

Press release of the Belgian National Contactpoint (NCP) responsible for the follow up of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

The OECD Guidelines for multinational Enterprises are governments recommendations to their enterprises, wherever they operate.

These recommendations concern a variety of areas such as disclosure of information, employment and industrial relations, environment, combating bribery, consumer interests, science and technology, competition and taxation. Moreover, the concept of sustainable development has been introduced.

The implementation of the Guidelines relies upon the National Contactpoints, responsible for the follow-up.

In Belgium the National Contactpoint (NCP) is chaired by a representative from the Federal Public Service of Economy and has a three-pillar structure encompassing social partners and representatives from different federal public services as well as regional governments.

The role of the NCP is to contribute to resolving issues raised in specific instances. The NCP will facilitate access to consensus-oriented , non-conflictuous means such as conciliation and mediation.

On March 27 2009, the Belgian National Contactpoint received, a specific instance from Greenpeace India to examine the possible non-compliance of some OECD Guidelines for multinational enterprises by Dredging International as regards their activities in the Dhamra Port Project in India.

The report, as presented by Greenpeace India, mentions the fact that Dredging Int. did not analyse thoroughly enough the environmental questions e.g. biodiversity, and did not address the issue of the precautionary principle toward ecological valuable areas and does not contribute to sustainable development.

In conclusion :

After a thorough evaluation of the file, the NCP reached the following conclusion. Neither the Belgian authorities nor Dredging Int. have been involved in the inception of the Dhamra Port.

The Belgian NCP recognizes the strong concerns of Greenpeace India regarding the development of the Dhamra Port in this ecologically vulnerable area.

The Belgian Company however took every possible measures to execute the dredging works in a correct and environment-friendly way. An additional environmental study of the dredging works has been produced which recommendations were followed up. In this regard, the presence on a permanent basis of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) on board of the ship is also a guarantee.

We recommend therefore that Greenpeace India's request to stop the further development of the Dhamra port should be seriously taken into consideration by the competent authorities.

The request to the company to keep on following the necessary due diligence procedure for all projects in the future was welcomed positively.

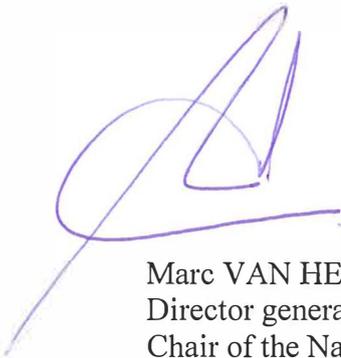
The principle not to engage in activities in ports or future ports within a radius of 25 km from ecologically vulnerable areas has to be taken seriously by the competent authorities.

Therefore, we ask the authorities to take these recommendations into consideration and include these in their tenders.

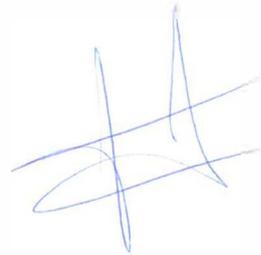
Belgium engages itself to put this general contractual principal on the agenda of the different OECD ad hoc working groups.

For all its future projects, the company is required to contact the local NGOs in order to detect any possible problems from the initial stage on..

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