

BUSINESS & HUMAN RIGHTS PEER LEARNING GROUP



REPORT 2016

GROUP MEMBERS AND ACTIVITIES

Ten companies from Germany and Italy participated in the 2016 Human Rights Peer Learning Group, convened by the Global Compact Network Germany with support from management consultancy twentyfifty ltd. The participating companies represented the chemical, insurance, logistics, textile, pharmaceutical, extractive, technology and ICT sectors.

Two webinars and two meetings were held throughout 2016, including an exchange with more than 20 representatives from other European Global Compact Networks. The group members were actively involved in preparing the content and its delivery. They presented good practices, joint analysis or lessons learned related to the following topics:

GROUP MEMBERS' HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES

In 2016, participant activities addressing elements of human rights due diligence within their companies included:

- Corporate-wide high-level human rights risk and gap assessment
- Deep-dive supply chain assessment in several sourcing countries
- Assessment of an internal grievance mechanism against the UNGP effectiveness criteria
- Self-assessment of local risks and development of targeted mitigation plans at subsidiary level.

MARCH	Webinar Embedding human rights policy commitments through training and awareness-raising
JUNE	Meeting Human rights due diligence in the supply chain
SEPTEMBER	Webinar Aligning future business strategy with respecting human rights
NOVEMBER	Meeting Access to remedy in practice – understanding and improving your grievance systems European Peer Learning Group Exchange with members of the Spanish, Italian, Greek, Dutch, UK and German Global Compact Networks at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

In addition to participant contributions, speakers from the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, external company representatives and experts shared experiences and contributed to thematic discussions with the group members. Global Compact Network Germany and twentyfifty supported the preparation, facilitated discussions and exercises and provided updates on key trends and developments related to business and human rights.

"By presenting our current grievance mechanisms to the group and receiving high value feedback from the participants, we have been able to identify gaps, to adjust our practices and reinforce our good practices"

Member of the Peer Learning Group

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LESSONS LEARNED

Insights gained this year on member companies' practices and challenges included:

SUPPLY CHAIN DUE DILIGENCE

- Most companies are working on the strategic integration of human rights due diligence in their supply chain management. A risk-based approach and corresponding prioritisation of measures has an important preventive function and can result in more efficient resource use - e.g. focusing audits on topics/risks where they are likely to be effective in identifying risks or non-compliances (e. g. health and safety) whilst adopting a different approach for more systemic human rights risks (e. g. related to freedom of association, discrimination).
- Some participant companies have set up pilot projects to build the capacity of suppliers and/or increase supply chain transparency in certain regions or for certain high risk supply chains. Most have applied a mix of risk and feasibility factors when choosing where to deep dive first.
- For effective integration, sustainability needs to become "part of the DNA" of sourcing and buying teams. Training, engagement at senior level and integration of social performance KPI in reward mechanisms or job descriptions are possible measures to incentivise further integration.

"Based on the knowledge imparted in the meetings of the learning group and the bilateral discussions with other learning group members, I drafted a human rights policy statement which was adopted by our executive committee."

Member of the Peer Learning Group

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS

- Companies are pursuing a diversity of approaches to improve their corporate and local grievance systems: Many start by mapping their corporate grievance channels against the UNGP effectiveness criteria to identify gaps and opportunities for alignment; some focus on strengthening local trade unions and cooperate with global trade unions in that context; others offer different grievance channels for different settings and countries to account for local cultural and legal differences.

NEXT YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

Meetings and webinars in 2017 will enable continued joint learning via an ongoing exchange on participants' implementation activities as well as current business and human rights trends. Group participants have paired up to prepare meetings or webinars about the following topics:

- Modern slavery due diligence
- Integration of human rights due diligence in human resources management
- Human rights due diligence at subsidiary/ production site level

INFO

About the Peer Learning Group

The Human Rights Peer Learning group is an active learning and leadership platform for European companies hosted by the Global Compact Network Germany.

In the group, individuals tasked with steering human rights due diligence processes within their business come together to exchange their experiences, discuss challenges they face and learn from each other on how to overcome barriers to implementation.

Group meetings are held under the Chatham House Rule to allow for an open and honest exchange among practitioners. Group members are free to communicate publicly about their involvement and some – Deutsche Bahn, Merck, Munich Re and Telecom Italia – choose to do so.

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