

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



Global and multilateral issues

Human rights
Head of Division

Brussels,
EEAS Global1 Ares (2017)

Dear Petitioner,

I would hereby like to thank you for your petition addressed to President Jean-Claude Juncker as regards Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and other business enterprises with respect to Human Rights.

The European Union is committed to the protection of human rights in the context of corporate activities. In this regard, the UN Guiding Principles (UNGPs) represent the most important framework. They express the consensus of governments, business, and civil society on how best to protect and respect human rights in the context of corporate activities. The European Union is fully committed to the UNGPs and is actively engaged in their implementation since their inception in 2011.

As regards a legally binding instrument on Business and Human Rights, the EU has carefully followed the preparations of the Inter-Governmental Working Group (IGWG) at the Human Rights Council and made its participation in the IGWG dependent on two conditions: 1) ensuring that the scope of the discussion is not limited to transnational corporations and 2) making sure that the implementation of the UNGPs is not undermined.

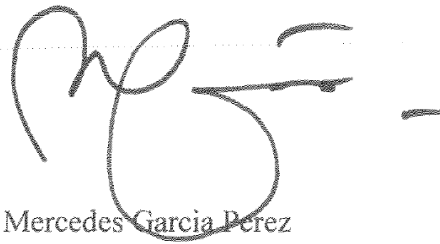
In the run-up to the meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group in October 2016, the EU has actively engaged with the Chair-Rapporteur, as well as all regional/political groups in order to address these issues. The EU is pleased that an agreement could be found in this regard with the Chair-Rapporteur of the IGWG and that discussions in the Group could cover all enterprises and not only transnational corporations. This is crucial because many human rights violations are committed by enterprises on the domestic level.

This agreement allowed the EU to attend and participate constructively in the works of the Group. The EU appreciated the open and constructive tone of the debate and the various qualified proposals and suggestions put forward by participants, in particular by Academia and civil society organisations. The EU gave its contribution to the debate and took note of all

suggestions. The EU also appreciated that attention was given to the much needed continued implementation of the UN Guiding Principles.

The EU will continue to provide its contribution to a steadily improving framework for the protection of human rights in the context of corporate activities, in close co-operation with civil society organisations.

Yours sincerely,



Mercedes Garcia Perez