

Time for a strong directive on due diligence for sustainable companies

Dear Excellency,

I hope this letter finds you well. As you may be aware, the inter-institutional triologue negotiations on the Corporate Sustainable Due Diligence Directive are entering their final and decisive round.

In the ongoing negotiations, the European Parliament has already moved a long way towards the Council. The ETUC fears that this is already jeopardising the effectiveness of the directive. It is of paramount importance that any provisions agreed in the Directive do not fall below the standards already implemented in national law. It is vital that existing protections for workers' and trade union rights, environmental protection and human rights are maintained and strengthened wherever possible.

The ETUC is deeply shocked that the Council does not want to take into account the ILO fundamental Conventions on Safety and Health at Work (N° 155 and 187). We strongly recall, that all of the 187 ILO Member States (including the 27 EU Member States) by virtue of their membership in the ILO, have an obligation to work towards realizing all the fundamental principles and rights at work. This obligation exists even if they have not yet been able to ratify the fundamental instruments which embody these rights and principles. We therefore urge you to recognise this obligation and support the inclusion of these important Conventions. The tragic catastrophe at the Rana Plaza which killed 1,100 workers should be reminder enough that health and safety at work must be a priority.

The ETUC is much concerned that the Council would like to exclude the financial sector. Given the significance of the financial industry for modern economies, an exclusion would massively limit the effectiveness of this Directive.

Furthermore, the Directive should guarantee the proper and meaningful involvement of trade unions and workers' representatives throughout the due diligence process in companies and their value chains. The ETUC calls on you to ensure that this involvement is provided for in full respect with existing EU acquis on information, consultation and participation rights of workers as well as on the promotion of collective bargaining and social dialogue. This involvement is essential to achieve a fair and comprehensive framework that takes into account the perspectives and interests of all stakeholders.

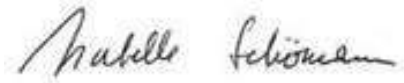
We also stress the importance of effective access to justice for victims and trade unions, dissuasive sanctions for companies found to have violated human rights, workers' rights or environmental obligations. Strong liability rules (Article 22 CSDD) are essential to ensure accountability and prevent impunity.

At this occasion, the ETUC would like to emphasise that any attempt to turn minimum requirements into maximum requirements must be rejected. The ETUC opposes any, even partial, full harmonisation.

As emphasised, international and European expectations are high and nothing less than the EU's reputation as human rights defender is at stake. Will the EU take its own values seriously and adopt an instrument that will effectively improve the respect and enforcement of human rights worldwide? It is without question that your Member State's

position and vote will be crucial for a positive answer to this question! The ETUC therefore calls on you to support a strong directive that can make a difference.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Isabelle Schömann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Isabelle Schömann
Deputy General Secretary