

# UN GLOBAL COMPACT COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS 2020

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PLESNER



## Joint effort

### Thoughts from the Managing Partner and the CSR Partner

Welcome to Plesner's annual CSR report. In the report we present our CSR programme which reflects our daily dedicated efforts to fulfil the ten principles of the UN Global Compact, the framework for our CSR work.

Plesner Advokatpartnerselskab is one of the leading law firms in Denmark. Our offices are located in Nordhavnen in Copenhagen and accommodate a staff of almost 400.

Plesner is committed to providing legal advice based on the highest ethical and professional standards and to running our firm in a socially and environmentally responsible way. Plesner is also committed to providing free legal advice to selected charitable organisations and to supporting the local community in general.

We strongly believe that because we are leaders in our field, we also have a strong obligation to give something back to the society of which we are part. Consequently, we have high ambitions for our CSR programme. And on the basis of the CSR programme we are creating a framework ensuring that these ambitions are also translated into concrete action in everyday life - both internally among ourselves and externally with our business partners. It also means that all Plesner's employees have continuously contributed to the firm's progress during recent years to attain the common CSR ambitions, and that everybody continue to contribute to even better results in the time to come.

The starting point for our CSR work is our

core competence of providing legal advice according to the highest ethical and professional standards. The CSR programme is comprehensive and includes pro bono work for charities, support for the education and development of local youth, employee satisfaction and environmental and climate initiatives.

Plesner's CSR programme is based on the ten principles of the UN Global Compact which have now been set out in seventeen ambitious and motivating Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals constitute an important contribution to our continued development and help us focus on making the best possible joint effort to achieve a society that is increasingly more sustainable - socially, environmentally and in terms of climate; locally as well as globally. In the coming years we will maintain our strong focus on and commitment to the CSR programme in order to contribute systematically to the fulfilment of the ten principles of the Global Compact as well as the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

When the COVID-19 pandemic spread in the spring of 2020, it marked the beginning of a highly unusual period for everybody which has impacted on everyday life locally, nationally and worldwide. Particularly on the national level the period has been characterised by extensive and resource-intensive work to protect the healthcare sector and the most vulnerable citizens. Plesner has supported the numerous restrictions

the Danish authorities have had to impose in order to address this difficult situation in the best possible manner. Consequently, we have had to learn to navigate in a completely new reality at short notice. The new reality has impacted on our operations and daily routines and it has therefore also had an effect on Plesner's CSR work, just as the pandemic will influence our approach to future efforts. The first assessment as to how Plesner's CSR work has been influenced by COVID-19 is included in the report.

We hope you will enjoy reading the report.

Copenhagen, June 2020



Tom Kári Kristjánsson

Managing Partner



Gitte Holtsø

CSR Partner

Since 2013, Plesner's CSR report has been published in June or July every year. From 2021, the report will be published in connection with the presentation of the financial statements due to an amendment of the Danish rules on the presentation of financial statements.

The CSR report constitutes statutory information under sections 99a and 99b of the Danish Financial Statements Act and is also included in the management commentary published with the annual report.



## Pro Bono

### Legal partner to charitable organisations

*Plesner has provided strong and well-coordinated pro bono advice to a number of charitable organisations.*

It is an important element of Plesner's CSR work to use our core competences as a legal adviser in connection with Plesner's pro bono work. Today, Plesner has partnerships with eight selected charitable organisations, all focusing on helping vulnerable children and young people as well as those who are critically ill.

Plesner assists the charitable organisations by solving large and small matters, and the charitable organisations increasingly make use of Plesner's competences.

In recent years, Plesner has focused on optimising the internal process in relation to Plesner's pro bono work and on ensuring a flexible and efficient framework for the pro bono advice. This has to a large extent been possible because Plesner for many years has made a great effort to organise the framework of the internal process related to our provision of advice to the charitable organisations.

### Strong long-standing relationships - which continue to be strengthened

Plesner's relationships with the eight charitable organisations have all lasted for several years. The long-standing relationships between Plesner and the charitable organisations help both parties ensure a clear definition of the work provided by the organisations, and to adapt the advice provided by Plesner to the organisations. At the

same time, Plesner's long-standing relationships provide a unique insight into the requirements of many organisations, and this makes Plesner's work with the organisations more efficient and rewarding.

Plesner is in regular dialogue with the organisations in order to strengthen our relationships and ensure that they will be able to draw on Plesner's advice to the best effect.

This applies to for instance Red Barnet Ungdom/Danish Child Rights Ambassadors where Astrid Engberg became the new Secretary-General in October 2019. A new Secretary-General brings along new ideas and perspectives on existing problems. In that context Plesner has discussed with Red Barnet Ungdom/Danish Child Rights Ambassadors how the organisation may benefit from Plesner's legal advice in the future and thus make the most of our partnership.

### Charitable organisations in the time of the coronavirus

COVID-19 has affected many companies in the course of 2020 and has also caused problems and challenges for the charitable organisations in many different areas. Plesner has provided advice on furloughing of organisations' employees with wage compensation, interpretation of agreements on fundraising events which have been cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19, the holding of general meetings in spite of bans

against mass gatherings, and many other issues which have arisen due to COVID-19.

On this point the charitable organisations' requests for advice from Plesner have been very similar to the requests from Plesner's other clients. This further emphasises that in many respects the advice requested by the charitable organisations is just as complex as that requested by Plesner's other clients. We are proud to have been able to provide advice to the charitable organisations in this extraordinary situation.



During the past reporting period, more than 60 of our assistant attorneys, attorneys and partners spent more than 1,100 hours providing voluntary work and advising the eight charitable organisations. To this should be added a significant number of hours committed by secretarial and administrative staff.





READ MORE ABOUT PLESNER'S  
SUPPORT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

## Plesner's school project

*At Plesner, we believe in education as the foundation for a good and successful life. Together with one of the local schools in Copenhagen we are engaging with 75 young people and their views on the possibilities provided by education.*

Fair and equal access to education is a fundamental human right for everyone, regardless of their background. The Danish State provides an educational framework for everyone but the personal framework which is often also necessary is not always available to all young people.

Most of our employees are highly educated and they are networking, professionally and privately, with other highly educated persons. We see the positive effect of this every day.

However, some young people grow up in communities where education is not valued or prioritised sufficiently. We are convinced that we can make a difference to these young people. It is therefore an important part of our CSR programme to set up long-term partnerships with selected schools where our influence may impact the young people's choice of education positively. That is the background for Plesner's School Project. And we are very proud of it.

The idea of the School Project is to motivate young people to focus more on their schooling and on continuing their education after having completed lower-secondary school and upper-secondary school. The School Project can provide them with a different view of their job opportunities. Normally, the largest motivation from the School Project is the contact between role models and the young people and annual visits to various large companies and institutions where

they can get a first impression of the many job opportunities also available to them.

### Nørrebro Park Skole

For more than ten years, Plesner has followed lower-secondary school classes at Nørrebro Park Skole in Copenhagen for the purpose of motivating the pupils to continue in the education system when they leave lower-secondary school. In addition, the project aims at inspiring young people to take an active part in society and consider future career opportunities. The School Project consists of Plesner role models and volunteers who wish to make a difference to the young people in the Nørrebro district.

The School Project involves monthly visits by the Plesner role models where the role models and the pupils discuss topics of current interest, for instance free speech or the sharing of photos without permission, as well as visits by role models from various companies. Once every six months the pupils are invited to visit one of the companies which are School Project partners.

In 2019, the pupils in two 9th grades, whom Plesner had followed since they started in the 7th grade, finished school. In spite of challenges and some turnover of pupils, action plans had been prepared to ensure that all pupils had the necessary support to continue in the education system.

Plesner invited all pupils for a reunion in the

autumn of 2019. At the event we had an opportunity to discuss the pupils' transition from the 9th grade. All pupils were well under way with continuation school (Danish: efterskole), 10th grade, upper-secondary education or other education. That is surely a success story.

In 2019, three new 7th grades with a total of 75 pupils were introduced to the School Project. The pupils were invited to a welcome event at Plesner. Nina Bech Damgaard Pedersen, who is the project coordinator and an attorney at Plesner, provided the pupils with an insight into the work at a law firm, including the many different types of employees and positions. Small legal cases were solved and dreams of the future were discussed, and the pupils had an opportunity to talk to lawyers, communications staff, kitchen staff etc.

### The School Project in the time of the coronavirus

In the autumn of 2019, it was possible to complete a single event. A police officer visited the school before the coronavirus outbreak in 2020 put a stop to getting the classes from Nørrebro Park Skole together for the joint meetings, dissemination of information and dialogue on the local community in particular, which had otherwise been the trademark of the School Project. Throughout 2020, activities have therefore been put on hold. They are planned to resume at full strength after the summer holidays in 2021 when it is expected that the entire Danish population will have completed the vaccination programme.



SCHOOL



ROLE MODELS



PROJECT MANAGER



BUSINESS-VISITS



STATUS-MEETINGS





READ MORE ABOUT PLESNER'S  
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## Employee satisfaction

*Working with our employees' satisfaction is an important part of our everyday life. We endeavour to develop all our talented employees and take part in their career planning. It is our goal to have extremely satisfied employees in our firm - all year round.*

### Welcome on the team ...

Every year Plesner welcomes a large number of new colleagues. Successful onboarding is essential for our new colleagues to be able to acquire knowledge, skills and relations quickly so they will feel comfortable and welcome already from their first day. Onboarding is also important when introducing talented, ambitious people with different experiences, professional competences and profiles to Plesner's unique collaborative culture.

During the reporting period we have strengthened our efforts to integrate our new employees, and we launched a new digital onboarding universe. We have also launched a new introduction week for our assistant attorneys. This ensures that the firm will appear smaller and more familiar already from the first day because the new assistant attorneys quickly get to know their future colleagues.

### Flying start with digital onboarding

Our new digital onboarding universe is a permanent part of the start for all new employees and is available from they step inside our doors on their first working day. In that way we ensure that all new colleagues get the same basic knowledge and the same conditions for getting off to a good start.

The platform includes engaging content

about everything from our most used IT tools and work processes to unwritten rules and how we ensure the good Plesner client experience. The format makes it possible for our new colleagues to test their newly acquired knowledge immediately on dilemmas they will meet in the course of their working day.

### A week of new experiences, insights and relationships

Every year in September, the building is filled with new faces when new assistant attorneys are about to commence their three-year training period in order to realise their ambitions to become attorneys. It is quite natural that most of them are excited, and perhaps a little nervous, at first. That is why we prepare ourselves thoroughly to receive them and make ensure that they settle in quickly and get to know the ropes in a new everyday life and in a new role with new demands and expectations.

To complement the more traditional part of the introduction to Plesner's work processes, tools and systems, we have developed a new intro programme focusing on teamwork and collaboration across the firm which stretches over their first working week.

Emilie Illum Rodam, an assistant attorney in the Commercial Real Estate team, says the following about her first week at Plesner

and the new intro programme:

*"The intro programme for the new assistant attorneys was a really good and fun start as an assistant attorney at Plesner. We got to know each other across the teams, which is really nice when we do not see each other every day due to the size of the Plesner building. It has resulted in weekly communal lunches and good teamwork, among other things."*

### New policies for good conduct

In the light of the focus on undesirable behaviour and harassment across society, and also in the legal profession, Plesner's board of directors has adopted seven new policies illustrating Plesner's measures to ensure a healthy and attractive workplace. The policies are to ensure that Plesner remains a healthy and attractive workplace prioritising mental and physical well-being. Each policy sets out guidelines which are to guide all employees and managers to contribute to creating a good working environment.

### Focus on the physical well-being of the employees during coronathe coronavirus

When COVID-19 started spreading in Denmark, large parts of society closed down. It also meant that Plesner's employees had to work from home for a long period of time. Our employees' health is important to us. In order to ensure that our employees could stay active, we provided online home training organised by a professional trainer every morning during this period, including for instance strengthening of balance and muscles and meditation.







READ MORE ABOUT PLESNER'S  
ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE  
POLICY

## Environment and climate

### Our environment and climate initiatives

*As a socially responsible firm we are committed to focusing on our impact on the environment and the climate, even if such impact is limited. It is our goal to continue to reduce the firm's environmental and climate impact.*

As a consequence, Plesner has taken several initiatives in recent years to reduce the firm's total environmental impact. We have been assisted by climate consultants who have helped us reduce our environmental impact through waste separation, environmentally friendly cleaning and by using LED light sources.

One of our focal points is to reduce the firm's total CO<sub>2</sub> emission. We primarily do so by using less energy, using less paper by optimising processes, increasing the use of environmentally friendly paper and office supplies, and by disposing of waste in an environmentally sound manner. We focus on recycling paper and cardboard and on using as many organic products as possible in our canteen and when hosting meetings and conferences. We are also focusing on reducing the canteen's consumption of meat, replacing it by more vegetables and vegetable products.

During the last period, Plesner's canteen was awarded the bronze ecolabel by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration. The label is proof that Plesner meets the requirement for 30-60% organic raw materials and other organic products to be used in the canteen and that the firm considers the environment and the climate special focal areas.

### Waste separation

One of the initiatives aimed at reducing the firm's climate impact is our waste separation project in the canteen. Our waste is now separated into biowaste, residual waste, metal, cardboard, paper, glass, plastic and electronics. Biowaste from the canteen is kneaded at a receiving facility, which means that the bags containing biowaste are wrung up, made into pulp and digested. The residual product from this digestion is manure which can be spread directly on the fields. In that way, the separation of waste contributes to non-depletion of soil and contributes to a higher degree of recycling of our waste.

### Energy optimisation

Plesner has been focusing intensively on the firm's energy optimisation in terms of how we can save energy day by day. As a result, light sources in the building have gradually been replaced by LED lighting, reducing Plesner's energy consumption by 30% since 2015.

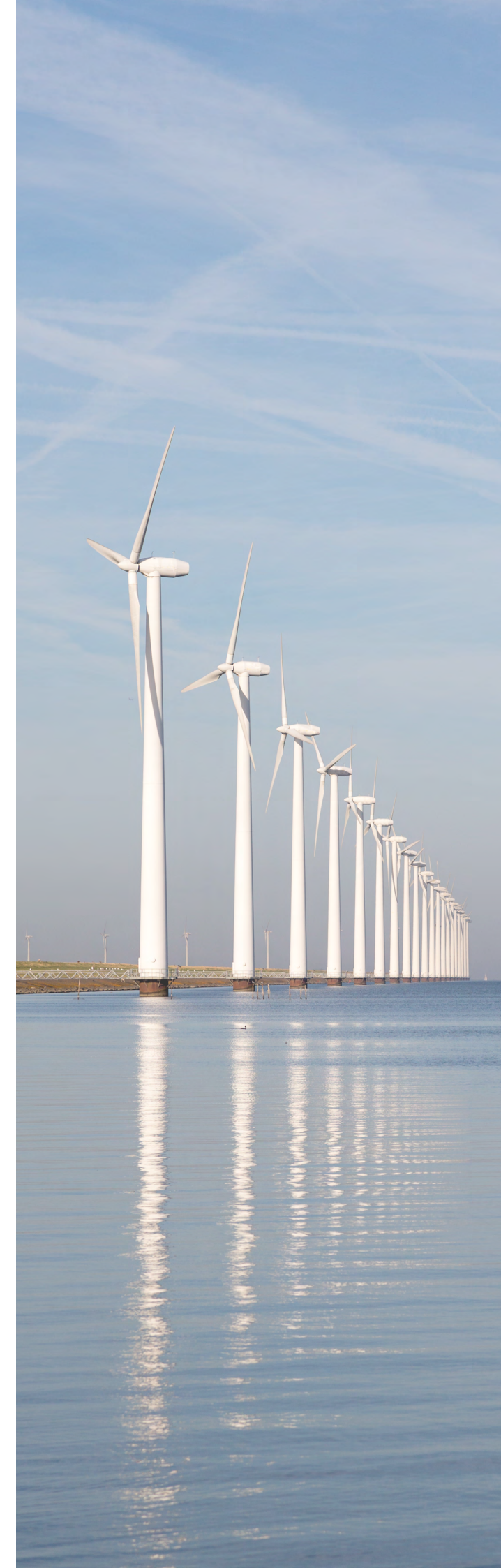
### Energy rating

Every ten years, the Danish Energy Agency prepares an energy label report with respect to Plesner's premises. The energy labelling

renders a building's energy consumption more visible and acts as a form of rating. At the same time, the energy labelling provides a good overview as to which energy improvements may be beneficial to our energy consumption. The energy label contributes to our continued focus on energy optimisation, which is an important part of the firm's CSR programme.

The energy labelling is carried out by an energy consultant assessing the status of the building. When we look at our energy optimisation, Plesner has made considerable progress. During the last ten years we have moved from energy label F to energy label B. We are proud of that. We have installed LED downlights in almost all offices. The downlights are linked to a clock and are adjusted continuously according to daylight. By replacing the last light sources in our atrium, canteen and auditorium we will be able to save 1.52 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, which is our plan for 2020.

By virtue of this energy optimisation with respect to light sources, waste separation, food waste etc, we expect to go from having the green B label to the dark green A-2010 label in 2020.







**United Nations** Global Compact

## The UN Global Compact's ten principles

### Human rights

- Our firm should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights within its sphere of influence
- Our firm should make sure that it is not complicit in human rights abuses

### Anti-corruption

- Our firm should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery

### Employee rights

- Our firm should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the employee's right to collective bargaining
- Our firm should support the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour
- Our firm should support the effective abolition of child labour
- Our firm should maintain the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

### The environment

- Our firm should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges
- Our firm should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility
- Our firm should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies





READ MORE ABOUT PLESNER'S  
ANTI-BRIBERY POLICY

## Plesner's implementation of the UN Global Compact 2020

Plesner joined the UN Global Compact in 2012. By doing so, we have committed to the ten universally accepted principles with respect to human rights, employee rights, environment & climate and anti-corruption & bribery. Plesner's CSR policy, CSR programme and CSR initiatives in 2020 reflect all ten universal principles of the UN Global Compact, which are put into practice in connection with specific initiatives across the firm.

### Human rights

Our employees' well-being and job satisfaction are important focus areas in our work. As a part of this long-standing and continuous project we have created a new online onboarding programme during the last reporting period for the purpose of giving our employees the best possible start and introduction to the firm. We believe that this increases their satisfaction as employees at Plesner and that our focus on our employees' satisfaction contributes to a positive development of their professional competences.

A key element of our CSR programme, which we take much pride in, is to use our legal core competences to provide legal advice for charitable work in our local community. We continuously advise a number of charitable organisations by offering free legal advice to enable them to get qualitative assistance - just like everyone else. We cooperate with eight charitable organisations which help vulnerable children and young people as well as those who are critically ill. The charitable organisations get the same treatment as our other clients and they increasingly act as ordinary clients.

Another important element of Plesner's CSR work is the School Project, which also reflects Plesner's social responsibility. The purpose of the School Project is to motivate pupils in selected schools to continue in the

education system after completing lower-secondary school and to inspire such pupils to take an active part in society and consider their future career opportunities. The School Project involves monthly visits by the Plesner role models where the role models and the pupils discuss topics of current interest and visits by role models from various companies. In the spring of 2019, the pupils of two 9th grades who had been involved in the School Project since 2017 completed lower-secondary school. All pupils are now well under way with continuation school (Danish: efterskole), 10th grade, upper-secondary education or other education. That is surely a success story.

### Employee rights

Our focus on our employees' well-being, satisfaction and development is reflected in our determined effort to develop our employees' talent and career. At the same time, it is important that our employees have the same opportunities to achieve senior management positions, regardless of their gender. More women in management is also one of our constant focal points. During the reporting period one woman has been a member of the board, and the gender distribution in senior management, that is the partner group, has been approximately 18% women and 82% men. This means that women are under-represented. However, it is our goal to increase the percentage of women on the board to 20% by the end of 2023 and to increase the representation of women in the partner group.

In the last reporting period we increased the number of members of the board from five to six and we have consequently been unable to fulfil the goal that one-fifth of the members of the board should be women. During the period until 2023 we will continue our work to reach the goal. In that connection

we have decided to change the requirement to board representation from a relative goal of 20% to an absolute goal of at least one female board member.

Historically, it has been difficult for women to pursue a career in the legal profession, and we try to do something about it. We would like both to retain female talents and to have greater diversity in the partner group. There is no quick fix but we have been engaged in changing the traditional structure and have taken a number of new initiatives to address greater diversity in our layers of management.

We have introduced a new career model. The model does not in itself ensure that we will reach the goal of more female members of the board. But we believe that the model, and its clear description of what is expected of an attorney in order for them to move up the career ladder, will be instrumental in developing and retaining especially our female talents and prepare them for a partner role.

We have developed a dialogue programme targeted at employees who will be taking maternity or paternity leave. The purpose of the dialogue programme is to ensure that in particular women returning from maternity leave feel included and welcome. With the dialogue programme we wish to create a closer dialogue between the employee taking leave, the immediate manager and HR both before, during and after the leave. The dialogue programme has been developed based on requests from our employees and in order to create a more uniform process across the firm. The dialogue programme comprises both prospective mothers and prospective fathers.

Diversity and inclusion as well as equal opportunities for our employees to use their competences across genders are also an important primary goal which we believe has

been achieved during the reporting period.

### Environment and climate

Plesner's canteen was previously awarded the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration's silver ecolabel, but this year it was awarded the bronze ecolabel. The reason for this is that it has not been possible to get Danish organic products in the quantities and the quality we are looking for. When it is not possible to get Danish organic products, we prefer to buy Danish conventional products rather than foreign organic products in order to reduce the CO2 footprint generated when products are transported to Denmark. We expect to get a silver ecolabel again in 2021.

Since 2015, Plesner has succeeded in reducing the firm's total energy consumption by around 30%. In the process we have focused much on for instance optimising electronic processes to reduce our paper consumption. We have also replaced most of our light sources with LED bulbs. This transition from incandescent bulbs to LED bulbs has reduced our electricity consumption by around 20%. Moreover, we have been able to reduce the constant CO2 emission.

### Anti-corruption

Plesner has implemented an anti-bribery policy which is to prevent corruption, bribery and other unethical behaviour. The anti-corruption policy is implemented through our case management systems and by efficient internal communication. In 2020, Plesner continued the development of screening in relation to the prevention of corruption, bribery and other unethical behaviour, and our anti-bribery policy ensures constant compliance with legislation.



