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Faber-Castell extends its social charter to suppliers

The term ‘corporate social responsibility’ is on all lips today, with many companies on the lookout for opportunities to present themselves as socially responsible. At Faber-Castell, on the other hand, social commitment has been part of the company philosophy for over 160 years. Lothar von Faber, the fourth generation to head the family firm (from 1839 to 1877), believed in looking after the welfare of his workers. In 1844 he set up one of the first company health schemes in Germany, and one of the first kindergartens in 1851. He also financed the building of housing, schools, and a church.

Faber-Castell has always cooperated closely with the trade unions, too. And so in the year 2000 it became one of the first companies to ratify an international “social charter” together with Germany’s largest union, IG Metall. The Faber-Castell social charter applies to all companies in the Faber-Castell group and guarantees conditions of employment as recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Amongst other things, that includes a ban on child labour, equal opportunities and fair treatment regardless of race, religion, gender, or nationality, the provision of safe and hygienic working conditions, and the payment of fair wages appropriate to the work. Every two years, an independent commission checks that the standards of the charter are being correctly implemented.

Now that the social charter has been successfully adopted in all subsidiaries all over the world, Faber-Castell has set itself a further goal, to extend the charter to its suppliers. This will also be carried out in close cooperation with IG Metall. In the future the company intends to use only suppliers who accept and themselves implement the Faber-Castell social charter.

That will take place in several stages. All Faber-Castell subsidiaries world-wide have sent out a questionnaire in which their suppliers are asked to rate themselves on the eight articles of the charter. They have been told that they will be assessed by these criteria in future, and that any incorrect or misleading answers will count against them just as much as poor quality of their goods. The results will be collected and summarized in the course of regular audits.

In a further step, if any questionnaires are returned incomplete or appear to contain contradictions, or there is reason to suspect certain suppliers do not meet all the conditions, then they will be scrutinized by Faber-Castell purchasers in accordance with agreed guidelines that apply internationally. That is already taking place in Brazil as part of a pilot study. The results are currently being evaluated, so as to be able to develop a monitoring process that is binding on all subsidiaries. And so corporate social responsibility is much more than just a short-term image-enhancing strategy for Faber-Castell: in the long term it will affect other companies, too.

Further information:

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The Faber-Castell social charter regulates the working conditions for all employees, world-wide.