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Press release | 10.03.2021

Businesses must be held accountable for human rights & environmental abuses

Due diligence & corporate responsibility

Today, the European Parliament will vote on an ambitious legislative initiative on corporate responsibility and accountability. The Commission is expected to propose a binding due diligence law for all companies operating in the European market by June. In its report, the European Parliament is calling for binding rules for companies that will have to identify and address risks to human rights, the environment and good governance, arising from activities throughout their supply chain. The European Parliament is also calling for increased transparency and the introduction of a civil liability mechanism and legal remedies for victims, and the prohibition of the import of products resulting from forced or child labour.

Heidi Hautala MEP, Greens/EFA Coordinator in the International Trade Committee, and the chair of the European Parliament's Responsible Business Conduct Working Group comments:

"Corporations must play their role in preventing environmental and human rights abuses. Today's vote is a substantial step forward for responsible business conduct and sets the benchmark for the Commission's proposal in June. The EU should be the world leader in due diligence and corporate responsibility. Human rights abuses, environmental and climate crimes must not end up on the European market as chocolate, clothing and mobile phones. Only through strong and binding rules for all companies operating in Europe can we bring an end to forced labour and child labour in the supply chain.

"It's clear that voluntary corporate initiatives are not enough. There must be a level playing field between companies. So long as we turn a blind eye to human rights violations in corporate supply chains, we reward those who evade their responsibilities. By setting a legal standard we can give responsible and sustainable companies a business advantage. The European Commission must include the Parliament's demands against unethical production conditions in the proposal for a European supply chain due diligence law. The Commission needs to guarantee access to justice for the victims of corporate malpractice."

More:
The final vote on the report on corporate due diligence and accountability will take place today.

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