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THE ARMED FORCES AND THE CURRENT MODEL OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Abstract

The Armed Forces are currently developing a model of social responsibility in the fields of human rights, the environment, equality and efficiency, among others. The leadership shown by the Armed Forces in the area of social responsibility stems from the adoption of sustainable measures and measures for modernization in connection with other institutions and administrations while respecting their own singularities. Social responsibility outreach takes place in foreign operations and in national operations with actions that go beyond mere compliance with legislation in force.

KeyWords

Armed Forces, social responsibility, environment, social clauses, equality.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The strengthening of corporate social responsibility (hereafter CSR or SR) as an innovative trend in the public sphere has an influence in the planning, organisation and functioning of public institutions. The adoption of the social responsibility model reinforces social legitimacy by adapting to the demands of citizens.

The Armed Forces have taken a pioneering role in adopting a socially responsible strategy, developing sustainability, gender equality and optimisation of resources in their military operations and missions. The implementation of socially responsible techniques and practices within the Armed Forces contributes to re-legitimising the deployment of operations.

From this perspective, the Spanish Armed Forces' leadership in the area of environmental and economic sustainability showcases the progressive importation of the model of social responsibility from the private sector. However, the peculiarities of the Army may interfere in the implementation of socially responsible measures in areas such as work-life balance due to the permanent readiness status of its members, or in issues to do with transparency due to national security and defence limitations.

The multi-faceted ramifications of SR cause an unequal level of implementation in the military sphere due to various factors such as adaptation to international directives or the complexities intrinsic to this institution.

In short, the promotion of a culture of defence based on the criteria of social responsibility implies the voluntary alignment from the side of the Armed Forces with a model for progress based on constitutional rights and values, in line with the expectations of citizens.

2. PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The initial steps towards public social responsibility as an extra-legal concept inevitably raised a certain amount of scientific and, therefore legal, scepticism. The gap between social responsibility and the law comes from its position at the level of legal voluntarism, over and above legal obligations. For this reason, social responsibility is

underestimated from a legal perspective, as it involves voluntary initiatives that add in a further layer, beyond the legal obligations.¹

In parallel, social responsibility is positioned between the law and ethics, skirting legal controls and without legal pressure. However, the legal importance of social responsibility is not limited to the integration of issues related to the law, such as human rights, equality, efficiency or transparency, but rather goes as far as pushing for practices that go beyond what is currently regulated, and converting this model into a compass for future legislative reforms.

With this in mind, a legal process of juridification of social responsibility has begun, ushering in the integration of this model to the public sector. Starting from its conception as a voluntary model limited initially to the private sector, it has evolved into becoming a legal uptake of the principles and duties intrinsic to the social responsibility model and into being implemented in administrations and institutions.

The administrative and institutional singularities require the reconversion of certain aspects of corporate SR, replacing the focus on interest groups for social interest and citizens' demands.² Accordingly, the voluntary integration of social concerns and the demands of citizens as regards the decisions made by public powers requires the development of a socially responsible model.

The Armed Forces, therefore, represent a suitable platform for social responsibility due to their institutional autonomy.³ The Army's commitment to modernisation has required ongoing reforms in areas integral to social responsibility, as will be analysed in the following sections.⁴

1 For YERA/PINA, "The social demand of public social responsibility", *Research Document DI-851, April 2010*, p. 5, "the idea that a public organisation should take responsibility for its actions is not a new one – laws and regulations already exist for this. What is different, and where organisational efforts should be based, is the social awareness that this corporate responsibility exists and that it should be respected even when not required by law; so, taking responsibility for all actions, independently of whether there is a legal obligation to do so or not. All public employees, not just top management, should be clearly involved".

2 Vid. PINO, A., "Organisational Social Responsibility Model in Public Administration", *Publicaciones Técnicas*, p. 3, "recognising that as regards the transversality of public administration, citizens in general have doubtless changed, both in societal make-up, as well as in citizens' aspirations and demands that have to be incorporated as variables in public administration processes."

3 PINO underlines, *op. cit.*, p. 4, "pointing out that Organisational Social Responsibility has two broad channels of action. On the one hand, there is the organisation's own social responsibility, which goes far beyond its obligations, just as a company's social responsibility goes far beyond mere compliance with the law. On the other hand, there is the role that the public sector should play in developing and promoting OSR, both in companies as well as in the community".

4 According to KIMBERLEY ASCOLI/ TAMAR BENZAKEN, *Public Policy and the Promotion*

3. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MODEL IN THE ARMED FORCES

As a result of the EU Strategy 2011-2014, EU Member States were mandated to publish a National Plan for the promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility, taking into account that this model “is not limited to the strict fulfilment of legal obligations, but rather goes as far as the voluntary integration by a company into its governance and management, strategy, policies and procedures, of societal, labour, environmental and human rights concerns that may come up as a result of the relationship and transparent dialogue with interest groups, assuming the consequences and impacts of their actions”.⁵ In addition, European Commission Communication 347 proposed integrating SR into European Union policies, including Public Administration policies.

In addition, the Spanish Strategy on Corporate Social Responsibility aims to promote actions that will strengthen the commitments taken by public administrations by integrating the needs and concerns of Spanish society as well as introducing sustainable management models to help administrations become more efficient.⁶

In parallel, there is an aim to provide official quality assurance “as an ensemble of planned and systematic activities through which the competent authority ensures and acquires confidence that the contractual requirements for quality and conformity with regulations are fulfilled”.

The impact of domestic and external military operations justifies the incorporation of socially responsible measures, as well as a commitment to environmental and social sustainability, to interest groups and to society.⁷

of Corporate Social Responsibility, School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, August 2009, “All seven countries researched harbour government-created voluntary or binding standards that range from broad voluntary guidelines and suggestions for CSR to more formal and legally binding standards. Both voluntary guidelines and binding standards tend to focus on transparency, accountability, and labour rights”.

5 The EU 2020 Strategy reflects the European commitment to establishing a new approach in corporate social responsibility. In addition, the European Parliament Resolution from the 6 February 2013 on corporate social responsibility refers to responsible and transparent behaviour by companies and sustainable growth.

6 Vid., SORIA, D., *La Responsabilidad Social Pública*, Documentos Técnicos, 2014, p. 4, acknowledges that the development of CSR is no longer strategic for companies alone, but also for the entire state apparatus and the governments that manage them.

7 For Canyelles, Social responsibility in public administrations, *Accountancy and Management Magazine* Vol. 13 2011 p. 78, this management approach started to develop in some companies but today has been incorporated in all types of organisations, both public and private, and always in line with the level of impact that they may have on society and on their surroundings. Although originally

Social responsibility contributes to promoting exemplary and transparent public organisations, resulting in an improvement in credibility and confidence in said organisations. As a consequence, the current effect SR has in the Armed Forces intensifies their institutional quality and, in parallel, strengthens their social reputation, thanks to their actions in adopting a socially responsible strategy in their planning, running and operations.

The Ministry of Defence published a report on Corporate Social Responsibility for the first time in 2009 and then again in 2010, preceding even administrations and institutions in adopting this management model. These two reports show the socially responsible commitments taken by the Spanish Armed Forces in various areas such as public procurement, gender equality, environmental issues, efficiency, code of conduct and transparency, among others. In the most recent report on SR, the Ministry of Defence obtained the highest grade for its accountability to society through sustainability reports with objectives for a reduction in energy consumption and environmental management systems, prevention of occupational risks, work-life balance, accessibility for persons with disabilities and the promotion of social clauses in procurement contracts.

As is recognised in the aforementioned documents, “responsibility, transparency and ethics should be among the priorities of the defence model in a democratic country because society will not accept the absence of these basic principles”. Continuity in the responsibility reports constitutes a guarantee of quality and improvement in the organisation of the Spanish Armed Forces and shines a light on the progress of the commitments taken in the interest of the social environment and planning for future challenges.

3.1. Public procurement

The Spanish Armed Forces’ commitment to socially responsible procurement is reflected in the SR reports and has led to the Armed Forces having a place at the Forum for Socially Responsible Public Procurement through agreements with other public and private institutions.

Cooperation with the Ministry of Defence on vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, can be seen in public procurement social clauses that promote equal

the public sector tended to develop activities to promote corporate social responsibility, very quickly it realised that it should consider how this new model would affect the public sector itself at all levels, going beyond the classic ethics models in public administration, to its relations with logistics companies, providers and third parties. The model has now expanded through the public sector to organisations.

opportunities.⁸ In this way, the contractual application of constitutional values is covered in contracts with logistics companies and providers of supplies working with the army. “Ethical procurement” ensures that procurement contracts guarantee non-discrimination based on gender, workforce stability, measures against work-related accidents, and a commitment to the promotion and inclusion of socially-excluded people in the workplace. These preferential criteria all come down to guaranteeing equality in the assessment of bids.

The Ministry of Defence includes social clauses in its calls for tender for suppliers and thus contributes to promoting SR in the companies it has dealings with by exercising its influence as a lead player through public procurement.

Another one of the aims of the Spanish Armed Forces’ Social Responsibility is focused on efficiency, as provided for in the 2010 report, unifying logistics services or through examining the material needs to better take advantage of the resources available, minimising the effects on the operability of the Armed Forces and guaranteeing security in operations with streamlining of purchasing.

Optimisation in Ministry of Defence procurement can be seen through efficient procedures and structures, reducing the number of contracting authorities through a strategy of follow-up and control, streamlining of purchases with reduction in costs following an evaluation of these processes.

3.2. Environmental management and social responsibility

The drafting of the social responsibility reports as a key instrument for the communication of CSR includes a sustainability report that sets out the environmental impact of Ministry of Defence activities.

Social Responsibility in military operations and missions can be seen in the adoption of measures for the reduction of environmental impact as an organisation and in the promotion of criteria for sustainability and energy efficiency through programmes focused on preventing and mitigating environmental contamination.⁹

8 Agreements with the ONCE Foundation (Spanish National Organisation for the Blind) and with CERMI (Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities) should be highlighted as proof of the Ministry of Defence’s commitment to equal opportunities and social inclusion.

9 The current environmental policy derives from the Ministerial Directive of the 2 June 1997 on the protection of the environment, introducing the criteria upon which the Ministry of Defence’s environmental policy will be based for the concept of sustainable development and which will establish a System for Environmental Management that will be uniform across all levels of the Department, based on the principles of ISO 14000.

According to the 2010 SR report, the aim is “the conservation and improvement of the environmental conditions within Defence facilities and the reduction of the possible impact on the surrounding environment, tackling the task through a policy of “sustainable development””. The link between the Spanish Armed Forces and sustainable development goes beyond simple compliance with environmental legislation and can be considered socially responsible thanks to the additional voluntary initiatives in this area.¹⁰ The main objectives cover energy savings, the development of alternative renewable energies, the reduction in the production of waste, the correct use of natural resources, the application of the Environmental Management Systems, with ongoing revision and controls of Army activities that have an environmental impact.

In particular, the Spanish Armed Forces have prioritised the conservation of species in Armed Forces training grounds covering a total area of around 150,000 hectares. The SR model allows for the reconciliation of military activities and the protection of flora and fauna through best practices and through the development of a General Plan for the Environment with actions and investment focused on “conservation and improvement, environmental training and evaluation, awareness raising among personnel, energy saving and the use of alternative energy sources”. An extended military presence and military use of large natural spaces with protected species does not imply uncontrolled pressure on the basis of the objectives for safeguarding its environmental richness.

The Ministry of Defence pays particular attention to the areas included in the Natura Network “through adopting actions that prevent their deterioration or facilitate their conservation, including, in particular, the drafting of specific management plans”.

In order to carry out environmental prevention and management functions, competencies have been assigned to the Sub-Directorate General of Environmental Sustainability and Energy Efficiency which has taken on the task of developing an environmental policy and promoting the coordination and implementation of Environmental Management Systems.

Among the SR measures being developed are agreements with the Autonomous Communities (Andalusia, the Balearic Islands...) to promote the conservation of protected species and of species that are important for biodiversity (such as the imperial

¹⁰ The natural values were analysed in Ministry of Defence properties, and the environmental information that was collected was built into reports covering aspects such as lithology, vegetation, protected natural spaces and cultural heritage, among others. In this way, academies and military bases, national training centres (CENAD), military practice grounds and shooting ranges (CMT), camps and barracks, munitions dumps, signals centres, batteries, air space monitoring stations and radio monitoring stations, naval bases or studs were all analysed using geographical information systems to extract uniform and comparable information that will help to improve and spread knowledge of this natural, public and future heritage.

eagle and the common chameleon) through specific programmes. Other agreements in place are those with foundations for research, training and display that are compatible with the preservation of the use of property and facilities for national defence. Partnership agreements have also been signed between the Ministries of Defence and of the Environment on forestry policy, quality and environmental evaluation for the implementation of principles for prevention and sustainable management of resources.

At the agroforestry level, the Ministry of Defence has also promoted socially responsible initiatives alongside the measures for adaptation to comply with current legislation, such as reforestation and clearing of mountainsides as a fire-prevention measure.

Other SR measures that should be mentioned are the Spanish Armed Forces' Action Plan for Energy Efficiency in Buildings and the use of renewable energies and high-efficiency integrated systems to reduce environmental impact. Other measures include the use of a photovoltaic solar power plant for electricity generation, which now works alongside the thermal solar panels already in use.

Participation in environmental fora such as DEFNET (an informal forum comprising the Ministries of Defence of EU Member States) and the drawing-up of objectives for improvement and the development of environmental legislation to minimise environmental pollution caused by the Spanish Armed Forces cover the air (the Montreal Protocol focused on a reduction in emissions of substances that deplete the ozone layer), water (construction of Juan Carlos I Strategic Projection Vessel for waste water treatment) and the ground (clean-up of firing ranges, sealing of spills...).

Training in environmental management, evaluation through audits and the disclosure of ecological values adopted by the Armed Forces closes the circle of social responsibility.¹¹ The Army's Environmental Management System takes action on various fronts, such as awareness-raising, prevention, conservation, restoration and cooperation. The activities carried out under the Army's Environmental Management System cover topics such as environmental education, environmental legislation, environmental authorisations, planning and control of activities, drawing up of necessary studies and projects, military operations and activities, works and engineering services.

The Ministry of Defence's awareness of the need to protect natural spaces as holder of said spaces has led to the adoption of measures for the conservation of its land as part of a commitment to society, developing a programme of actions and investments

¹¹ As regards the Environmental Management Systems as an indicator of environmental protection, the Armed Forces plan for their introduction in 80% of facilities in the medium term; AENOR (Spanish Association for Standardisation and Certification) has already certified the Environmental Management System (2010), reflecting the Army's commitment to the protection of the environment.

focused on improving the environment. This socially responsible position also stems from its international cooperation with NATO fora and other international fora, such as the Environment Protection and Environment Training Working Groups that have led to STANAG (NATO Standardisation Agreement) 7141 EP, 2510, and Military Committee document 469 on environmental protection. STANAG Document 7141 EP, NATO Doctrine on environmental protection on exercises and operations under NATO leadership, established environmental guidelines that “commanders should consider when preparing an order of operations and that should be included in the order, as well as environmental protection measures that should be adopted to minimise damage that may occur during NATO-led operations”.

Numerous army bases have obtained accreditation certificates for the environmental quality of the facilities and compliance with ISO Standard 14000. In addition, the Armed Forces’ environmental SR has required an organisational chart and structure with competencies and responsibilities such as the Advisory Commission for the Environment. And finally, further aspects that should be included in the environmental policy lines are environmental quality, ongoing improvement, audits and certification that contribute to alleviating responsibility for environmental damage from within the framework of social responsibility. Self-imposed obligations for environmental sustainability that are not required by the law come directly back to social responsibility and it is up to the Spanish Armed Forces to make them visible to society.

3.3. In the area of equality

In the field of equality, the Armed Forces have also been developing socially responsible and anti-discriminatory strategies to improve conditions of equality, work-life balance, and the fight against gender-based violence as well as insertion into the labour market for groups of people with greater difficulties accessing it or staying in it, and groups at risk of social exclusion, as well as female victims of gender-based violence.

The Ministry of Defence’s policy in the area of equality in the Armed Forces has focused on *integrating the principle of gender as a cross-cutting pillar in all of its activities, carrying out regulatory developments that guarantee equality and public acts to raise awareness of the role of women in the Armed Forces and the promotion of gender mainstreaming in international missions.*

Firstly, from the perspective of gender equality, the SR Report (2010) included a Plan for Infant Schools as being one of its most important activities within the framework of social responsibility. This plan stems from Decree DEF/524/2005 from the 7 March and stipulates the construction of crèches and a protocol for action in situations of gender-based harassment, sexual harassment and gender-based violence within the Spanish Armed Forces.

Among the socially responsible measures adopted by the Army is the revision of physical exams for women for entry to officer level, the revision of the work-life balance, the Army Prevention Services and provision of vacancies.

The Armed Forces have, however, initiated a process of converting social responsibility into legal responsibility when it comes to gender equality. This has resulted in a body of legislation made up of the regulation governing entry, promotion and planning of teaching and training in the Spanish Armed Forces approved by Royal Decree 35/2010; RD293/2009 which approves maternity protection measures within the field of education covering actions focused on ensuring that the candidate does not suffer from any kind of disadvantage due to her pregnancy, birth or post-birth period; the Regulation on Posts (Royal Decree 456/2011 from 1 April) covering measures that contribute to better reconciling work, personal and family life as well as measures that affect the partners of military personnel sent on international missions; publication date for vacancies in line with family needs and the possibility of being assigned a different post in cases of reduced working hours due to breastfeeding, with the aim of ensuring that geographical mobility has a lesser effect on personal and family life.¹² The regulation referred to above also sets out the possibility for a female member of the military who has been a victim of gender-based violence to request assignment to a different position of the same level, where possible, to benefit from protection or comprehensive social assistance.

In parallel, the Armed Forces' Equality Observatory has drafted impact reports on gender and equality diagnostics in Defence to analyse the implementation and effects of the regulations (Armed Forces Royal Ordinances RD 96/2009); there are also follow-up reports to the Spanish Government's Action Plan on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security (2009-2013); and the implementation in the Spanish Armed Forces of the Concilia Plan resulting from Ministerial Order 121/2006; and the Social Action Plan for civilian personnel on aid for children, disabilities and health.

12 According to article 10.2 of the above-mentioned Regulation, the Director-General for Personnel and Army Commanders and Heads of Personnel will establish quantifiable merit scales that include points to be met in order to move up in seniority, as follows:

- a) The posting of the military or civil servant partner in the municipality of the requested vacancy, as long as it is accessed from a different municipality.
- b) The care of children (birth children, adoptive children, in the case of fostering or pre-adoption) only until the child reaches 12 years of age, as long as this requested posting allows for better care of the child.
- c) The care of a family member (up to and including second degree blood relative or relative through marriage) if this relative cannot take care of themselves due to age, accident, illness or disability, and does not carry out any remunerated activity; as long as the requested posting is made from a different municipality and as long as this requested posting allows for better care of the family member. This condition may not be requested in combination with the condition regarding care of children.

The voluntary initiatives for the promotion of equality include a male-female balance in the selection bodies for selection tests; a focus on the under-representation of women for public positions in Defence; balanced representation in collegiate bodies, expert bodies, and courses and seminars on the promotion of the value of gender equality; promotion and implementation of preferential rights for job postings for female military personnel who have been victims of gender-based violence.

Also foreseen is the drafting of impact reports on gender and equality diagnostics in Defence to analyse the implementation and effects of the regulations. Equality training and participation in courses and training days could be considered as SR measures due to their contribution to raising awareness of the gender perspective. Particularly important is the Gender Advisor in Operations course given at MADOC and the seminar on the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the area of the Joint Security and Defence Policy. Equally, gender training in overseas peace-keeping operations inspired by UN Security Council Resolution 1325/2000 on 'Women, Peace and Security' and the subsequent follow-up reports on the Action Plan for the implementation of the aforementioned resolution reflect the Armed Forces' socially responsible position.

In particular, the Air Force has adopted family reconciliation policies through "the extended use and improvement of electronic devices that are increasingly portable and secure, facilitating communication and access to information for these professionals, bringing them closer to their families when not physically with them; equally, flexibility in working hours is another important advance that manages to offer a high level of availability to the service without losing out on family life".

Also with a view to improving quality of life, the Spanish Navy has set up Personnel Support Bodies whose tasks include providing information and support during the various steps that need to be taken as a consequence of transfers (accommodation, schools, health care...); information and processing of requests for assistance to personnel in the absence of the head of household (financial aid, "Grumete" preschool centre places, benefits, holiday accommodation...) and support or inquiries from family members of military personnel.

Finally, from the perspective of social responsibility, it is worth underlining the provision of a Protocol of Action against sexual harassment in the Spanish Armed Forces that will be presented to the Spanish Parliament.

3.4. Social responsibility and transparency

From another perspective, the CSR Report (2010) recognises the development of a policy of transparent and open communication to all audiences, in line with the principles covered in the recent Law 19/2013 from 9 December, on transparency, access to public information and good governance.

In relation to this, the area for developing socially responsible initiatives in the field of transparency could be considered even broader within the Armed Forces due to them being excluded from the scope of the Transparency Act which covers activities subject to administrative law carried out by *The Household of HM The King, the Parliament, the Senate, the Constitutional Court and the General Council of the Judiciary, the Bank of Spain, the State Council, the Public Defender, the Court of Auditors, the Economic and Social Council and the corresponding autonomous institutions*, which are all bound entities.

In fact, the Armed Forces are excluded from legislation on public and transparent information, although of course there is nothing stopping them from developing the principle of active promotion along the same lines as the institutions mentioned above, within the limits of national security and defence. From a constitutional perspective, neither does article 105 EC regulating access to archives and registers within the limits of State security and defence impose upon the Spanish Armed Forces a duty of accessibility to public information, covering, as it does, only administrations. Nonetheless, the conversion of military archives into public services means that they can be considered similar to administrative archives, meaning military documentation is available to citizens. “With the adoption of the Military Archives Regulation in 1998 (RD 2598/1998 from the 4 December), the new situation of Armed Forces archives has been normalised and these archives are now included in the Defence Archival System”.

Furthermore, the restrictive interpretation of the reasons for refusal of public information of a general character and the criteria of public interest could guide a type of proactive transparency from the side of the Armed Forces considering their commitment to Public Social Responsibility. And so, the Army has publicly called for “transparency” as well as “merit, that should lead and does lead the activities of the Armed Forces”, seeing as the only limitation to transparency are in issues “that are directly related to national defence, the conduct of military operations or the privacy of military personnel and their families”, highlighting the “complete willingness” of the Armed Forces to “maintain a true, timely and transparent information flow”.

As a consequence then, accessibility to public information and openness towards citizens promote citizen participation, and for this reason the Armed Forces CSR Reports refer to public control through telephone contacts and new technologies.

3.5. Other socially responsible activities

Overseas operations and humanitarian and peace-keeping missions involve a commitment to the values of solidarity and protection of human rights, offering assistance following earthquakes, floods and numerous other international activities that contribute to upholding a reputation for excellence.

The Spanish Armed Forces' participation in humanitarian operations carried out within the framework of international organisations and done over and above strict compliance with current legislation could be included in the SR framework.

Voluntary adoption of a Code of Conduct is a socially responsible action and, in this way, the Ministry of Defence has promoted this initiative with companies that have dealings overseas. In 2008, the Secretary of State for Defence set out the strategic objective of drafting a code of conduct for defence industries "focused on deepening understanding and adapting to challenges to guarantee capacity for defence and sustainable operability in the medium and long term...which has allowed for the integration of the principles of social responsibility into the supply chain, as well as increasing the capacity of the Spanish technological and industrial base of defence within the national, European and global market".

Nonetheless, various pieces of legislation are applicable within the Army including legislation regulating the ethical framework for activities carried out by members of the Government and high-level officials of the State General Administration as well as the Code of Good Governance (Order APU/516/2005, from 3 March); the law regulating conflicts of interest affecting members of the Government and high-level officials of the State General Administration (Law 5/2006, from 10 April (BOE 11 April)); the regulation that develops Law 5/2006, from 10 April, regulating conflicts of interest affecting members of the Government and high-level officials of the State General Administration (Royal Decree 432/2009 from 27 March).

Thus, the model of social responsibility in the public sector cannot be limited to its promotion between companies that contract with the institutions, but should also be taken on within public organisations.

From this perspective, the delimitation of stakeholders or interest groups related to the military organisation (providers, administrations or society in general) is an issue that has to be looked at before implementing SR. The public service provided by the Army, as well as its purpose of guaranteeing security and defence, mean that the Ministry of Defence's interest groups have to be determined as set out in the SR Report (2010), integrating the Defence Commission of the Spanish Parliament, the political groups elected to represent society in the Government Chambers, civilian and military personnel, families of military personnel, other ministerial departments and Public Administrations, international security and defence bodies, the communities where the Armed Forces are present, companies in the defence and security sector, universities and the media.

Social action plans also include socially responsible measures related to the care and education of children, the care of disabled persons, cost of health treatment for military personnel and their families, and aid in exceptional situations. From the perspective of SR, certain measures should be highlighted, including aid for single fathers for the care of their children aged younger than three years, and aid and benefits managed

by the Armed Forces Social Institute as subsidies for temporary incapacity for civilian officials, compensation for permanent injuries that do not lead to invalidity, and special subsidies and economic benefits for multiple births.

One of the measures included in the Armed Forces' Social Responsibility reports that should be highlighted is the focus paid to multicultural issues, important thanks to the high numbers of immigrants in the Spanish army. Cultural diversity managed in a manner similar to that in some private entities could contribute positively to the Spanish Armed Forces through the enrichment of the organisational culture and the improvement in their social reputation.

We can see some examples of best practices in the area of SR in the Army by studying practices in other Armed Forces, such as Chile's incorporation of sport into daily life. Cooperation from the side of the Army in the organisation of sporting careers or the involvement of their members in competitions could be considered to be socially responsible by making it visible and including it in the next SR reports.

Certainly, the Armed Forces, due to their link with society and despite their institutional autonomy, can develop a voluntary socially responsible commitment that doesn't always involve a financial burden. The Army, as an institution, acquires the responsibility for promoting exemplary activities as regards society, taking into account the fact that institutional quality depends on the commitment taken to Social Responsibility.

4. CONCLUSION

Certainly, the Armed Forces, thanks to their link with society and despite their institutional autonomy, can develop a voluntary socially responsible commitment with transparency, public information, environment, cultural diversity and equality as parameters for democratic quality. Citizen expectations and confidence regarding this institution depend on the development of SR measures in operations, functioning and procurement, with no further constitutional limitations than those of national security and defence. The modernisation of the Spanish Armed Forces requires the adoption of a model of transparency, social opening and accountability through planning, strategy, reports and annual SR reports that highlight the public service that the Armed Forces provide to Spanish society.

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- Submitted: November 14, 2014.

- Accepted: September 17, 2015
