



## Round Table Conference

### Child Labour and Corporate Social Responsibility: What the European Union should do

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2008

Time: 16.00 – 18.00 hrs

Hosted by: **Thijs Berman MEP**

Co-host: **Richard Howitt MEP**

Venue: **European Parliament Brussels**  
**ASP building, room 5 G 305**

**With introductions from Thijs Berman (MEP, vice chair Development Committee), Richard Howitt (MEP, PES rapporteur on CSR), representative of the European Commission and representatives of the campaign 'Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work'**

This Round Table, organised by the campaign 'Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work'<sup>1</sup> of the Alliance2015<sup>2</sup> will discuss and promote concrete public policies, including regulatory measures, by the European Union and its member states to eradicate child labour in the framework of corporate social responsibility.

Children's rights are human rights. Children have the right to be free from child labour and the right to education. But rights also imply that others have duties. While states have the primary responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil these human rights, it is increasingly recognized that companies and other non-state actors also have obligations to contribute to the realisation of internationally recognized rights.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.stopchildlabour.eu](http://www.stopchildlabour.eu)

<sup>2</sup> [www.alliance2015.org](http://www.alliance2015.org)

The European Parliament has frequently recommended to the European Commission and its Member States to adopt regulatory measures to curb child labour and other labour rights violations. These proposals have also come from civil society, including unions, NGOs and a number of companies.

However, there is a stalemate at present regarding the need to adopt regulation with respect to those elements of CSR that are directly linked to international laws and national legislation, such as on child labour. One should therefore 'unpack' corporate social responsibility again and determine that internationally agreed norms can not be left to 'the market' or the individual company to decide.

The 218 million children suffering from child labour in the world, of which the products are also consumed in Europe, are a dramatic illustration of the mismatch between the rights of the economically powerful and the rights of the child. Where regulations in other fields abound, including those regulating the rights of companies, children seem to be left to fend for themselves in the international market. That is absolutely unacceptable.

The Stop Child Labour campaign invites the participants of the Round Table to discuss which stronger measures are needed within the EU to ensure the implementation of internationally agreed norms and regulations on CSR and the elimination of child labour by EU companies. This will require a more actively engaged role of the European Commission and the EU Member States, for which the Stop Child Labour campaign has already formulated some recommendations:

- 1. Make a (child) labour impact assessment of trade and investment relation;*
- 2. Include plans to monitor and remediate child labour in EU agreements with developing countries where this practice is widespread;*
- 3. Work towards mandatory reporting and right to know on child labour;*
- 4. Declare a transition phase to move from reporting on child labour to mandatory implementation of a no-child labour policy;*
- 5. Create appropriate legal safeguards to prosecute EU based companies who violate (child) labour rights;*
- 6. Create a fair 'child labour free' public procurement policy;*
- 7. Combine any support given by the European Commission and its Member States to companies (trade missions, subsidies, export credit guarantees, studies etc.) is combined with the obligation that no child labour is used in the company or the supply chain;*
- 8. Make sure that subsidies for organisations that campaign against child labour are not treated as non-tariff trades barriers.*

Yours sincerely,

Jetteke van de Schatte Olivier  
International coordinator "Stop Child Labour" Campaign



## **Programme Round Table Conference**

### **Child Labour and Corporate Social Responsibility: What should the European Union do**

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ASP building, room 5 G 305

**16.00 – 16.15**

#### ***Opening speech***

**Mr. Thijs Berman MEP**

Vice-Chair Development Committee, Socialist Group,  
The Netherlands

**16.15 – 16.20**

#### ***Introduction to the Stop Child Labour campaign***

**Ms. Jetteke van der Schatte Olivier**

Chair of the 'Stop Child Labour' campaign

**16.20 – 16.30**

#### ***Stop Child Labour campaign's action plan on CSR***

**Mr. Gerard Oonk**

Director India Committee of the Netherlands and senior CSR  
advisor of 'Stop Child Labour'

**16.30 – 17.00**      ***Round of speeches***

**Mr. Sajjad Karim MEP**

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, sub committee on Human Rights, Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats, UK

**Representative of the European Commission**

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, or DG Aidco, or DG trade

**Ms. Ruth Casals**

Coordinator European Coalition for Corporate Justice Secretariat (ECCJ)

**Prof. Dr. Cees van Dam**

Visiting Professor at King's College London and Queen Mary University of London. Honorary Professor at Utrecht University.

**17.00 - 17.15**      ***First discussion round***

Questions and reactions

**17.15 - 17.30**      ***Key not address***

**Mr. Richard Howitt MEP**

Subcommittee Human Rights, Committee Employment and Social affairs, Rapporteur EP Resolution on CSR, Socialist Group, UK

**17.30 – 17.50**      ***Second discussion round***

To identify concrete measures by the EU to eliminate child labour in the framework of CSR

**17.50 – 18.00**      ***Closing remarks by Thijs Berman MEP***

***Working language is English***

