



DEBATE ABOUT NEW INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES AND ETHICAL TRADE

What impact will the new international and European guidelines have on our present approach to Ethical Trade?

8th February 2012; 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

DIEH, Bredgade 26, Copenhagen (Entrance from Skt. Annae Plads 1)

AGENDA

- 10:00 Welcome and introduction by Christian Friis Bach, the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation
- 10:10 New European definition and strategy on CSR by Tom Dodd, CSR Team, EU Commission
- 10:40 Qs & As
- 10:50 The impact on responsible supply chain management of the new EU strategy on CSR and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by Sune Skadegaard Thorsen, CEO, Global CSR
- 11:20 Qs & As
- 11:30 The present and future approach to Ethical Trade by Hanne Gürtler, Director, Ethical Trading Initiative, Denmark
- 11:50 Qs & As
- 12:00 Lunch & networking
- 01:00 Panel discussion – Moderator: Peter McAllister, Director, Ethical Trading Initiative, UK
- Review of current practices and identification of gaps in order to fulfill the expectations listed in the new EU strategy and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
 - Proposals for future updates and developments within the Ethical Trading Initiatives
- Panel: (TBA)
- 02:30 Summing up and conclusions by Per Bondevik, Director, Ethical Trading Initiative, Norway

Registration by e-mail to hg@dieh.dk before 1. February

In June 2011 the UN adopted a set of Guiding Principles, UNGPs, which describe how corporations are expected to deal with their responsibility to respect human rights including labour rights. The expectations listed in the UNGPs apply to all companies and establish a global reference point for what corporations can expect from actors, including suppliers, in the value chain. The UNGPs were unanimously adopted by the UN and since then they have been widely endorsed by businesses, business associations, civil society and states. They are now part of the CSR policies of the OECD, the World Bank and the EU.

In October 2011 the EU Commission launched a renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR. The Commission puts forward a new definition of CSR as:

“The responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society”. Respect for applicable legislation, and for collective agreements between social partners, is a prerequisite for meeting that responsibility. To fully meet their corporate social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders, with the aim of:

- *maximising the creation of shared value for their owners/shareholders and for their other stakeholders and society at large*
- *identifying, preventing and mitigating their possible adverse impacts*

The Ethical Trading Initiative-UK (ETI), the Ethical Trading Initiative-Norway (IEH) and the Danish Ethical Trading Initiative (DIEH) welcome the renewed EU strategy and embrace the Commission’s understanding of CSR as business impact on society including their supply chains and the alignment of EU policies on CSR with international principles and guidelines.

European businesses are today faced with a number of challenges when it comes to upholding human and labour rights and good environmental standards in their supply chains as well as challenges on how to reduce the risk of complicity in breaches of said rights and standards. For more than 10 years the ETIs have been working in a tripartite manner equipping European companies with knowledge, tools and networks in order to meet these challenges. The Commission emphasizes in its strategy the need for a balanced multi-stakeholder approach that takes account of the views of enterprises, non-business stakeholders and Member States to increase impact.

The new international and European frameworks for responsible business conduct raise questions about; whether the traditional compliance approach to Ethical Trade (audit - corrective action) is the most effective; whether companies alone can in reality assess the efforts of all suppliers in relation to human rights and labour rights; and what companies in practice can do if the new frameworks are to make a real difference.

The meeting will address the new international and European guidelines, their impact on responsible supply chain management and the present and future approach to Ethical Trade by the Ethical Trading Initiatives.

***The Ethical Trading Initiative-UK (ETI), the Ethical Trading Initiative-Norway (IEH) and the Danish Ethical Trading Initiative (DIEH)** were founded in 1998, 2000 and 2008 respectively. ETI, IEH and DIEH are national multi-stakeholder initiatives, which bring together trade unions, businesses, public institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to promote ethical trade and responsible supply chain management among English, Norwegian and Danish companies respectively. ETI, IEH and DIEH are all member based resource centres, which address social and environmental issues in global value chains by identifying and promoting good practices and developing practical solutions to ethical dilemmas. The overall aim is to promote international trade and responsible supply chain management in concordance with the 10 principles of UN Global Compact, UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.*