



Richard Howitt and Pervenche Berès, MEPs invite you to:

**Whose responsibility?
Decent work and multinational supply chains:
A half day seminar exploring the business of labour rights**

When: November 17th 2009, 9.30am-12.30 pm (followed by lunch)

Where: European Parliament, Brussels, Room A3HI

The view from the ground

Multinational enterprises are important players in the global economy and whilst they have the potential to bring benefits to the areas where they work, some also participate in violations of labour, human and community rights and environmental law in many countries. These companies' head offices can profit from their subsidiaries' operations and have substantial control over their actions without being held accountable for any irresponsible conduct or crimes they commit.

Workers in global food and clothing supply chains face some of the most exploitative conditions of work. Many work in Export Processing Zones, where trade unions are often forbidden, where working hours are long and health and safety conditions dangerous. Others work in agricultural supply chains, earning below-minimum wages and with no social protection in the case of illness or unemployment.

And yet, supermarkets, retail chains, mining companies, amongst others are making greater and greater profits. Are they and can they be made to hold account for the denial of decent work to their workers?

Who's responsible?

Thusfar, at the European Union level, companies have been encouraged to engage in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, but 20 years of CSR has borne little fruit. Meanwhile, the UN Special Rapporteur on Business and Human Rights, John Ruggie, has developed a framework under which both states and companies can be held accountable. The so-called Protect, Respect, Remedy framework– states' obligations to protect their citizens from human rights abuses, companies' responsibility to respect human rights and access to remedies is gaining more and more ground as a tool which can bring decent work to those who desperately need it. Given its commitment to decent work as elaborated under the Communication on Decent Work (2006) and the Communication on CSR (2006), what are the next steps for the EU?

Moving the business of decent work up the EU agenda

This half day seminar will hear:

- **Testimonies from grass-roots workers** and their representatives about the conditions on the ground and why we must act
- **Case studies from Southern NGOs and trade unions** of their experiences of dealing with CSR initiatives and why we must move from voluntarism to accountability
- **Ideas from experts from the EU institutions, NGOs, trade unions and progressive business** about what steps the European Union can take to ensure companies can be held accountable for their denial of decent work and how it can ensure those facing abuse of their rights can access justice

EVENT DETAILS

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AGENDA

9.00am Registration	
9.30am Opening	Pervenche Berès , France, S&D Simon McRae , War on Want Conny Reuter , SOLIDAR
9.45am The state of decent work in Global Supply Chains	Anton Marcus , Free Trade Zone Trade Union, Sri Lanka Astrid Valencia , Grupo de Monitoreo Independiente de El Salvador Dharmendra Kumar , Director, FDI Watch, India Chair: Pervenche Berès
10.45 CSR vs. Corporate Accountability?	John Evans , Trade Union Advisory Body to the OECD Alison Tate , Technical Officer (Design of Union Capacity Building Programmes), Better Work, ILO Felipe Saboya Braga , Research Coordinator, IOS- CUT Brazil Chair: Simon McRae, War on Want
11.45 What can the EU do?	Ruth Casals , Coordinator, European Coalition for Corporate Justice Ramon JAUREGUI ATONDO , MEP, Spain S&D Claudine Musitelli , Director, Global Social Compliance Programme Pedro Ortún , DG Enterprise, European Commission Chair: Andrea Maksimovic, SOLIDAR
12.30 Lunch	

This event is organized with the assistance of the European Union under the project Decent work in Supermarket Supply Chains. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the publisher and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

