



SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENT & ACTIONS

Environmental sustainability, social responsibility and good governance are essential to our progress as a society and as a firm.

Simont Braun is committed to walking the talk towards better sustainability, diversity, inclusion, and good governance practices.

We actively promote and implement ESG values within our firm, in our interactions with our clients and other actors in our value chain and with society at large.

Internally, everyone is welcome to bring up ideas and suggestions to reduce our environmental footprint and to improve diversity, inclusion, good governance practices as well as increasing the general well-being at the office.

In 2022, Simont Braun created an ESG committee aiming to listen, promote and centralise all initiatives within the firm. Its members embody our diversity at all levels (gender, generational, function-wise...). The ESG committee reports regularly to all the firm stakeholders on the actions and measures proposed and implemented. It has initiated many of the actions described below.

With our clients subject to ESG regulations, we provide up-to-date legal advice and assist them in implementing adequate reporting, efficient measures, etc. We are actively involved in impact finance and environmental transition projects.

More generally, our clients seeking to have a positive impact trust us to advise and guide them to reconcile sustainability goals and commitments with their overall strategy and financial targets, as they both are now as important to create valuable and meaningful companies.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & GOOD GOVERNANCE

Diversity, social equity, inclusion and proper governance are a strong part of Simont Braun's DNA. These values are an essential component of our internal and external behaviour and strategy, as we believe long-term prosperity and sense of belonging are improved when ensuring diversity, social equity and inclusion, and when nurturing the rights and well-being of every individual.

This process starts in-house as we place great emphasis on diversity and the physical and psychological well-being of all our lawyers and staff (good work-life balance, increased connectivity tools allowing schedule flexibility, availability of external psycho-social help, various internal social and educational events, gym subscription, wellness week, etc.).

Our lawyers are also actively involved in pro bono work for non-profit organisations, for example in the medical sector or in the development and protection of vulnerable individuals.

In terms of gender diversity, Simont Braun has always placed great emphasis on empowering and retaining women all the way to the top. Since its foundation, our firm has had, on average, one-third of female partners. Gender diversity was a reality at Simont Braun, even before it became an important topic. Currently, a significant number of our associates and partners are women and our managing partners are a female-male duo.

At Simont Braun, we believe good governance is achieved by promoting transparency, participation, communication and business ethics.

We have taken action to reach these objectives.

Simont Braun is fairly transparent regarding its organisation and its decision-making processes. We also have many internal communication channels (notably via our intranet) to keep our stakeholders informed of internal measures, news, events, newcomers, etc.

Simont Braun has also implemented participative systems such as the forum described below.

We believe that such concrete measures can stimulate the sense of belonging and commitment within the firm. They make all stakeholders feel involved and care about their workplace and colleagues.

At Simont Braun, we have always had an uncompromising stance regarding professional and business ethics (especially independence, integrity and confidentiality). We try to go one step further, both internally and externally, and raise awareness on the importance of these principles in providing legal services.

INTERNAL ACTIONS

At Simont Braun, we seek to create a workplace where everyone feels included and respected, no matter the gender, origin, academic background, age, sexual orientation or other specificities.

Simont Braun has implemented various concrete actions to improve inclusiveness and good governance within the firm.

Examples of actions undertaken recently:

- **Buddy system:** for every newcomer at the firm, an internal buddy is appointed as a key contact. The buddy is in charge of welcoming newcomers, answering their questions, making sure they are best included in the team and remains the privileged reference person on the long term.
- **Discussion forums for associates and counsel:** all associates and counsel gather on a regular basis to discuss ideas and suggestions to improve life, governance and inclusion at all levels. Reporting and follow-up is then made directly with the managing partners.

- **Discussion forums for staff:** Meetings between staff members are also regularly organised with the same objective.
- **Inclusive meetings and events:** for all our internal meetings, timing and format are proposed to as much as possible respect work-life balance, work schedules, family obligations, religious celebrations... Openness and flexibility are essential. During team meetings, we promote a “tour de table” to make sure all participants have the opportunity to express themselves.
- **Associates’ representative:** a counsel has been chosen as the preferred point of contact for associates, notably to express their questions or potential concerns.

Simont Braun also regularly organises internal workshops and events on chosen topics linked to sustainability questions to raise awareness on these matters. Recently, we held a discussion on work-life balance at the occasion of the International Women’s Rights Day. In December 2021, we organised a workshop with SeeWhy on the importance of ESG issues within the firm and for clients. In September 2022, we organised a wellness week with several activities and workshops such as a yoga class and a workshop on emotional intelligence.

SOCIAL COMMITMENT

At Simont Braun, we are also committed to creating a more inclusive society and our lawyers take part in many initiatives on a pro bono basis, such as:

- [ToekomstAtelierdel’Avenir \(TADA\)](#): this organisation strives to integrate vulnerable children and teenagers in Brussels by proposing weekend schools and practical workshops with professionals. It organises educational activities to inspire and motivate young people and build bridges for a more inclusive society. In February 2022, Simont Braun animated two classes of children at the Brussels Courthouse. We believe it is crucial to break biases towards the legal profession and such activities have been extremely valuable, on both sides.
- For almost 20 years, Simont Braun has been participating in the 20km run through Brussels as part of the [Legal Run](#) team, which supports a local charity each year. In May 2022, Simont Braun’s team was back again to support [Kick Cancer](#).
- In September 2022, Simont Braun participates in and supports [Bike for Kivu](#), a solidarity race, organised in Belgium to fund sustainable development projects in the Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Simont Braun also supports many selected charities, either through our lawyers’ substantial pro bono involvement (as board members, with pro bono legal advice, etc.) or through donations. We are, for example, strongly connected with the [Maison des Migrants](#), [Chapelle de Bourgogne](#), [Infirmiers de Rue ASBL](#) and [Pairi Daiza Foundation](#).

MEMBERSHIPS

Simont Braun is a co-founding member of the [Legal Diversity & Inclusion Alliance \(LDIA\)](#), a collective network launched in 2018 by several legal practitioners in Belgium. By joining LDIA, members confirm

their commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive working environment, exchanging good practices on diversity and inclusion, sharing on their challenges, and raising awareness on non-discrimination and diversity issues by combining efforts to organise workshops and other activities.

Several partners are members of [Guberna](#), an association with the mission to stimulate good governance in all organisations in Belgium. It has notably actively contributed to the creation and implementation of the Belgian Corporate Governance Code 2020, containing guidelines on how organisations should be managed and controlled. Guberna also organises many seminars and workshops on sustainability and good governance.

Simont Braun is also a member of the following Belgian organisations promoting women in the professional world: [Women on Board](#) and **Women in Law and Leadership (WILL)**.

Every year, Simont Braun sponsors the participation of a woman senior associate of the firm to the WILL programme, aimed at fostering and encouraging their professional development through trainings and workshops.

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Simont Braun is committed to building a healthier, cleaner and more sustainable environment.

We start this process in-house, of course.

As a firm, we believe it is our role to lead by example and we are continuously adapting our behaviour to reduce our environmental footprint. We have adopted a series of concrete measures notably to reduce our paper consumption, the use of plastic and our carbon emissions.

We also make sure to work with external providers (food, office supplies...) committed to reducing their environmental footprint.

- **Paper & Plastic**

Simont Braun's lawyers and staff join forces to decrease paper and energy consumption in our office. We all consider the necessity of printing before doing it, and we exclusively use recycled paper and recto-verso mode by default. In the same spirit, since 2017, the firm has stopped sending paper greetings cards, switching to e-cards and donating the amount saved to a charity (Infirmiers de Rue – Straatverplegers – Street Nurses).

We also stopped using pens made of plastic and metal, replacing them with sustainable wooden pens. They are approved under the eco-certification scheme, PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification).

Glass bottles have replaced all plastic bottles and cans, and our catering partners are required to avoid using single-use plastic in their deliveries. Glass containers for food are also available.

- **Food**

We offer healthy and seasonal food (organic fruits, soups, etc.) several times per week at the office.

- **Transport**

As our offices are located in the centre of Brussels, most of our lawyers come to work using public

transport, by bike, electric scooter, foot or even on an electric wheel! Simont Braun pays for all its employees' public transport costs. We are also currently rethinking our mobility plan to promote eco-friendly transportation modes.

AN ONGOING PROCESS

Simont Braun has taken many measures to improve its environmental sustainability, social commitment and good governance. We actively seek to make concrete and meaningful steps in the good direction to change mentalities and behaviours, to become a sustainable firm at all levels, where everyone feels included, committed and respected, and to better serve our clients.

This is a daily challenge, but it is our mission to stay aware, speak up and take concrete actions when necessary. As there is always room for progress, we believe in sharing experiences, ideas and good practices with our peers and clients.

Would you like to know more on our actions or share ideas? Please contact Simont Braun's ESG committee: esgcommittee@simontbraun.eu.