

## Afterword

At last, a timely publication. To begin with, *Resisting Extortion Solicitations in Tax and Customs Matters* approaches some of the conclusions made by the International Chamber of Commerce's Anti-corruption Commission in a decisively more practical and operational way. Two chapters of the book *Fighting Corruption, International Corporate Integrity Handbook*<sup>1</sup> are indeed devoted to the difficult question of extortion solicitations: *Preventing Extortion and Overcoming Corruption on Customs*.

Secondly, this CIAN handbook demonstrates that resistance to extortion solicitations is possible, but only if companies adopt effective, clearly displayed – if not proclaimed - corruption-prevention policies, strategically plan their resistance to extortion solicitations (particularly as regards the human and financial resources involved), and form collective resistance in partnership with other companies, local authorities and local representatives.

This publication comes at a crucial point with regards to the financial crisis that has shaken the global economy. According to one large auditing firm, two out of five businesses have not reinforced their anti-fraud efforts during the recent years while 42% of employees admit that they are willing to engage in unethical practices to save their company from financial difficulties<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Fritz Heimann and François Vincke – ICC Publications, 2008  
<sup>2</sup> Ernst & Young, European Fraud Survey 2009 : *Is integrity a casualty of the downturn?*



Has the financial crisis tolled the bell for improving business ethics?

Admittedly, these reactions may be partly driven by an irrational fear of the future, an irrepressible desire to revisit the ghosts of the past, or even an excessive tendency towards negligence. They nevertheless challenge our capacity to hold the course of integrity in the face of economic turmoil.

Companies are inevitably confronted with crises at one time or another, be it in their country or abroad. Companies cannot brandish crises in order to justify sidestepping ethical commitments. This handbook's main assertion is that extortion solicitations can be prevented and effectively opposed through will and determination.

However detrimental the current crisis proves to be, experienced company executives know that integrity, probity and transparency are essential to their company's long-term future and reputation among consumers and the general public. After a careful study of this excellent publication, this is the message that will benefit readers the most.

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