote campaigns inform future corporate initiatives aimed at strengthening democracy?*

By addressing these questions, the report aspires to highlight the potential for businesses to act as catalysts for strengthening democracy while also sharing valuable data on the principles of political engagement of companies. Ultimately, it aims to foster a dialogue on how economic actors can collaboratively promote democratic values across Europe.

The data is available as open source, and we welcome organisations or individuals interested in conducting further analysis. We encourage collaboration to deepen the exploration of these findings and advance understanding of the subject.





The Corporate Responsibility movement, a work in progress

Two decades of corporate political engagement

The concept of **Corporate Political Responsibility** emerged in the early 2000s as a response to the growing struggles of national governments to address global challenges such as climate change and digital transformation, a phenomenon often referred to as the "governance gap." While companies have historically influenced politics from behind closed doors, with a primary focus on serving industry interests, scholars and mission-driven business leaders have worked to establish corporate political engagement over the past two decades, urging businesses to engage more transparently in political processes and play a constructive role in public life.

"For me, Corporate Political Responsibility means that companies use their influence to promote ethical public policies, encourage civic engagement, respect human rights, adopt transparent governance practices, and assess the societal impact of their decisions."

Variations in corporate political engagement have since emerged across different sociopolitical contexts and moments in time. The 2020 U.S. presidential election, for instance, was one key moment in the evolution of this concept, with many companies taking strong political stances. Movements such as the nonpartisan Civic Alliance, uniting over 13,600 participating companies, were established in this context, illustrating a growing recognition among businesses of the importance of contributing to society. In Europe, momentum was gained in the run up to the recent EU parliament elections, with companies leveraging their outreach to mobilise citizens to vote.

These efforts by the corporate sector to support democracy and active citizenship, sometimes also grouped under the term **Corporate Civic Engagement** (CCE), tend to be nonpartisan and include business activities such as encouraging employee voting, promoting volunteering, and contributing to local communities. With its focus on a company's community involvement, it can be seen as a subset of the broader concept of Corporate Political Responsibility which further addresses a company's impact on political systems, institutions, and public discourse¹.



"Brand activism" on the other hand has also gained prominence in recent years, with companies such as Patagonia at the forefront of continuously taking public stances on political and social issues. Whether reactive or planned, brand activism allows businesses to engage with current debates, reflecting their values to stakeholders. As consumers and partners increasingly factor in corporate values when making business decisions, brand activism has become part of many companies' marketing strategies.

Meanwhile, some think tanks and foundations such as the Bertelsmann Stiftung view CPR as a key element of **responsible leadership**. It emphasises the need for businesses to contribute to the political and social systems that underpin their success. Particularly as they face global challenges such as climate change and inequality – the very problems that many companies also contribute to – it is now time for them to become part of the solution. Here, corporate political engagement can be a strategic tool for managing risks, improving reputations, and ensuring long-term market stability. Pioneers of the European CPR movement, such as Dr. Johannes Bohnen, argue that socio-political engagement of companies is first and foremost a business case, seeing it as an investment in the foundations of their corporate success².

In all these variations, corporate political activities have both ethical and economic dimensions. Corporations are integral actors in society and must fulfil their civic duties not only because it is morally right, but because stable political environments are critical to business success. Recent political instabilities, from Brexit to shifts in U.S. leadership, have demonstrated how uncertainty can stall investment and disrupt business operations. By working actively to stabilise political systems, companies can safeguard their long-term interests.

On a more granular level, research such as the Civic Alliance study from 2022³ has also shown that companies involved in civic engagement tend to outperform the overall market on financial metrics such as profitability and revenue growth. This aligns with the findings of the 2017 Edelman Earned Brand Study⁴, which suggests that 57% of consumers buy or boycott products based on the brand's position on social or political topics. By embracing political and social responsibility, companies can therefore strengthen their relationships with employees and consumers, foster greater brand loyalty, and reduce costly employee and customer churn.

Challenges & limitations

Despite its potential, corporate political engagement remains a somewhat fragmented concept, as it continues to face several challenges and limitations, both from the broader public and within companies themselves.



One fundamental question is whether businesses should even engage in political processes. There is a risk that the political involvement of companies could prioritise business interests over societal needs, thereby deepening inequalities. Since businesses are primarily accountable to their shareholders – with the promising exception of some companies such as B Corps that prioritise stakeholders alongside financial health, offering a model that aligns business success with broader public good – their influence on political matters can potentially skew policies in ways that benefit companies more than the public. This risk is related to the fear of corporate influence in politics that is generally linked to the practice of corporate lobbying⁵. Although CPR is a distinctly different concept, it is possible that reservations about the long-existing practice of lobbying⁶ are automatically transferred to the relatively new approach of CPR. As corporate lobbying is still a significant force in shaping policy, particularly in the EU, where an estimated 25,000 lobbyists operate in Brussels⁷, consumer scepticism towards corporate political engagement should not be underestimated.

This goes hand in hand with the fact that consumer opinion tends to be divided when it comes to corporate communication in political debate. A survey from 2019⁸ suggests that the majority of consumers (53%) believes that companies only engage in political topics for marketing purposes, raising ethical concerns about the proper role of companies' political involvement. It also touches on yet another dimension impacting the success of corporate political and civic engagement: authenticity. A company's communication on social or political topics can only be convincing if it appears to be in line with its internal practices and values.

Finally, some researchers suggest that the core concept⁹ of the entire corporate responsibility movement needs reevaluation. While individual corporations appear to be making progress in overcoming major societal challenges, it is still profitable for the majority of businesses to carry on with their business-as-usual. In their latest report, The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership is therefore calling for a broader economic transition.

Internally, businesses face practical dilemmas in adopting CPR. One challenge is balancing financial responsibilities with ethical commitments. This is especially sensitive when political involvement is perceived as partisan or controversial, creating the potential for negative reactions from stakeholders. Many companies hesitate to take public stances due to the fear of backlash from consumers, employees, or investors. This cautiousness is particularly evident in politically divided societies, where businesses aim to avoid the risks associated with strong political statements – leading to the growing demand for apolitical influencers in marketing¹⁰.



Another internal challenge is that CPR is generally dominated by large companies that have the resources and capacity to engage meaningfully in political issues, making it seem like an elite strategy. Moreover, the boundary between this and traditional public affairs work is blurred. In contrast, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often find it difficult to adopt similar practices as their resources are limited. The specific opportunities and obstacles faced by smaller mission-driven companies will be given particular attention in the analysis of the survey data.

Especially in Europe, corporate political actions tend to be more individual and less part of a broader, coordinated shift. For instance, in Germany, recent efforts have emerged in response to the rise of the far-right AfD, with one-off initiatives like companies granting employees time off to serve as electoral assistants.

Finally, these challenges highlight the need for corporate political involvement to become a more structured and standardised practice. Currently, it lacks formal integration into established frameworks, certifications or regulations, and remains largely voluntary and inconsistent. There is also a clear opportunity to develop practical handbooks and tools that offer concrete examples for its implementation, particularly for SMEs that may lack the resources of larger corporations. By creating accessible resources, businesses of all sizes can more effectively fulfil their political responsibility.

Offering an accessible opportunity for companies of all sizes to promote democratic values was the intention of the 9o6 movement and its Vote Anyway campaign. The insights gained from this initiative and the subsequent survey will be detailed out in the following chapters.



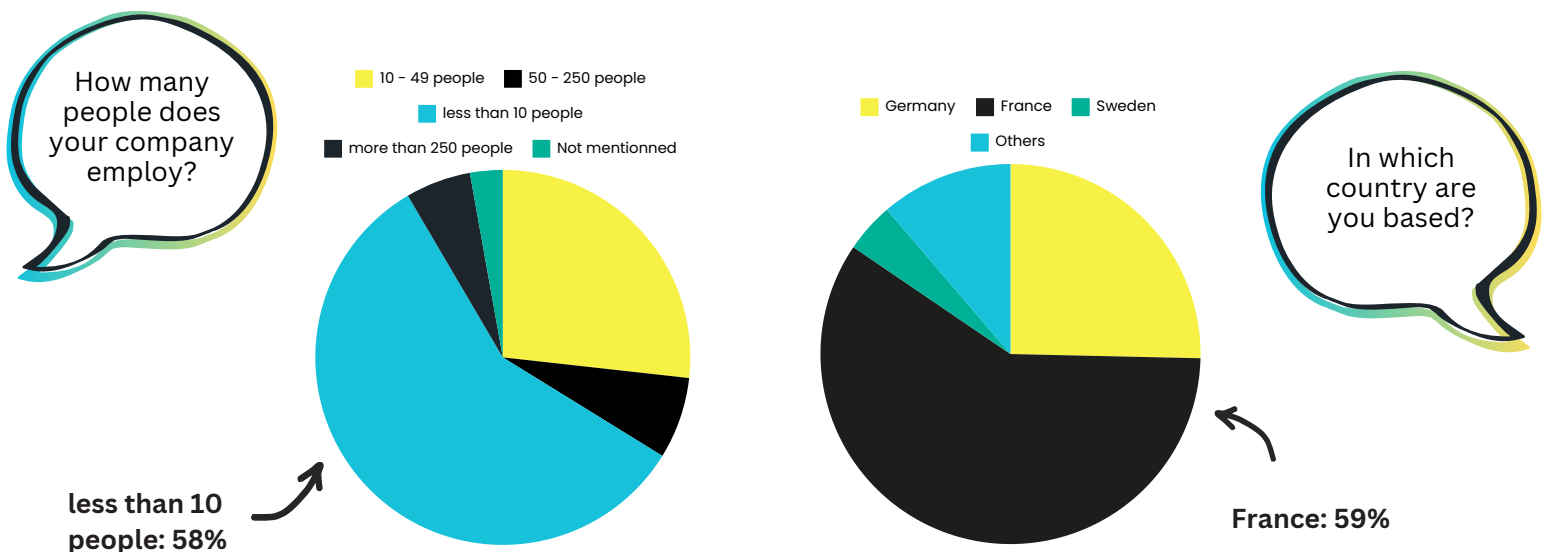
Data overview and key findings

Data collection methodology

As a social enterprise with nine years of experience in participatory campaigns, Civocracy conducted a survey on corporate political engagement from July 8 to September 20, 2024. The questionnaire was available in French, German, and English, consisting of 23 questions targeting managers, CEOs, business leaders, and communication professionals.

This online survey was published on the websites of the Vote Anyway campaign ([here](#)) and of the On Vote campaign ([here](#)). The survey was distributed through various channels, including partner networks, newsletters and social media. While aiming for a wide range of perspectives, the following factors are important to note:

1. **Network composition:** the participants were drawn from networks associated with social entrepreneurship and organisations focused on sustainability, tending to have a predisposition towards engaging with CPR topics.
2. **Company size:** many respondents were from smaller companies, which may not reflect the views or practices of larger corporations that might be more hesitant or cautious about political engagement.
3. **Geographical focus:** the dissemination primarily targeted German and French (but also, more generally European) business leaders, potentially overlooking perspectives from other regions in Europe that may have different corporate political dynamics.



Additionally, in-depth questions were asked to selected companies from our network to explore their understanding and implementation of CPR. This data collection serves as a starting point for discussion rather than a comprehensive academic study.

Data analysis approach

For the quantitative analysis, we exported the data from the Civocracy platform and used Excel and Google Sheets for data cleaning features, organisation, and basic visualisations.

For the descriptive statistics in the annex, we used Excel to calculate frequencies and percentages for Yes/No questions and to generate charts and graphs to visually represent key findings.

The data of the 71 participants (completed questionnaires) was filtered based on the following criteria to understand the links between one condition in combination with another, and to analyse the correlations:

- The participants with a company based in France
- The participants with a company based in Germany
- The respondents who did participate in - at least one of - the two campaigns On Vote/Vote Anyway and those who did not participate in any
- The companies with a B2B (business-to-business) focus or a B2C (business-to-consumer) focus

Given that the questionnaires were available in 3 languages (French, English and German), we initially translated all verbal statements for the qualitative data analysis. For this task, we used Deepl. We also used the help of generative artificial intelligence to summarise some of the verbal statements and have a global overview on trends within the open questions. These tools (Perplexity.ai and ChatGPT) allowed us to identify the most recurring themes and patterns in the textual data and to examine the context and sentiment surrounding specific topics. Finally, in combination with quantitative analysis, these tools helped us to develop a comprehensive narrative that weaves together both data types.

>> [The data files can be accessed through this link.](#)



Key findings: Intent is high – the level of action could be higher

The survey on Corporate Political Responsibility involved 71 participants, predominantly CEOs and top executives (55%), with a strong presence in France and Germany. The majority of the respondents operate in B2B environments (66%) and lead companies with fewer than 10 employees (58%), indicating a significant representation of small businesses. Notably, over three-quarters of the respondents affirm their companies' commitment to social or societal missions, with environmental issues (27%), democracy (16%), and education (8%) being the key focus areas. While companies that achieved sustainability labels, such as B Corp Certification, are not particularly widespread among respondents (16%), there is a strong commitment to democratic initiatives, as evidenced by their participation in the Vote Anyway/On Vote campaign (41 respondents). Therefore, it is important to note that the findings are not representative for all businesses, as the survey largely attracted companies with pre-existing social missions.



Given the profile of the respondents, a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) is to be expected. This is reflected in the fact that 77% of respondents affirm that their companies regularly communicate about social or societal issues via social media channels. However, when it comes to political engagement, the picture is less clear, with differences appearing between business sectors as well as national contexts.



French respondents show a clear distinction between social and political topics: while 80% of French companies say they communicate on social issues, only 39% report having engaged with political topics. In contrast, 72% of German companies have engaged with political issues, likely influenced by Germany's recent political climate, where more companies have openly taken a stand against far-right politics.

"To me, this term ties back to the original meaning of politics, which is first and foremost about the management of the city. Every company (whether mission-driven or not) is involved in managing society, whether at a local, national, or international level. The role of impact-driven companies is clear when it comes to managing society, but even companies without an impact mission can rally around democratic values, both internally through governance choices and in their communication during key moments in societal life. I believe raising awareness of democratic and political values shouldn't be limited to education at school; I think companies also have a role in promoting these values."

"I lean more toward the idea of a 'citizen' role for companies. They should participate and contribute to important issues and support society and citizens."

"I'm not sure if companies have a political responsibility, to be honest. I think that's why I didn't participate in the second campaign. I was uncomfortable calling for a vote against the National Rally. In my company, political topics are central to the debates, but as a leader, I don't think it's my role to influence my employees' votes."

"Or Corporate Democratic Responsibility? To: highlight the citizen dimension of the company, its necessary contribution to society, and its role in the territories where it is present, acknowledge that all of the company's strategic and operational choices have political implications, whether it is aware of them or not, and remind that the company is a democratic organisation in itself, through its governance and how it manages relationships with stakeholders."

The divide extends to opinions on partisanship. While 35 respondents support partisan engagement, 35 oppose it. Interestingly, 61% of German companies believe it's important to remain non-partisan, compared to just 49% of French companies. The more polarised political landscape in France may explain why French companies are either more open to taking partisan stances or prefer not to communicate on political topics at all.



Apart from the socio-political context, a practical aspect may also impact opinion on partisanship. Among the companies that participated in the VoteAnyway and OnVote campaigns, 60% believe businesses should remain non-partisan. This contrasts sharply with companies that didn't participate, where only 35% think corporate engagement should be non-partisan. It confirms that the non-partisan nature of the campaigns mainly attracted companies who felt more comfortable with political communication that avoids polarising political stances. This is also true when looking at all companies that already communicate on political topics: Here too, a slight majority (57%) is in favour of non-partisan engagement. In contrast, 58% of companies that have not yet participated in political discourse believe that businesses do not need to remain non-partisan. In this respect, the differing opinions on partisanship might indicate a mismatch between the theoretical support for political involvement and the practical difficulties of sending out political messages to a company's audience.

The difficulty to turn intent into action is also emphasised by the fact that 73% agree that companies should engage in political discourse, while only 52% have already communicated on political topics. Moreover, 22% of respondents, particularly in France (27%), did not choose a clear "Yes" or "No" but selected "Other". This indicates that the question of political engagement is complex and multifaceted, and businesses may prefer to approach political issues on a case-by-case basis.

"Difficult question [if private companies should engage in political discourse through their communication channels]: I would say yes, they should when the very foundations of our society are at stake. They 'shouldn't' but 'could' on more open topics, but this raises questions of internal sharing, for example."

"Companies are already integrated into the political system through lobbying organisations, but this often happens more, and perhaps too much, behind closed doors without public scrutiny. Not all companies are represented, and maybe not as much as they would like by their lobby organisation. It's interesting to rethink how companies can play a role here, and whether they should, as a complement or alternative to lobbying. The world has changed significantly due to a shift in the media landscape, and citizens are exposed to various and sometimes very harmful societal influences. Companies can take responsibility here, both internally and externally, to keep the picture balanced. As a private person, I do this very intensively, but not in official company statements."



Industry type also plays a role in shaping corporate political responsibility. The survey data revealed that B2C companies are much more likely to engage in social debates, with 92% saying they communicate on social topics. B2B companies, while still engaged, are slightly more hesitant, with 77% engaging in similar communications. B2C companies are also clearer on their stance regarding non-partisanship: 75% of B2C respondents think it's important to stay neutral. This suggests that B2C businesses are keenly aware of the expectations of their consumer base, which demands social responsibility but prefers neutrality on political party affiliations.

The survey also explored the reasons for companies participating or not participating in the two political engagement campaigns. Companies that took part said the campaigns resonated with their values and were aligned with their desire to strengthen democracy. The campaigns' simplicity and clear structure made it easier for them to participate without facing the complexity of political discourse. One respondent, for example, mentioned "the de-dramatization of the topic[...]" which convinced them to join the campaign and the fact that the message was relatable to everyone.

Moreover, the respondents who took part in the campaign also shared their most important argument to encourage other companies and organisations to join an initiative like Vote Anyway or On Vote. The top three arguments were: positive impact on brand image and CSR, economic benefits or risk mitigation, and easy implementation.

"The vast majority of businesses are excluded from the democratic discussion while they have the most connections with citizens [...] - it is time for this to change."

"The main argument would be engagement in a civic cause that makes sense, without necessarily having to express a political orientation as such. Moreover, from a strategic point of view, start-ups and companies are increasingly engaged in CSR issues, and often only the aspects of 'ecology' or 'governance' are taken into account. Raising awareness of democratic and civic values fits perfectly into a CSR commitment."

"Companies with strong values have untapped potential to encourage people to act more sustainably by highlighting actions that align with their values. This is especially evident in their employees, but even core customers can be motivated to act if their favourite brands show this as part of their identity. This enhances a company's purpose identity and fosters more loyal customers."

"Consumers trust the positioning of companies more than the speeches of politicians."



On the other hand, companies that didn't participate in initiatives like On Vote and Vote Anyway often cited reasons such as lack of awareness, internal capacity constraints, or difficulties in fitting the campaigns into their existing social media strategies. A few also mentioned the lack of neutrality, internal disagreements over whether to engage in such initiatives or the general complexity of the topic, highlighting the internal tensions businesses may face when deciding on political engagement.



Smaller companies, in particular, seem to face additional hurdles. Resource constraints were a recurring theme. The fact that only 17% of respondents say their company holds an official certification related to social or political responsibility also points to the difficulties that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face in formalising their commitments to political and social issues.

The overall reactions to the social media posts of the companies that participated in the campaigns were positive or neutral. Participants mention that most interactions with the posts were favourable, with no significant negative feedback. Engagement levels ranged from low to moderate, with some noting good reach while others experienced limited interaction. Some participants gained new followers but lost others, suggesting the campaign had a polarising effect on their audiences. While generally well-received, many reported that the campaign didn't generate high levels of excitement or extensive sharing. Their audience did seem to appreciate the non-partisan approach.



Despite some hurdles, the findings from this survey generally show an increasing significance of corporate political actions in contemporary business strategies. Companies seem to recognise their responsibility as civic entities and are willing to engage in political discourse. The commitment, demonstrated by a majority of the survey respondents, indicates a notable shift towards integrating political engagement into business strategies and operations.

However, the survey results reveal a nuanced reality: while there is a strong inclination among business leaders to support social missions and engage politically, substantial gaps remain in the formal acknowledgment and execution of these commitments. This discrepancy highlights the complexities businesses face in navigating political engagement, particularly in an increasingly polarised environment. Companies must adeptly balance stakeholder expectations with their civic responsibilities, ensuring that their actions align with their stated values.

Moreover, the data suggests that while many organisations advocate for political involvement, only a minority actively communicate on these issues. This inconsistency underscores the need for businesses to not only declare their intentions but also to operationalise them effectively within their organisational frameworks. As the political landscape continues to evolve, companies must embrace their roles as key players in democracy, fostering civic engagement and contributing positively to societal discourse while remaining sensitive to the diverse perspectives within their stakeholder communities.

"I didn't hesitate for a second [to take part in the initiative], because the idea of using the leverage of companies to mobilise communities of employees and customers seemed to me to be an obvious one. It's part of the company's role in society. What's more, the campaign was well organised and easy to get to grips with. Informing and mobilising our customers and communities is one way of doing this, as in the campaign you shared with us. I don't have any plans on this subject for the next few months, it's not one of May's focuses to be honest, but don't hesitate to share your ideas, we'll relay."

- Cécilia Creuzet (Co-founder and CEO of May)



Corporate Political vs Civic Responsibility

During the analysis of the survey, we realised that the term Corporate Political Responsibility was not reflecting the ideas of all companies engaging in political topics. Some respondents suggested that the word civic was more accessible and relatable than the word political. Indeed, civic responsibility emphasises the role of businesses as an integral part of the communities they serve and fosters a sense of belonging and mutual obligation. It resonates more with stakeholders who view companies not just as profit-driven entities but as active participants in societal well-being.

The term civic responsibility could simplify the conversation around corporate engagement in societal issues. The emphasis is no longer on politically polarising views, but on a broader commitment to community well-being and democratic values. It encourages companies to engage in constructive dialogue and actions that promote social cohesion without the baggage often associated with political discourse. Framing corporate actions within the context of civic responsibility could allow for a more inclusive dialogue.



In the following, we will therefore use the term Corporate Civic Responsibility (CCR) which, by our definition, encompasses all internal and external efforts of a company to encourage active citizenship of its employees, customers, and other stakeholders. Companies practising CCR align their values, actions, and communications with the goal of strengthening the democratic foundations on which they are built and driving positive civic engagement in the communities they serve.





At La Netscouade, we believe that companies have a duty to play an active role in transforming society. Committed to meaningful projects and working alongside players in the social and environmental transition, we take an outspoken stance on key issues. With *Vote Anyway*, we're saying that it's time to get out of our comfort zone and take concrete action. Inaction is no longer an option.

Ronan Le Goff
Co-founder and CEO
La Netscouade





At happn, we believe in going beyond traditional dating. Partnering with NGOs such as A Voté allows us to encourage our users to not only connect with others but also actively participate in society. This collaboration aligns with our mission to inspire engagement and social responsibility in everyday life. Whether it's finding love or making a difference, we aim to empower our community to embrace opportunities that matter.

Karima Ben abdelmalek
CEO HAPPN





We strongly believe that corporates need democracy to grow, and viceversa. Far from a partisan position, we consider democracy as the essential framework to protect our private life, our values, and our business. Corporates should have an important role to play in the democratic space protecting the rule of law, the separation of powers or the independence of the media. Thus, corporates should integrate a Corporate Civic Responsibility in their strategy supporting the actors running our democracies.

Grégoire Ducret

CEO Advens for People and Planet



Activating *Corporate Civic Responsibility*: from principles to concrete applications

Even if companies agree with the principles of Corporate Civic Responsibility, it does not guarantee that they will know how to put theory into practice. As CCR encompasses a wide range of possible activities from internal changes of organisational structures to external communications, every company will have to find their own unique path to embed CCR into their daily business.

A prerequisite for the successful implementation of CCR is to ensure that the company's political engagement is in line with its core values and long-term goals. Subsequently, there are various routes to apply CCR in practice. The following list provides some practical steps that can help companies to navigate their many opportunities.

- 
Regularly communicate regarding your political engagement with customers, employees, and stakeholders to set the right expectations and build credibility on these topics. Regular updates on political activities can build trust and demonstrate accountability. Companies such as Unilever have adopted transparent communication strategies¹¹ that inform stakeholders about their political positions and actions, thereby enhancing corporate reputation.
- 
Partner with like-minded businesses, NGOs, or public-private initiatives to amplify political impact and strengthen democratic institutions collectively. The implementation of such cooperative marketing allows to make more noise about joint initiatives. By pooling resources, companies can mobilise their combined, larger audience more effectively. *For example, in the Vote Anyway and On Vote campaigns, each partner contributed their specific expertise and values to the overall story, creating a more powerful and far-reaching message.*
- 
Encourage employee voting through paid time off, information campaigns and/or collaborative activities around key elections. These activities raise awareness and encourage employees as well as customers to support democracy by exercising their right to vote. This could include organising non-partisan events that encourage employees and clients to participate in the voting process. *One example could be the Starbucks coffee chain in 2020, which has strengthened the democratic process by facilitating voter registration efforts through a dedicated online tool.*



- ✓ **Incentivise customers to vote by leveraging the brand's image, products, or communication tools to share voting information. B2C brands can play a key role in combating voter abstention, as they reach a very broad audience.** The NGO "A VOTÉ" has developed partnerships with brands for this purpose. *For example, 48 hours before the June 2024 European election, the dating app Happn partnered with A VOTÉ in a campaign titled "Stop crushing, go vote," reminding users of election dates and directing them to the official site for all necessary voting information. This campaign reached 250,000 users, generated 40,000 clicks, and primarily engaged an audience under the age of 35. If we combine the expertise of NGOs with the reach and power of B2C brands, we can convince vulnerable people to be part of democratic life. Brands have the power to reach places where institutional messages don't go and to connect with citizens who feel most disconnected from institutions.*
- ✓ **Establish board-level committees or roles dedicated to overseeing political and democratic responsibilities.** The goal is to ensure that these topics receive appropriate attention within corporate governance structures. This approach allows companies to systematically evaluate their political engagements and align them with broader corporate strategies. *One notable example is Siemens AG, in Germany, which has a Sustainability and Governance Committee within its board structure, responsible for addressing sustainability, corporate governance, and political engagement related issues.*
- ✓ **Imagine a recognition system for democratic engagement within your company to incentivise employees participating in civic initiatives.** Such internal recognition could highlight great initiatives to other employees while also encouraging a competitive spirit among them. *For example, some companies adopt the skills sponsorship (as with Vendredi) for their employees, enabling them to invest their skills in associations and NGOs during their working hours, to support a specific social cause.*
- ✓ **Integrate bottom up participation methods to involve your key stakeholders, including your clients into project and company strategies.** CivicTech companies like Bluenove, Make.org and Civocracy have been developing online consultation tools for over a decade to involve internal and external stakeholders into the decision making. In addition, using innovative concepts such as quest building, is a way of telling impactful stories that engage customers as active co-creators of a brand's mission. By participating in interactive challenges, a company's audience becomes an engaged stakeholder and ambassador for their mission.



- 
Promote transparency and report political activities, including lobbying efforts and policy advocacy, to maintain stakeholder trust. Implement transparent political spending policies and disclose all political contributions.
- 
Support civic education initiatives, internally as well as in local communities. Contributing to civic education programs, e.g. in schools or community centres, fosters informed citizenship. Companies can thereby promote media literacy and combat disinformation. *As an example, we can mention Fritz-Kola, a beverage company, actively opposes political extremism and promotes democratic values by supporting initiatives that encourage youth voting and sponsoring electoral resources. Similarly in France, the ride-sharing platform BlaBlaCar has launched campaigns to boost civic engagement among users, partnering with local organisations to discuss the importance of voting and democratic participation.*
- 
Support independent journalism and press freedom through funding and partnerships. Funding independent journalism initiatives is crucial for maintaining press freedom and ensuring diverse viewpoints are represented in public discourse. Companies can partner with media organisations to support investigative journalism that holds power accountable. *In France, we can find two recent initiatives: the media's La Croix and Brut have launched the "Il faut qu'on parle" initiative, aimed at fostering dialogue among French citizens with differing opinions, in response to increasing societal polarisation. Additionally, the Coop-Médias newly launched initiative aims at strengthening independent media by creating a cooperative structure with financial sustainability and democratic governance among its members, while advocating for press freedom and pluralism in the media landscape.*
- 
Link executive compensation to CCR-related goals, such as sustainability or ethical governance. It encourages leadership accountability regarding corporate political actions. This practice ensures that executives prioritise ethical governance and sustainability in their decision-making processes. *For instance, the chocolate company Tony's Chocolonely is well-known for its commitment to ethical sourcing and social justice. It has also advocated for voter access by supporting campaigns that educate citizens about their voting rights, particularly in marginalised communities.*
- 
Track and report progress as a part of a company CSR's strategy and reporting: set measurable goals and regularly report on CCR outcomes in sustainability or impact reports. It can further solidify the company's commitment to responsible political engagement, by nurturing democracy as a key component of CSR.



By implementing some or all these practical steps for Corporate Civic Responsibility, companies can seamlessly integrate democratic values into their business models, enhancing both their reputation and the democratic environment. While the list is not exhaustive, it encourages creativity and adaptation to each company's unique resources. The key is to establish solutions that align with the company's mission and core values, fostering a genuine commitment to democracy.

Recognising that not all initiatives will be feasible for every organisation, what matters most is the willingness to support democratic principles and communicate this commitment openly and sincerely. Some actions, such as encouraging employee voting through paid time off or joining coalitions, may be easier to implement, while others may require more time and reflection.

To maintain stakeholder trust and avoid perceptions of "democracy-washing," it's essential that political discourse aligns with the company's societal goals. Ultimately, these efforts should reflect an authentic mission, reinforcing stakeholder confidence while promoting transparency in political activities.



Conclusion

In this report, we have seen that among companies with a social mission, there is a growing interest in supporting democracy. The engagement in initiatives like the **Vote Anyway** or **On Vote campaign** demonstrates a proactive approach of companies toward promoting democratic values. However, while 73% agree that companies should engage in political discourse, only 52% say their companies have communicated on political topics in the past, indicating a gap between intention and action¹².

Through initiatives like **Vote Anyway** and **On Vote**, and with the support of our partners and 350 participating companies, we have been able to show that it is possible to initiate impactful political actions and give the impulse for a democratic movement of companies.

However, nourishing such a movement requires time, resources, and collective effort. We therefore invite all organisations in Europe to join forces in the support of democracy.

What can you do moving forward?

1. Share resources such as this report and empower more companies to fulfil their role as democratic agents. Encourage those around you to adopt practical steps and recognise existing efforts.
2. Continue to learn and get inspired by the organisations leading the way, such as B Lab, The Club of Rome, A Voté, and aDvens Foundation.
3. Join us as responsible leaders by applying some (or all!) of the actions presented in this report to your own company. Communicate about your efforts to amplify the movement and generate a positive impact around you.

Thank YOU for reading this playbook!

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who contributed to making this playbook possible through their hard work and dedication. We extend our gratitude to our valued partners—Glow Communication, GOPA Com., the NGO A Voté, B Lab Europe, the Advens for People and Planet Foundation, and Earth4All, an initiative co-convened by The Club of Rome—and to the hundreds of companies that participated in the On Vote and Vote Anyway campaigns across Europe. We also deeply appreciate the contributors to the questionnaires, whose insights and data were instrumental in shaping the concept and spreading the learnings. A special acknowledgment goes to Lily Andrews, a student at Sciences Po Paris, for her meticulous revision of this document. Finally, thank you for engaging with this content and sharing it with others.



Conclusion

By embracing **Corporate Civic Responsibility** and taking concrete actions to support democracy, companies can become powerful catalysts for positive change, fostering a more engaged and resilient democratic society for generations to come. Join the movement and adopt the principles of CCR in your company, to support democracy with us.

For more information on how to continue this work - whether through reporting, providing direction, or sharing reflections - please contact us.

To keep an eye on Civocracy's work, you can also follow us on social media and subscribe to our monthly newsletter.



Notes & references

- [01.](#) Andrew Winston, Elizabeth Doty, and Thomas Lyon, The Importance of Corporate Political Responsibility (2022), Corporate political responsibility (last updated - 2024)
- [02.](#) Dr. Johannes Bohnen, Corporate political responsibility (2022)
- [03.](#) Civic Alliance, Corporate Civic Playbook (2022)
- [04.](#) Edelman Earned Brand Study (2017)
- [05.](#) Oxfam, Right-Sizing Corporate Voice: A briefing for business on responsible political engagement (2024)
- [06.](#) InfluenceMap, Corporate Lobbying on the EU's Ecolabel (2020)
- [07.](#) Thomas Klein Wolterink, Corporate lobbying in the European Union (2023)
- [08.](#) Sprout Social, Brands Creating Change in the Conscious Consumer Era (2019). The study is based on a survey of 1,505 U.S. consumers. We have not come across similar large-scale studies in Europe.
- [09.](#) The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, Survival of the Fittest: From ESG to Competitive Sustainability (2024)
- [10.](#) Kimeko McCoy, Brands push for apolitical influencers to avoid 'backlash' as U.S. presidential election looms (2024)
- [11.](#) The Importance of Corporate Political Responsibility (2022).
- [12.](#) You can find the complete data set in this open source document here.



ANNEX - DETAILED ANALYSIS



Annex - the detailed data analysis

Results interpretation of all data (question per question) :

- *How many completed the questionnaire?*

In total, on the project page On Vote, we collected 1 097 answers to the 23 questions, and on the Vote Anyway project page, we collected 1 847 answers. 283 people visited the questionnaire and around 100 people answered it totally or partially. In this report, we are considering only the 71 participants who completed 100% of this questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Pourcentage d'achèvement

55.8%

Nombre complété

110

Total réponses

1097

Cacher liste des questionnaires

Questionnaire

Un plaidoyer pour la Responsabilité Politique des Entreprises

Voir tableau >

Visites

128

Participants

38

Pourcentage d'achèvement

42.7%

Temps d'achèvement

01:14:22

Total réponses

822

Completion rate

52.4%

Number of completed

233

Total answers

1847

Hide questionnaires list

Questionnaire

9o6 - A case for Corporate Political Responsibility

View table >

Visits

155

Participants

42

Completion rate

40.0%

Time to complete

14:34

Total answers

968

Questionnaire

I want to register my company for the campaign

View table >

Visits

564

Participants

191

Completion rate

56.2%

Time to complete

23:08

Total answers

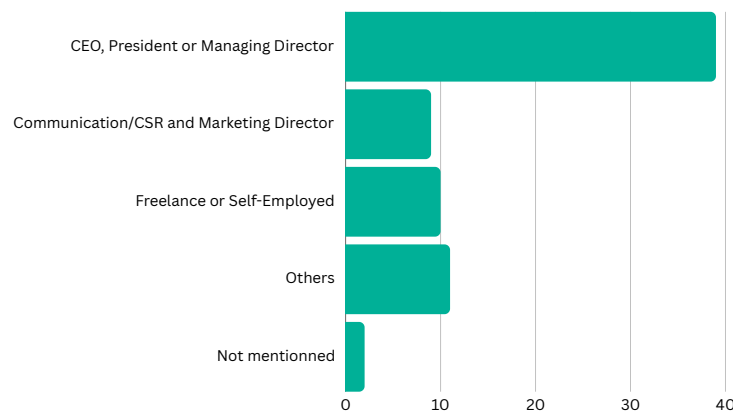
879



PART I - About your job (profile of the respondents) - 7 questions

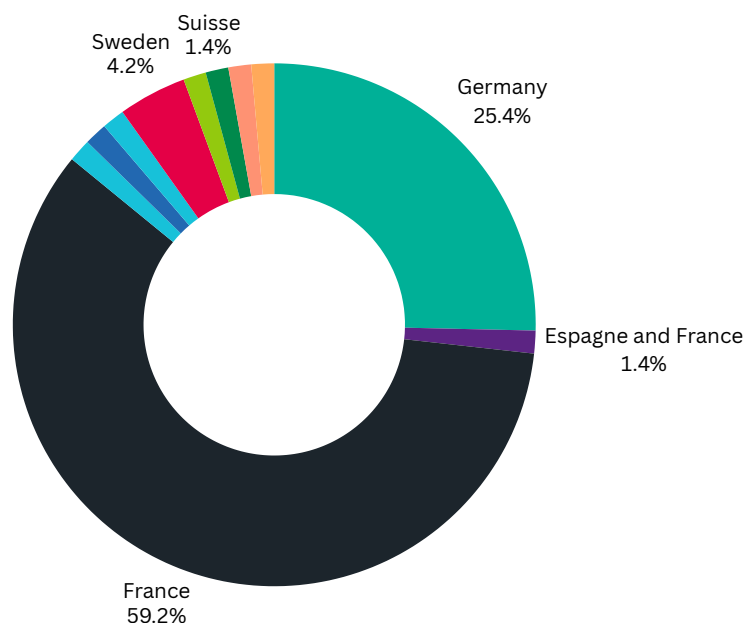
- ***What is your position in your current job? (question 1.1)***

The graph illustrates the distribution of professional roles within the organisation. The majority of respondents are CEOs, Presidents, or Managing Directors, comprising 54.93% of the total. Then, communication and marketing directors.



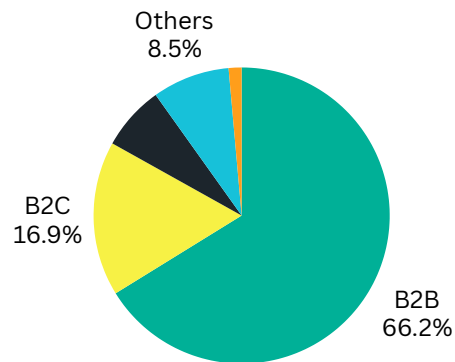
- ***In which country are you based? (question 1.2)***

Most of the respondents in this survey are based in France, accounting for 42 individuals, which represents a significant majority. Germany follows with 18 respondents, while several other countries, including Spain, Sweden, and Denmark, have notably fewer participants. Additionally, a small percentage of respondents did not specify their location.



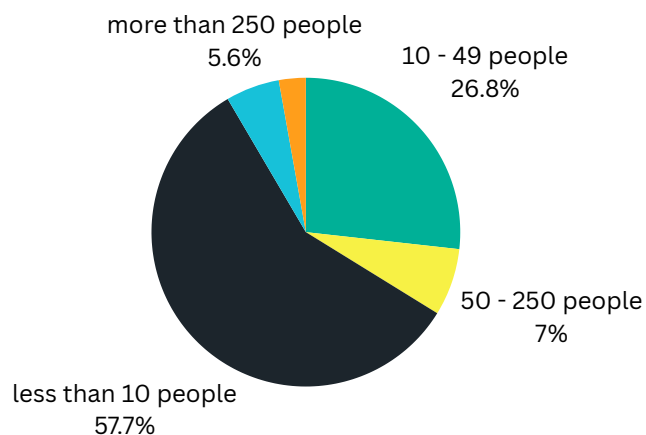
- ***Which type of business activity does your company engage in? (question 1.3)***

The data reveals that a substantial majority of respondents, 66.20%, are engaged in B2B (Business-to-Business) activities, indicating a strong focus on this sector. In contrast, 16.90% operate in B2C (Business-to-Consumer) environments, while 7.04% are involved in both B2B and B2C models. Additionally, 8.45% identified as "Others," and 1.41% did not specify their business model, suggesting a diverse range of operational strategies among the participants.



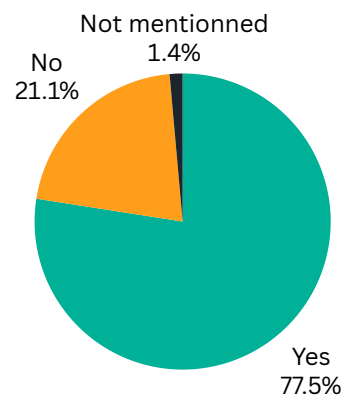
- ***How many people does your company employ? (question 1.4)***

The data indicates that the majority of respondents work in companies with fewer than 10 employees, comprising 57.75% of the total. This suggests a significant prevalence of small businesses within the surveyed group. Additionally, 26.76% of respondents are from companies employing between 10 and 49 people, while only 7.04% operate in organisations with 50 to 250 employees. A small fraction, 5.63%, are from larger companies with over 250 employees, and 2.82% did not specify their company size, highlighting a diverse range of organisational structures among the participants.



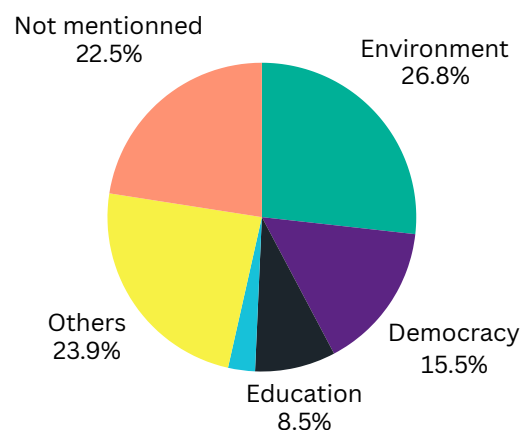
- ***Does your company have a social or societal mission? (question 1.5)***

The data reveals that a significant majority of respondents, 77.46%, affirm that their companies have a social or societal mission, indicating a strong commitment to social responsibility within the surveyed group. In contrast, 21.13% of respondents do not have such a mission, while a small percentage, 1.41%, did not specify their stance. This suggests a growing trend among organisations to align their operations with broader societal goals.



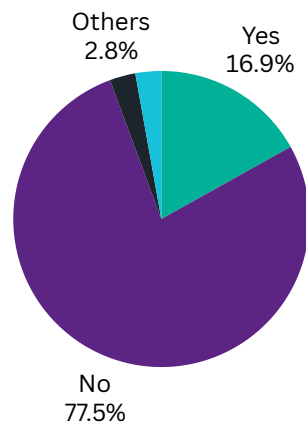
- ***Where does the social or societal mission of your company lie? (question 1.6)***

The data indicates that the social or societal missions of companies are primarily focused on environmental issues, with 19 respondents identifying this as their mission. Democracy follows, with 11 responses, while education is highlighted by 6 participants. Human rights are prioritised by 2 respondents. A notable 17 individuals selected "Others," which includes a variety of topics such as UN SDGs, discrimination in employment, gender equality, disability and humanitarian aid, financial and social inclusion, responsible economy, social innovation, corporate social responsibility, media, digital initiatives, mental health in the workplace, supporting motherhood, and addressing information overload and the democratisation of AI.



- ***Has your company acquired a B Corp Certification or other sustainability label? (question 1.7)***

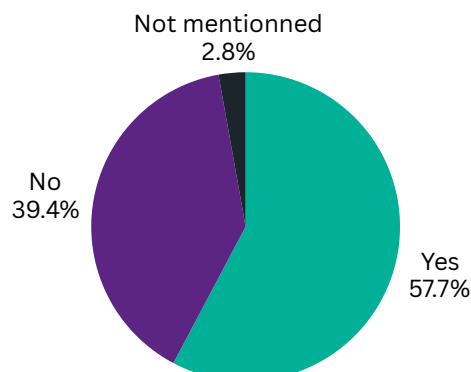
The data shows that only 12 respondents, representing a small fraction of the total, have acquired a B Corp Certification or another sustainability label, indicating a limited adoption of formal sustainability standards among the surveyed companies. In contrast, 55 participants reported that their companies do not hold such certifications, suggesting that many organisations may still be exploring or developing their sustainability initiatives.



PART II - About the Vote Anyway/On Vote campaign - 9 questions

- ***Have you participated in the Vote Anyway/On Vote campaign (by posting the campaign message on your social media channels)? (question 2.1)***

The data indicates that 41 respondents have participated in the Vote Anyway/On Vote campaign by sharing its message on social media, reflecting a strong engagement with the initiative aimed at increasing voter turnout and promoting democratic values. Conversely, 28 participants did not participate, suggesting that there may be barriers to involvement or a lack of awareness about the campaign. 2 respondents did not specify their participation status.



- ***What motivated you to join the Vote Anyway Campaign? (top 3) (question 2.2)***

Here is a summary of the answers to this question:

- Participants were strongly motivated by the belief that democracy is under serious threat, particularly from far-right movements, and felt compelled to act in defence of democratic values.
- Many believed that companies have a duty to engage politically and support democratic principles, using their platform to promote civic engagement and strengthen the democratic process.
- A key motivator was the desire to increase voter turnout, especially to counter abstention, misinformation, and voter apathy, with the understanding that voting is a powerful tool to address pressing social issues like climate change.
- The growing expectation for businesses to take a stand on societal issues and engage constructively in political or civic matters was a major factor, as companies are increasingly seen as key players in driving social change.
- Participants were personally committed to democratic ideals, feeling a sense of duty both as citizens and business leaders to contribute to democratic vitality and promote civic responsibility.

To summarise, participants in the Vote Anyway and the On Vote campaigns were primarily motivated by a strong desire to protect democracy from perceived threats, particularly from far-right movements. Many felt that businesses have a responsibility to support democratic values and engage politically, using their platforms or social media channels to promote civic engagement. **A significant motivation was the aim to mobilise voter participation, countering issues like voter apathy and misinformation, as voting is seen as a critical tool for addressing pressing social challenges, including climate change.** Additionally, there is an increasing expectation for companies to take a stand on societal issues. Lastly, participants expressed a personal commitment to democratic ideals, feeling a duty as both citizens and business leaders to contribute positively to the democratic process and civic responsibility.

- ***How did your audience react to your Vote Anyway/On Vote posts? (question 2.3)***

In a nutshell, the answers to this question are mentioning:

- *Overall positive reception: most responses indicated favourable reactions, with no significant negative feedback reported*
- *Varied engagement levels: engagement ranged from low to moderate, with some noting good reach while others experienced limited interaction*
- *Mixed impact on audience: some gained new followers but lost others, suggesting the campaign had a polarising effect on some audiences*



- *Mixed impact on audience: some gained new followers but lost others, suggesting the campaign had a polarising effect on some audiences*
- *Limited enthusiasm: while generally well-received, many reported that the campaign didn't generate high levels of excitement or extensive sharing*
- *Appreciation for non-partisan approach: the bi-partisan nature of the message was valued, and some noted it helped demystify political engagement*

The audience's reaction to the Vote Anyway/On vote posts was generally positive, with most respondents reporting favourable feedback and no significant negative comments. However, engagement levels varied, with some participants experiencing good reach while others noted limited interaction. The campaign appeared to have a mixed impact, as some users gained new followers while losing others, indicating a potentially polarising effect on certain audiences. Although the posts were well-received overall, many reported that the campaign did not generate high levels of excitement or extensive sharing. Notably, the non-partisan approach of the message was appreciated, as it helped demystify political engagement for many viewers.

- ***What would be the No 1 argument to encourage other companies and organisations to join an initiative like Vote Anyway/On Vote? (top 3) (question 2.4)***

Here is a summary of the answers to this question:

- **Positive impact on brand image and CSR:** *participating in non-partisan democratic initiatives enhances a company's reputation, demonstrates social responsibility, and resonates well with employees and customers.*
- **Economic benefits and risk mitigation:** *supporting democracy contributes to economic stability and growth, while also protecting businesses from the risks associated with democratic erosion.*
- **Easy implementation with high impact:** *these initiatives often provide ready-to-use tools and clear guidelines, making it simple for companies to participate while potentially having a significant influence on civic engagement.*

The top arguments for encouraging other companies and organisations to join the Vote Anyway/On Vote initiative centre around the importance of democratic engagement, highlighting the collective responsibility to strengthen democracy. Many respondents noted that promoting voting is a low-risk, high-impact action that allows companies to demonstrate social responsibility without alienating stakeholders. Additionally, the ease of participation, facilitated by ready-to-use tools, makes it accessible for businesses. Participants also pointed out potential benefits such as improved brand image and alignment with corporate values, while emphasising the broader societal impact of taking a stand against extremism to preserve a stable democratic environment.



- **What did you like best about this campaign? (question 2.5)**

Here is a summary of the answers to this question:

- *Ready-to-use, visually appealing materials (templates, communication kits, visuals)*
- *Clear messaging and easy implementation for participants*
- *Non-partisan, relatable tone with a touch of humor*
- *Sense of community and being part of a larger movement*
- *Flexibility in customization and sharing within companies' ecosystems*

Participants expressed a strong appreciation for the Vote Anyway/On Vote campaign's visually appealing and engaging materials, which included ready-to-use visuals and communication kits that made participation straightforward. The campaign's simplicity and accessibility were highlighted, along with its clear purpose of increasing voter turnout and civic engagement. Many valued the non-divisive, humorous, and relatable tone of the messaging, which fostered a sense of community and collective action among participants, reinforcing the feeling of being part of a larger movement with shared values.

- **What would you improve about this campaign? (question 2.6)**

In a nutshell, the answers to this question are mentioned:

- *Create spaces for participating companies to connect, share experiences, and support each other, fostering a stronger sense of community.*
- *Start earlier, involve more big corporations, engage influencers, and extend beyond social media to traditional media channels like TV commercials.*
- *Offer a wider range of visuals (including softer options), diversify content formats, and provide concrete tools for civic engagement beyond communication.*
- *Simplify the process, reduce email volume, and centralise information on an easily accessible platform.*
- *Provide more data on the campaign's importance, demonstrate the concrete impact of elections*

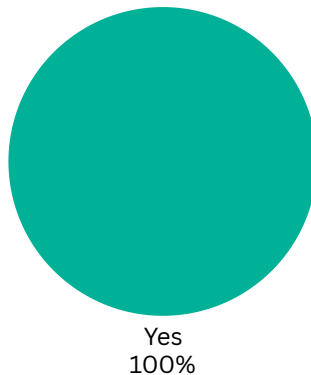
Participants identified several areas for improvement in the Vote Anyway/On Vote campaign. To enhance visibility and reach, suggestions included starting earlier, involving the press, and engaging larger corporations and influencers. Enhancing community engagement was also emphasised, with calls for more connections between participating companies and the organisation of events or webinars. Additionally, expanding the content and tools offered—such as resources for proxy voting or tracking elected officials was seen as notable. Participants expressed a desire for a wider variety of visual materials to cater to different company needs and suggested extending the campaign's duration to maintain momentum around democratic themes. Simplifying and personalising the onboarding process, diversifying content formats, and refining campaign logistics were also highlighted as key improvements to foster greater participation and clarity.



- ***Would you participate in a similar campaign again in the future? (question 2.7)***

100% of the participants - so the 41 out of the 71 - who took part in the Vote Anyway/On Vote campaigns answered they would do it again in the future.

The results indicate a strong commitment to future participation in initiatives like the Vote Anyway/On Vote campaign. Notably, there were no negative responses or participants who chose not to participate, reflecting a unanimous enthusiasm for the campaign's objectives and its impact on promoting democratic values. This overwhelming support suggests that participants recognize the importance of collective action in strengthening democracy and are eager to continue their involvement in similar efforts.



- ***What made you decide not to take part in the Vote Anyway/On Vote campaign? (question 2.8)***

Here is a summary of the answers to this question:

- *Many were unaware of the campaign, learned about it too late, or lacked time due to competing priorities.*
- *Companies preferred to maintain political neutrality or avoid taking stances on potentially divisive issues, especially those working with public entities or diverse clientele.*
- *Some felt the campaign didn't align with their core business, mission, or wasn't relevant to their specific audience.*
- *Organisational constraints, such as getting collective agreement from leadership or concerns about how the initiative would be perceived by employees, posed obstacles.*
- *Some cited a lack of time or resources, while others had already created their own voting initiatives or preferred personal rather than company engagement.*



The analysis of the Vote Anyway/On Vote campaign questionnaires revealed several key factors influencing non-participation. Lack of awareness and timing issues were prominent, with many respondents learning about the campaign too late or lacking time to engage effectively. Organisational constraints, such as concerns about appearing partisan or maintaining neutrality, particularly for companies working with public entities, also played a significant role. Additionally, some companies felt the campaign didn't align with their core mission or audience, while others faced internal decision-making challenges or resource constraints. The responses highlight the need for increased awareness, more flexible participation options, and better alignment with diverse company cultures and missions to improve future campaign engagement.

- ***What was missing in the campaign that would have convinced you to take part? (question 2.9)***

Here is a summary of the answers to this question:

- *Many respondents simply didn't know about the campaign or felt they needed more easily accessible information and time to engage.*
- *Organisations wanted clearer links between the campaign and their specific industries or business focuses, as well as guidance on how to position themselves legitimately within the context of the campaign.*
- *Requests for ready-to-use communication kits, decision-making tools, and educational content (such as online training sessions) were common.*
- *Some responses indicated a need for better representation of diverse political opinions and addressing the cultural barriers around businesses engaging in political discourse.*
- *Better alignment with companies' current business phases, internal decision-making processes, and overall missions could have increased participation.*

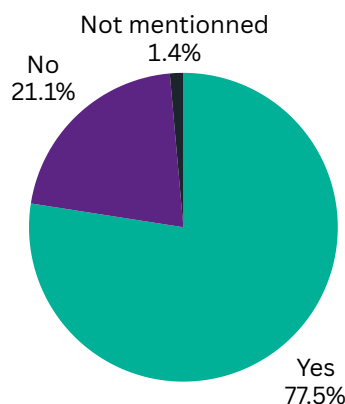
The responses highlight several key factors that could have increased participation in the Vote Anyway/On Vote campaigns. Many participants cited a need for more accessible information, better awareness, and improved timing of the campaign. There was a strong desire for increased relevance and specificity, with respondents requesting a clearer connection between the campaign and their industries or business focus. Additionally, participants expressed interest in ready-to-use communication tools, educational content, and guidance on integrating the campaign into their corporate communications. Some responses also pointed to broader issues, such as the need for diverse political representation and addressing cultural barriers to engagement in such initiatives.



PART III - About Corporate Political Responsibility - 7 questions

- ***Does your company usually communicate about social or societal issues to its audience via social media channels? (question 3.1)***

The survey results regarding companies' communication about social or societal issues on social media channels reveal interesting patterns across different segments. Overall, a majority of companies (55 out of 71) reported engaging in such communication. This trend was consistent across various subgroups, with French-based companies showing a particularly high rate of engagement (33 out of 41). German-based companies also demonstrated a strong tendency to communicate on these issues (12 out of 18). Notably, companies that participated in at least one of the two campaigns were more likely to communicate about social issues (34 out of 41) compared to those who did not participate (20 out of 41). Both B2B and B2C-focused companies showed a strong inclination towards social communication, with B2C companies having an especially high rate (11 out of 12). These results suggest that communicating about social and societal issues is a common practice across various business types and locations, with some variation based on campaign participation and business focus.

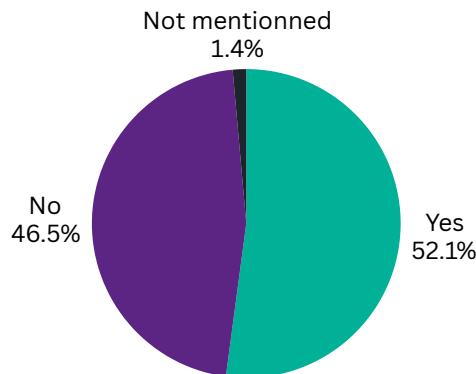


- ***Has your company ever engaged in a political topic? (question 3.2)***

The survey results regarding companies' engagement in political topics reveal a more divided landscape compared to general social issue communication. Overall, the responses were nearly evenly split, with 37 companies engaging in political topics and 33 not engaging.



Interestingly, there was a notable difference between French and German-based companies, with German companies showing a higher tendency to engage in political topics (13 out of 18) compared to French companies (16 out of 41). Companies that participated in at least one of the two campaigns were more likely to have engaged in political topics (25 out of 41) than those who did not participate (12 out of 41). Both B2B and B2C-focused companies showed a slight inclination towards political engagement, but the difference was not as pronounced as in other categories. These results suggest that while many companies are willing to engage in political topics, there is more hesitation in this area compared to general social issue communication, with notable variations based on country and campaign participation.



- If so, can you tell us which topic or event you engaged in? (question 3.3)

Here is a summary of the 36 answers to this question (out of 37 who answered yes to the previous question "Has your company ever engaged in a political topic?"):

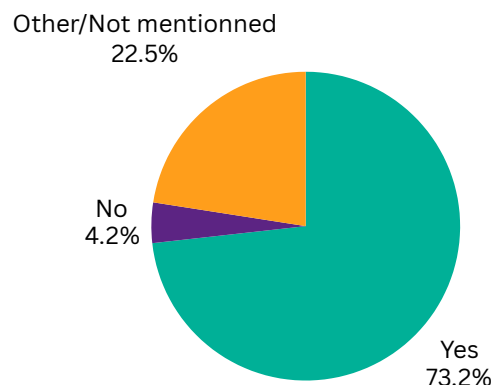
- Engagement with immigration laws and policies that support migrant integration, language learning, and naturalisation processes, emphasising the need for inclusive practices.
- A strong focus on ensuring that ecological transitions incorporate social justice, addressing inequalities and advocating for ethical consumption.
- Active opposition to far-right politics and misinformation, with a commitment to enhancing youth participation in political processes.
- Concerns about pressing issues such as deforestation, overconsumption, inflation, poverty, and the influence of large corporations on social equity and the environment.
- Recognition of the interconnectedness of climate, water, and social equity challenges, advocating for comprehensive solutions that address these dimensions together.



To summarise the answers to this question, the contributions reveal a diverse range of political engagements by companies. Key themes include housing and social rights, climate action, and advocacy for marginalised groups. Many organisations focused on environmental issues, particularly in the context of elections and policy-making. There was also significant emphasis on youth involvement in politics and combating misinformation. Companies engaged in topics spanning from immigration and integration to economic challenges like inflation and poverty. Notably, many responses highlighted the interconnectedness of social and environmental issues, advocating for holistic approaches to address climate change while ensuring social justice and equity.

- **Do you think that private companies should engage in political discourse through their communication channels? (question 3.4)**

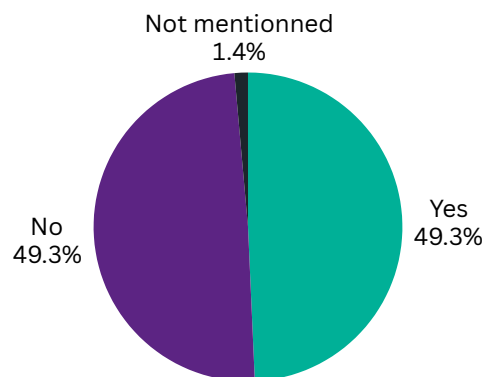
The survey results reveal a strong inclination towards corporate engagement in political discourse across various categories. Overall, a significant majority (52 out of 71 respondents) believe that private companies should engage in political discourse through their communication channels. This trend is consistent across different geographical locations, with both France-based (28 out of 41) and Germany-based (13 out of 18) companies showing support for political engagement. Notably, participants who had previously taken part in at least one campaign were unanimously in favour of corporate political involvement, with 34 out of 41 responding positively. In contrast, those who had not participated in any campaigns showed a more divided opinion, though still leaning towards engagement (14 yes, 3 no, 11 other/not mentioned). The business focus of companies also seemed to influence opinions, with B2C-focused firms showing near-unanimous support (11 out of 12), while B2B-focused companies displayed a more varied response, though still predominantly positive (29 yes, 3 no, 15 other/not mentioned). These results suggest a growing acceptance and expectation of corporate political responsibility across different business sectors and geographical locations, with past involvement in campaigns strongly correlating with support for continued engagement.



To summarise the answers to this question, the contributions reveal a diverse range of political engagements by companies. Key themes include housing and social rights, climate action, and advocacy for marginalised groups. Many organisations focused on environmental issues, particularly in the context of elections and policy-making. There was also significant emphasis on youth involvement in politics and combating misinformation. Companies engaged in topics spanning from immigration and integration to economic challenges like inflation and poverty. Notably, many responses highlighted the interconnectedness of social and environmental issues, advocating for holistic approaches to address climate change while ensuring social justice and equity.

- **Do you think companies should remain non-partisan? (question 3.5)**

The survey results on whether companies should remain non-partisan reveal a striking divide in opinion across various categories. Overall, the responses are evenly split, with 35 participants each voting for and against non-partisanship. This division is closely mirrored in France-based companies, where the split is nearly equal (20 yes, 21 no). Interestingly, German-based companies show a slight preference for non-partisanship (11 yes, 6 no). A notable trend emerges when considering past campaign participation: those who have participated in at least one campaign lean towards non-partisanship (25 yes, 16 no), while those who haven't participated prefer partisan engagement (10 yes, 18 no). Business focus also seems to influence opinions, with B2B-focused companies slightly favouring non-partisanship (25 yes, 22 no), while B2C-focused firms show a stronger preference for remaining non-partisan (9 yes, 3 no). These results suggest that opinions on corporate political neutrality are highly divided, with factors such as geographical location, past campaign involvement, and business focus potentially influencing these views. The even split in overall responses highlights the complexity and contentiousness of this issue in the current business landscape.



For the next question, note that there was a little difference in the way the question was framed, therefore we analysed the results separately.

- In the Vote Anyway questionnaire, the question was using the following wording: “Do you have a last statement you would like to share?” (Verbatims) (question 3.6.a.)

Here is a summary of the (24) answers received on this question:

- *Businesses have an ethical duty to use their influence responsibly, by advocating for important causes, avoiding harmful practices, and building diverse and equitable teams.*
- *Companies should engage in the political process transparently and in alignment with democratic principles, while respecting the political opinions of employees, suppliers and customers.*
- *Businesses can promote civic engagement by providing employees time for volunteering, offering training on climate and ecology, and educating stakeholders on important issues.*
- *Responsible businesses should be accountable for their actions and their impact on society, and strive for transparency in their operations and decision-making.*
- *Businesses have a co-responsibility to defend and strengthen democracy, by refusing to contribute to destabilising forces and promoting social cohesion to counter anger and inequality.*
- *Companies are stakeholders in addressing the planetary crisis and must take responsibility for the consequences of their actions or inaction.*

To sum up, Corporate Political Responsibility encompasses several critical aspects that highlight the role of businesses in society. Firstly, companies have an ethical obligation to wield their influence responsibly by advocating for significant causes and fostering diverse, equitable teams. They should engage in the political process transparently, respecting the views of employees and stakeholders. Furthermore, businesses can enhance civic engagement through volunteer opportunities and education on pressing issues like climate change. Accountability and transparency are essential, as responsible companies must own their societal impact and decision-making processes. Additionally, businesses share a co-responsibility to defend democracy by resisting destabilising forces and promoting social cohesion. Finally, they must acknowledge their role in addressing the planetary crisis, taking responsibility for the outcomes of their actions or inaction.



- In the On Vote version of the questionnaire, the question was asked as follows: “What does the concept of Corporate Political Responsibility mean to you?” (question 3.6.b.)

Here is a summary of the (24) answers received on this question:

- *Here is a summary of the (29) answers received on this question:*
- *Companies must be aware of their democratic, health, and ecological impact and take responsibility for it. They can no longer remain neutral in the face of crises for which they bear significant responsibility.*
- *Corporate actors should take positions that align with their values and objectives, even if it means facing economic consequences. They have a duty to set an example and must embody their rhetoric in their practices.*
- *Companies have a civic role to play by participating in and contributing to important issues, supporting society and citizens. They are an integral part of managing the community.*
- *Private actors have a role in raising awareness and educating about democratic and civic values among their employees, stakeholders, and society at large. They can encourage voting and highlight certain issues.*
- *While expressing views on societal issues, companies must adhere to democratic rules. They should be transparent about their challenges and those faced by their employees.*
- *The political responsibility of companies also involves questioning their internal governance and adopting democratic modes of operation, both internally and in their relationships with stakeholders.*

If we summarise it, the concept of Corporate Political Responsibility encompasses several key dimensions that reflect the evolving role of businesses in society. Firstly, companies are urged to recognize their impact on democratic processes, public health, and the environment, taking accountability for the consequences of their actions. This awareness should lead to active engagement, where businesses take clear stances aligned with their values, even at the risk of economic repercussions. Additionally, companies are seen as civic entities that contribute to societal issues, emphasising their integral role in community management. They also bear the responsibility to educate and raise awareness about democratic values among employees and stakeholders while encouraging civic participation, such as voting. Transparency is crucial; businesses must communicate openly about challenges they face while adhering to democratic principles. Finally, fostering a democratic internal governance structure is essential for companies to embody these responsibilities authentically in both internal operations and external stakeholder relationships.



- *Please share your email address if you would like to receive the final results of this survey (question 3.7):*

In total, we received 19 answers to this question:

- In the Vote Anyway questionnaire, 11 out 37 respondents gave their email, meaning 29,7% did want to get the final results of this survey.
- In the On Vote version of the questionnaire, 8 out 34 respondents gave their email, meaning 23,5% did want to get the final results of this survey.

If we summarise the results for this final question, 26,8% of the respondents wanted to receive the final results of this survey afterwards.

To find the rest of the data, [please visit this link](#).



