



NOVEMBER 2013

Campaign action on company reporting and transparency

Introduction:

The European Union (EU) will soon adopt a directive requiring all large EU companies to provide non-financial information in their annual reports, which includes information on the human rights, social and environment impacts and risks of their activities throughout their supply chain. This will help to raise standards by putting in the public domain more relevant information about companies' impacts.

Purpose of the Action:

- To persuade key UK MEPs on relevant EU Committees to support a series of amendments, which will strengthen the proposed EU draft directive on non-financial reporting by companies

Timing of the Action:

- November 2013. Please ensure your letter(s) are either sent by post or emailed to the identified MEP(s) in your region on the list included in the background note, at the latest by 29 November.
- If possible it is recommended that you e mail your letter to the MEP so it does not risk getting delayed or lost in the post.

Targets of the Action:

- The targets for this action are UK MEPs with roles on the key committees discussing this proposal. A full list of the target MEPs is provided at the end of this document.

Action:

- To either send or e mail one letter signed by as many members of the local group as possible or each activist send or e mail an individual letter
- If you have an Amnesty Local Group letterhead, please use that if possible.
- The postal and e mail addresses for the key MEPs can be found at the following link - <http://www.europarl.org.uk>
Once in the link click on UK MEPs to take you to the information you will need.

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- The guidance sheet
- Background information
- MEP letter

GOT QUERIES OR WANT TO DO MORE?

Please contact:

Paul Eagle on 020 7033 1578 or by e-mail at paul.eagle@amnesty.org.uk

Download this action at:

www.amnesty.org.uk/resources

MONTHLY ACTION

Background information

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The European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ) promotes corporate accountability within the EU and brings together civil society organisations to influence regulatory processes. ECCJ, together with Amnesty International, has been campaigning for several years for the introduction of this type of reporting requirement. The European Commission (EC) estimates that at present, only 2500 out of the 42000 EU large companies formally disclose non-financial information, and much of the information provided is inaccurate, irrelevant and difficult to compare.

In May 2013, the European Commission introduced a draft proposal which if passed would require all large European companies to include human rights, social and environmental information in their annual reports.

ECCJ, with Amnesty's support, has drafted a series of amendments which if adopted will strengthen the directive and make it more effective. In summary, the amendments would:

- Clarify that companies must report on risks to human rights and the environment, not just risks to the company's bottom line
- Make sure that companies are obliged to report on human rights and environmental risks in their supply chains
- Ensure that companies have to report against key human rights standards and give specific information on their environment impacts
- Make sure that the European Commission produces guidance for companies on what and how to report
- Extend the scope of the directive to cover more companies
- Require Member State governments to properly enforce the legislation once it is transposed into national law

The priority amendments are on impacts and risks, supply chains and international standards.

Rationale for a campaign action:

We need to put pressure on key MEPs to both strengthen the directive (by supporting the proposed amendments) and to ensure its successful passage. The proposal will pass through the EU's ordinary legislative procedure, in which it will be considered by Member States in the European Council and by MEPs in the Parliament. Supporter actions targeting key MEPs would complement current CAFOD and Friends of the Earth actions aimed at influencing the UK Government's position.

Based on previous experience, we believe UK MEPs will respond well to being contacted by constituents on this issue. Letter-writing is generally felt to be more effective in influencing MEPs. But a recommended alternative would be an e mail to the MEP with an attached letter.

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Key points to make in your letter to your MEP:

We have provided a suggested letter for you to send or email to the MEP or MEPs in your region, listed in the table below. Please personalise the letter if you would like to. The letter emphasises some of the following points:

- European companies are global actors that touch the lives of people all around the world. They must be transparent about the impacts they have on people and the environment
- Companies consistently fail to report on the issues that matter – EU/governments need to take action to make sure that they are bound by a duty to report
- Companies must report on impacts and risks to people and the environment, not just risks to the company's bottom line
- Many of the worst impacts on people and the environment happen in company supply chains – requiring companies to report on these issues will mean that they have to find out what's going on in their supply chains and take action to raise standards
- Companies should be required to report against internationally recognised human rights standards and environmental targets and not be able to pick and choose what to report

Timescale of action and process:

Based on current timetables there will be a window of opportunity to lobby the target MEPs in November. A vote takes place on the proposals, including any amendments in early December.

The amended proposals then become the basis of negotiations between the Council, European Parliament and European Commission, a series of behind-the-scenes discussions designed to achieve a compromise position which is acceptable to the various parties. The final compromise agreement from this process will be voted on in early 2014.

The approaching European elections in 2014 mean that time is of the essence. If the directive is not agreed by January or February, then it is unlikely to go through before the elections in May. While this does not necessarily mean the end of the proposal, it will significantly delay it and is likely to affect the content, as the make-up of the Parliament and the European Commission will change after the elections.

Allies:

Advocacy and campaigning on non-financial reporting is being led at EU level by ECCJ. UK work is coordinated by the Corporate Responsibility Coalition (CORE). Organisations involved include Friends of the Earth, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Amnesty International UK, Share Action, Save the Children, UNICEF UK, WWF UK, and the TUC.

The directive is supported by the World Business Council on Sustainable Development, the Association of Chartered Certified Accounts (ACCA) and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Coalition, a large group of investors and NGOs working on sustainability issues.

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Finding the postal and e mail addresses of your Region's MEPs:

The following link enables you to find both the postal address and e mail address of any of the MEPs you have been asked to lobby in relation to this action. <http://www.europarl.org.uk>

Key MEPs:

Name	Party & Group	Constituency / Region
Vicky Ford	Con (ECR)	Eastern
Richard Howitt	Labour (S&D)	Eastern
Bill Newton Dunn	Lib Dem (ALDE)	East Midlands
Mary Honeyball	Labour (S&D)	London
Dr Syed Kamall	Con (ECR)	London
Jean Lambert	Green (Greens/EFA)	London
Claude Moraes	Labour (S&D)	London
Fiona Hall	Lib Dem (ALDE)	North East
Stephen Hughes	Labour (S&D)	North East
Sajjad Karim	Con (ECR)	North West
Arlene McCarthy	Labour (S&D)	North West
David Martin	Labour (S&D)	Scotland
Alyn Smith	SNP (Greens/EFA)	Scotland
Catherine Stihler	Labour (S&D)	Scotland
Sharon Bowles	Lib Dem (ALDE)	South East
Nirj Deva	Con (ECR)	South East
Peter Skinner	Labour (S&D)	South East
Keith Taylor	Green (Greens/EFA)	South East
Giles Chichester	Con (ECR)	South West
Dr Kay Swinburne	Con (ECR)	Wales
Phil Bennion	Lib Dem (ALDE)	West Midlands
Michael Cashman	Labour (S&D)	West Midlands
Malcolm Harbour	Con (ECR)	West Midlands
Sir Graham Watson	Lib Dem (ALDE)	South West
Rebecca Taylor	Lib Dem (ALDE)	Yorkshire & Humber

S&D - Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

ALDE - Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe in the European Parliament

ECR – Group of the European Conservatives and Reformists in the European Parliament

Greens/EFA - Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance in the European Parliament