



27 May 2018

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## **COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT**

Period covered: 27.05.2016-26.05.2018

Dear Sirs,

Acting on behalf of the Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business, I am pleased to express continuous support of the Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business for the UN Global Compact and its ten principles.

With this commitment, we renew our intent to advance these principles within our sphere of influence and will make a clear statement of this commitment to our stakeholders and the general public. We also pledge to continue our participation in the activities of the UN Global Compact where appropriate and feasible, through e.g. awareness raising and capacity building efforts; sharing our human rights and labour rights expertise with other organizations; and engagement in partnership projects, as well as participation in UN Global Compact Local Network Poland and involvement in specialized initiatives and work-streams.

### **Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business (PIHRB): Basic information**

Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business is an independent and impartial foundation offering advanced expertise in Human Rights and Business, labour law and relations, social unrest, stakeholder engagement and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

PIHRB aim is to advance Human Rights and Business/UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) implementation in Poland and beyond, by contributing through research and activities that influence the everyday practice of all market actors, policy and legislation development as well as educational activities, to improved respect for human rights and sustainable development principles in business context.

Convinced that only enhanced and open cooperation and interaction of all actors can result in most effective and fair solutions for all, PIHRB cooperates with all stakeholder groups, to:

- Raise awareness and improve business competencies in the area of human rights to help them understand what human rights are and how to respect them in everyday conduct



(e.g. presentations at business-oriented events, training, research, publications, workshops);

- Build capacity of NGOs and Trade Unions to enhance effectiveness of their actions in the area of human rights and business (e.g. workshops, research, publications, coordination of the CSR Watch Coalition);
- Provide support to the public administration in efforts leading to introduction of legislation and policies promoting and supporting responsible business conduct (e.g. contributing to the consultations, research, member of auxiliary bodies of ministers responsible for the economic development and economy).

PIHRB also undertakes educational and awareness raising activities aimed not only at the above-mentioned groups, but also at youth and students to ensure that the next generation is sensitized to those issues before entering the market (presentations at conferences, organization of seminars, educational events, projects, publications; cooperation with student volunteers, organization of internships).

PIHRB:

- contributes with its expertise to the work of the CSR and Sustainable Development Committee, an auxiliary body of the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development (since May 2018), and was contributing to the work of similar auxiliary body of the Minister of Economy (2014-2015);
- co-initiated creation of the CSR Watch Coalition Poland, to create a representative partner for government in the area of human rights and business.
- cooperates with UN Global Compact Poland providing it with advice on human rights and business; is a member of the UN Global Compact initiative;
- cooperates with international NGOs platforms like European Coalition for Corporate Justice, OECD Watch; as well as with recognized academic institutions.

Established in March 2014, the PIHRB is already recognized and highly appreciated in Poland and abroad for its activities and engagement in the field of human rights and business.

During the past 2 years PIHRB has conducted and was involved in a number of activities and projects supporting the ten principles and mission of the UN Global Compact, with the main focus of the activities being on the implementation of UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). The major undertaken activities and initiatives can be described as following:

### **PROJECTS AND EVENTS**

- **Improving the Performance of National Contact Points & Access to Remedy for Human Rights Disputes in Central and Eastern Europe** – PIHRB together with SOMO and in cooperation with the Frank Bold Foundation implements a three-year project funded by



the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aimed at improving access to remedy for victims of corporate abuses. The project duration: July 2016 – July 2019

- **SMART Project (Sustainable Market Actors for Responsible Trade)** – PIHRB is a member of an international research consortium that has been implementing the EU Horizon 2020 funded, three-year SMART project coordinated by the University of Oslo. PIHRB is contributing to the project with jurisdictional mapping of certain law areas in Poland and organization of the stakeholder oriented event on Sustainability in the Supply Chains. The project duration: March 2016 – January 2020
- **Cooperation with the export credit agencies** – in October 2017 and February 2018 PIHRB supported export credit agency in the area of verification of respect for human rights and labor rights in the supply chain in the shipbuilding industry.
- **The Valuing Respect Project: Developing Better Ways to Measure Business Respect for Human Rights.** PIHRB is a regional partner, together with The Center for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria in South Africa and ASEAN CSR Network, in an international project led by the Shift Project, whose goal is to improve the use of information and indicators enabling effective and credible assessment of the level of respect for human rights by companies.

These projects, in addition to a number of analysis, created a space, among others, for the organization of the events such as:

- May 2016: Workshop on *Building collaboration and confidence between NCPs and stakeholders in CEEL Understanding each other's challenges and building on opportunities*;
- May 2017: Workshops for the OECD National Contact Points from Central and Eastern Europe dedicated to the issues of building trust in the NCP complaints mechanism among stakeholders (Warsaw, Poland);
- May 2017: Presentation of an analysis by PIHRB expert on the implementation of the *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in the world* commissioned by the European Parliament, at the joint hearing of the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) and The *Committee on International Trade (INTA)* of the European Parliament (Brussels, Belgium);
- June, October 2017: Workshops for ICT enterprises on human rights and business (Warsaw, Poland)
- October 2017: International Stakeholder Engagement SMART conference “Sustainability in the Supply Chains”. The conference brought several new threads to discussion on this subject in Poland, showing, among others, good examples of actions taken by the state administration in the Netherlands or Sweden. The discussions highlighted the role of the public administration in ensuring respect for human rights, through introduction of



appropriate clauses in public procurement or conditioning of granting financial support or loan guarantees to companies from ensuring that they respect human rights, including employee rights;

- October 2017: Conference on the *Implementation of the National Action Plan on business and human rights* organized jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Development of the Republic of Poland and PIHRB. The conference created a space for the voice of civil society organizations to be heard at the stage of work on the schedule of implementation of actions indicated in the NAP on such key issues as forced labor, equal treatment, protection of whistleblowers, liability of Internet intermediaries, public procurement or increased protection of children in the tourism industry (Warsaw, Poland);
- December 2017: Workshops for NGOs and trade unions on practical aspects of using the NCP OECD complaints mechanism (Warsaw, Poland);
- December 2017: Open debate on *Economic interests and protection of human rights* co-organized by the European Parliament Information Office, PIHRB and the Institute of Global Responsibility (Warsaw, Poland);
- January – February 2018: Series of debates on Human and Business Rights organized by the Rzeczpospolita journal with merit support from PIHRB. A first cycle of debates in the Polish public space devoted to the issue of human rights in the context of business and state's commitment to ensure protection and respect for human rights by third parties, including enterprises. Debates were hosted by the Rzeczpospolita journal and video-streamed in internet. Summaries from the discussions formed articles published in the Rzeczpospolita online special section dedicated to Business and Human Rights, and in the printed supplement on this topic (28.02.2018).

#### **ADVOCACY / PUBLICATIONS/ ANALYSES/ CONFERENCES (examples)**

- **Active participation in the process of drafting the Polish National Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights 2017-2020** (adopted in May 2017 by the Polish government) through engaging on bilateral basis with public administration raising the need for the NAP development, coordinating the development of comments of the CSOs on the first draft of the NAP as well as through developing an analysis for the MFA on most effective way of engaging with the CSOs in the process.
- **Analysis “The implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights”** by Beata Faracik, President of Board of PIHRB published by the European Parliament in February 2017 and presented in May 2017 at the hearing of joint DROI & INTA Committee;
- **Basic analysis of the current situation in Poland regarding access to remedies in cases of fraud related to enterprises’ activities** developed by Frank Bold Foundation in cooperation with PIHRB and published as part of the PIHRB Report Series;



- a **32-page supplement on Business and Human Rights (in Polish) to the major issue of the Rzeczpospolita and Parkiet newspapers published in February 2018**. PIHRB provided merit support in developing the concept and content of the publication and gave patronage over the publication. This was the first publication on this topic in Polish journals;
- **Global NAPs portal**: PIHRB experts were commissioned by Danish Institute for Human Rights to develop large sections of the content of the portal dedicated to the National Action Plans, the official inauguration of which took place during 2017 UN Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva.
- Numerous commentaries, blog entries, articles concerning various aspects of the UNGPs implementation and its challenges.

The voice of PIHRB experts resounded at scientific conferences, in the country and abroad, including:

- **June 2016: Conference on Non-Financial Reporting in Poland**. During the conference, the Polish version of the most popular standard for non-financial reporting prepared by Global Reporting Initiative GRI G4 was presented and discussed in detail. PIHRB contributed with its merit expertise to developing the Polish version of the GRI.G4 standard.
- **November 2016: Oslo SMART week *Life-cycle based management and reporting for sustainable business***. During the conference, PIHRB contributed with a presentation on *Non-legal factors affecting the use of sustainable public procurement*;
- **December 2016: Roundtable on human rights and business**. PIHRB contributed with its expertise to the meeting organized by the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in the frame of the project organized jointly with The Polish Business Roundtable and forming part of the discussions with the public administration on the best ways to develop and implement the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights;
- **December 2016: *Business and human rights in Europe. Next steps in strengthening implementation and accountability. Stakeholder Workshop***. PIHRB participated in the Roundtable discussion panel on *Supporting Human Rights and Business implementation in Europe - Needs and Priorities* (Copenhagen, Denmark);
- **May 2017: Scientific Conference on the interpretation and application of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poland where PIHRB presented a presentation on employee rights in the context of management practices of Polish enterprises;
- **May 2017: Conference on *Procurement beyond price: Sustainability and CSR in public purchasing*** organized by the Center for Enterprise Liability (CEVIA), Faculty of Law of the University of Copenhagen where PIHRB presented an advanced version of the research paper on the non-legal aspects affecting the level of sustainability of the public procurement;



- **November 2017: Spring SMART Week at the University of Oslo** - PIHRB moderated the session devoted to the issues of international investment agreements and the possibility of incorporating into them the human rights aspects;
- **February 2018: Conference on Cross-sectoral cooperation as a way to socio-economic development** (Częstochowa, Poland) – PIHRB contributed by providing introductory remarks and moderating the whole day conference.
- **May 2018: SMART Symposium** - expert contribution to the academic research (Oslo, Norway)
- **May 2018: Valuing Respect Project expert consultations** (New York, USA)
- **May 2018: Seminar om aktsomhetsvurderinger knyttet til arbeidsforhold i verftsnaeringen** – PIHRB expert contributed with a presentation on labour rights and practical aspects of ensuring their spirit in practice at the event directed at the Norwegian investors (Ålesund, Norway)

In order to bring the issue of the EU Directive on non-financial information to the attention of Polish audience, PIHRB has also developed Polish subtitles for the film on this subject, developed within the framework of the ECCJ coalition. In addition, in order to support companies in the preparation for reporting non-financial information in the field of human rights, PIHRB also republished the Polish language version of the *Reporting Framework in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (UNGP reporting Framework), the only reporting standard in the field of human rights in full compatible with the UN Guidelines on Business and Human Rights, which is also fully compatible and can be used in a supportive way (which facilitates correlation tables) when reporting by other standards, such as GRI.G4 or SIN (Polish reporting standard). Finally, PIHRB has taken the patronage over selected initiatives and events that were meant to advance respect of human rights by companies

## **COOPERATION**

During the period covered, PIHRB has strengthened its cooperation with partners from Poland and abroad, including among others Frank Bold Foundation, SOMO, University of Oslo, Danish Institute for Human Rights, Cicero Center for International Climate Research, Fafo Foundation, ECCJ, ICAR, OECD Watch, Project Shift, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Better Regulation Watchdog or National Federation of Polish NGOs but also the Ministry of Development of the Republic of Poland, Ministry Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, the Information Office of the European Parliament in Poland and diplomatic missions of Sweden and the Kingdom of the Netherlands and local Polish municipalities.

After several years of informal cooperation with the **European Coalition for Corporate Justice**, PIHRB joined the coalition as a formal member, representing in it the CSR Watch Coalition Poland, which it continues to coordinate.



Polish Institute  
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Last not least, we are undertaking efforts to ensure that also our day to day operations have smallest possible impact on our surrounding, e.g. we try to reduce the use of paper for office purposes and use only eco- and recycled paper, also for printing publications despite higher costs.

We will continue to offer our expertise in order to undertake variety of initiatives engaging different actors, shaping strong partnerships and promoting mission of UNGC as well as support companies to build their capacity in sustainability by following the ten principles of the Global Compact.

Sincerely Yours,

Beata Faracik

President of the Board

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