

Breakout Session

“The Power of Harmonisation – Building European-Wide Alliances to Scale Impact.”

FTA Annual Conference 15 June 2017, 13:45-15:00

Event Background

Many EU countries are proposing, or have already put in place, different initiatives or laws on due diligence for human and labour rights for companies.

Some significant recent examples are the German “**Partnership for Sustainable Textiles**”, which aims to bring about social, ecological and economic improvements all along the textile supply chain, the Dutch “**Covenants**” and the “**Law on child labour due diligence**”, and the French “**Law on Corporate Duty of Diligence**”. These developments have left companies, particularly those operating in two or more EU countries, with questions of how each of the national initiatives can affect them.

The growth of these initiatives around Europe also raises questions about the possibility of coordination at the EU level, and whether a European-wide cross sectoral framework is possible or even desirable.

Key issues to discuss

- What are the currently the most significant due diligence initiatives in force, and how do they impact companies?
- How can companies, various stakeholders and Member State governments work hand in hand to create a right enabling framework?
- Can/should the different national initiatives be scaled-up to the EU level for more effect?
- What should be the future for due diligence initiatives in Europe?
- Which role does or could EU-level regulation play?

Participants

- Lorenz Berzau, FTA Coordinator (Germany)
- Norma Snell, FTA Coordinator (Netherlands)
- Sylvie Thonnerieux, FTA Coordinator (France)
- Jef Wintermans, Coordinator, Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textiles
- Elske Van Efferink, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Netherlands)
- Dante Pesce, Member of the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights
- Ms. Szofia Kerecsen, Policy Officer, DG Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, European Commission
- Margaret Wachenfeld, Managing Director, Themis Research

Moderator

- Milan Pajic, FTA Trade Policy Advisor

Agenda/Format of the Session

Time (minutes)	Topic	Person(s)
2	Welcome	MP
5	What are the trends for due diligence legislation and initiatives internationally?	DP
5	Introduction to NL legislation	NS
5	Introduction to NL initiatives	JW
5	Introduction to DE initiatives	LB
5	Introduction to FR legislation	ST
5	Can/should the different national initiatives be scaled-up to the EU level for effect?	EVE
5	Current situation and possible future developments in the field of Due Diligence initiatives in the EU.	SK
5	Ideas about different frameworks for unifying action on CRS/BHR/BCR at the EU level.	MW
30	<p>Discussion (ice breakers):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What/who should fall under the scope of due diligence? 2. What mix of voluntary and mandatory Due Diligence initiatives should we have to allow companies to operate in a responsible way. 3. Should each MS implement its own initiatives and legislation? 4. What is/should be the role of the EU? 5. What should the future of Due Diligence look like in Europe? <p>Main take-away to communicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many initiatives appearing. - Becoming an important political and trade policy topic. - We need to ensure that the process does not become cumbersome. - FTA best placed to help members understand these developments and promote their interests. 	All
3	Closing remarks	MP