

**International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ)**

Press Release

**Corporations must be truly accountable
NGO demand for regulation is supported by a broad range of
stakeholders**

Brussels, 6 December – The European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ) [\[1\]](#) and FIDH [\[2\]](#) today propose that a legal framework is developed to ensure that corporations behave in a socially and environmentally sustainable way. They see the CSR approach adopted by the European Commission as unpromising and misguided.

Civil society groups have decided not to participate in tomorrow's multi-stakeholder forum organised by the European Commission, because the narrow agenda will only address voluntary measures, while it has been proven that this approach is not sufficient to solve social and environmental problems related to the performance of corporations. NGOs host a conference today for representatives from governments, enterprises, trade unions and the European Institutions in order to provide stakeholders with a range of measures that will ensure corporate accountability. [\[3\]](#)

Paul de Clerck from Friends of the Earth Europe and steering group member of ECCJ said: "If European companies do not respect human rights and environmental interests in other parts of the world, we need to ensure that affected people can find justice and hold companies accountable."

High profile stakeholders from retail company Carrefour, the French government and European trade unions are all pleading for a level playing field on Corporate Social Responsibility. Rules and regulations to ensure corporate accountability are not only to protect affected communities, but they are in the interests of companies as well," [\[4\]](#)

At the conference today, NGOs will propose the following measures which will contribute to corporate accountability:

- Mandatory reporting on social and environmental issues
- Creation of a duty of care for CEOs for the environmental and social impacts of their companies' activities
- Enforcement of mechanisms for redress for affected communities
- Use of public procurements to favor environmentally and socially responsible businesses

Richard Howitt, UK Socialist MEP and rapporteur for the European Parliament's current report on CSR, said: "There is a very strong case for companies to report their social and environmental impacts on a mandatory basis. And as long as this is not yet introduced, the European Commission should be enforcing existing laws to test the transparency and credibility of current CSR initiatives."

For more information, please contact:

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NOTES:

[1] The European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ) brings together hundreds of national and international NGOs and trade unions, including national sections of Amnesty, Oxfam, ActionAid, Friends of the Earth, The Corporate Responsibility (CORE) Coalition and Greenpeace. Members of ECCJ are committed to working with the European institutions on issues of corporate accountability.

[2] Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme, a federation of 141 Human Rights organisations from over 100 countries, whose mandate is to contribute to the respect of all the rights defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

[3] The conference "Towards a regulatory approach to Corporate Social Responsibility" is taking place today at Le Botanique, Rue Royale 236, Brussels, from 14.00 to 17.00 .

[4] European supermarket giant Carrefour has argued for clear CSR rules and a precise distinction between the responsibilities of private companies and governments. In their view, this is a necessity to allow fair competition between companies.
The French government would like to see an international framework for corporate accountability and is currently working with several other countries to push for a new initiative at the United Nations.
ETUC wishes to emphasise that it is indispensable and fundamental that CSR should be governed by conditions set at the European level.

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