



European Coalition
for Corporate Justice



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Changing the rules
to make business
accountable

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Who we are

Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ) is the only European coalition bringing together European campaigns and national platforms of NGOs, trade unions, consumer organisations and academics to promote corporate accountability. The coalition is driven by a vision of a sustainable world in which corporations' drive for profit is balanced with the interests of society at large, and where businesses respect human, social and environmental rights. We seek to tackle some of the root causes of corporate injustice by improving European laws governing business activities.

Our Priorities

As employers, as well as providers of goods and services, companies are at the heart of everyday life. While some corporations voluntarily integrate human rights and the environment into their business strategy, some unscrupulous companies are responsible for some of the worst social and environmental harms, especially in developing countries. Yet they are not held accountable for the damage they do, in the absence of a legal framework outlining rules for corporate behaviour and recognising corporate liability. Our work seeks to address this situation by changing European laws to increase corporate accountability and transparency, and to ensure justice for the victims of corporate malpractice.

Accountability

We want to see clear rules for EU businesses to recognise their responsibility for their supply chains and for the activities of their subsidiaries. At present, complex corporate structures are used to shield companies from civil and criminal liability, encouraging irresponsible behaviour.



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Transparency

We think that companies should be required, as a first step, to identify and disclose the impacts that their activities, including through their supply chains, have on people and the environment. If the information is not available, it is difficult for governments, affected people, the general public, employees, consumers, investors, or even the company's own management to understand and address the impacts.

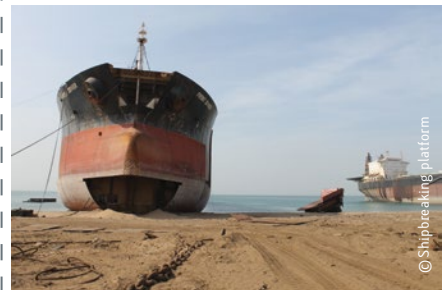
With 21 member groups who represent over 250 organisations from 15 countries, the European



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Justice for victims of corporate crimes

When communities and workers suffer harm because of the activities of European companies, they should be able to access justice in Europe if they are unable to do so in their own country. Justice for victims serves as a deterrent against irresponsible corporate conduct; when potential victims are able to assert their rights, corporate executives take environmental and social concerns much more seriously.

Need for regulation

Although voluntary initiatives can deliver results in some cases, regulatory measures are unquestionably necessary to ensure all corporations abide by nationally and internationally agreed standards. Legislation is the safety net protecting our fundamental rights from abuses.

What we do

ECCJ works as a catalyst, drawing on the expertise and experience of organisations across Europe to provide a united voice at the European level promoting the need for legal change. We carry out research with lawyers, academics and civil society organisations in other regions of the world to make the case for greater corporate accountability, identify and promote legal solutions to the gaps in governance created by economic globalisation. We played a key role in pushing for the legislation adopted in 2014 which requires large European companies to disclose environmental and human rights risks, and see this as an important step towards a coherent framework for corporate accountability in Europe.

CSR AND CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society (EU Commission, 2011). It is no longer a purely voluntary approach. “Responsibility” cannot be dissociated from “accountability” which is the ability of those affected by business practices to hold corporations to account for their impacts. Corporate accountability demands fundamental changes to the legal framework in which companies operate.

FACT 1

Companies have huge power that they can use for the common good: “58% of the top 150 economic entities worldwide, including states, are corporations (Global Trends report, 2012)”

FACT 2

Companies’ involvement in human rights and environmental harm is not marginal: “between 2005 and 2013, half of the companies listed on the UK, French and German stock exchanges have been identified in concerns or allegations about human rights-related harms (The Adverse Human Rights Risks and Impacts of European Companies: Getting a glimpse of the picture, 2014)”

FACT 3

It is in the interest of companies to act responsibly: “74% of Chief executives agree that measuring and reporting their total (non-financial) impacts contributes to their long-term success (PwC’s 17th Annual CEO Survey, 2014)”

FACT 4

Legislation action is part of the mix of solutions: “legal regulation and CSR are not necessarily in conflict. (...) Regulation is an important driver for some [CSR] issues.(CSR Impact Study, 2013)”



Our members

NeSoVe (Austria)
Gresea (Belgium)
Frank Bold Society (Czech Republic)
92 Group Forum for Sustainable Development (Denmark)
Finnwatch (Finland)
Forum Citoyen pour la RSE (France)
CorA (Germany)
ManiTese (Italy)
ForUM (Norway)
Centrum CSR.pl (Poland)
Observatorio de RSC (Spain)
Swedish Coalition for Corporate Justice (Sweden)
Swiss Coalition for Corporate Justice (Switzerland)
MVO Platform (the Netherlands)
CORE Coalition (UK)

EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS

Access Info

Corporate Europe Observatory
Friends of the Earth Europe
Karat Coalition
The Jesuit European Social Center

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme

Profit should not be at the expense of health, people or the environment

Shell in Nigeria

The UN Environment Programme has found that people in the Ogoniland region of the Niger Delta have been exposed to widespread oil pollution, causing severe health risks. Their 2011 report found evidence of previously unacknowledged pollution of drinking water supplies and fundamental failures in Shell's procedures for cleaning up oil spills. Communities in Ogoniland are still waiting for Shell to remedy the situation.

Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh

In April 2013, nine stories of concrete holding 5 garment factories in Bangladesh collapsed, killing 1,138 people and injuring over 2,000 more. It was the worst industrial accident ever to hit the garment industry. At least 27 global garment brands, including Kik, C&A and Primark were sourcing low cost garments from the factory.

Amesys in Libya

The company faces accusations of complicity in acts of torture after supplying surveillance equipment to the Gaddafi regime. Libyan citizens represented by FIDH Litigation Action Group and acting in the proceedings as civil parties argue that this allowed the regime to perfect its means of repression against its opponents and the population as a whole.

Anglo American in South Africa

Thousands of former gold miners who worked at Anglo American's mines in South Africa are now suffering from the lung disease silicosis, linked to excessive exposure to dust. The company has been accused of delaying payment of compensation to the former gold miners. The process has been so lengthy that several claimants have died before compensation was paid.

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