



***International Conference
Business and Human Rights:
Corporate Social Responsibility***

Organised under project

Human Rights and Environmentally Responsible Business Practices

17 June 2025

Yerevan, Armenia

**DoubleTree by Hilton Yerevan City Centre
4/2 Grigor Lusavorich Street,**

"Parigi" Hall



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Background and objectives

This conference will explore the intersection of human rights, environmental considerations, and business operations, particularly in the context of the instruments provided by the Council of Europe and case law of the ECtHR. It will look into issues of foreign investment, the rights of businesses and the role of states in strengthening regulatory frameworks to ensure responsible business conduct while maintaining a fair and competitive economic environment.

A key discussion point will be the national implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), as recommended by the Council of Europe's Recommendation on Human Rights and Business. Member States are encouraged to review their legislation and practices to align with these principles, including developing National Action Plans (NAPs). Experiences from Belgium and the Netherlands can be explored in the light of coordinating the development of NAPs. The event will highlight best practices and challenges in implementation.

The discussion will then examine foreign investment and its human rights and environmental impact, with a focus on regulatory measures and due diligence requirements for businesses. The experience of countries such as France, Germany [tbc] can be looked into in this respect. States are increasingly expected to ensure that enterprises conducting substantial activities within their jurisdiction comply with human rights due diligence obligations. Additionally, trade and investment agreements should incorporate human rights clauses to mitigate and address adverse impacts. A particular emphasis will be placed on human rights and environmental impact assessment standards for investment projects with a special focus on relevant case law from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

Another panel discussion will be dedicated to protection of businesses, including an overview of the ECtHR cases on taxation and protection of awards in investor-state dispute settlement and discussions on the national situation.

This conference will serve as a platform for policymakers, legal experts, business representatives, and investors to engage in a meaningful dialogue on the evolving legal landscape governing business, human rights, and environmental responsibility, ensuring that human rights frameworks also respect and uphold the rights of businesses in a competitive global economy.

Target Audience: Corporate social responsibility (CSR) professionals, national authorities, Human Rights Defender, CSOs

This event is organised within the framework of a Council of Europe project [*“Human Rights and Environmentally Responsible Business Practices”*](#) funded by the Human Rights Trust Fund.

Programme

09:00 – 09:30 Registration and welcome coffee

09:30 – 09:45 Opening Session

Welcome Remarks /

Moderator: Mr Tigran Karapetyan, Head of Division, Transversal Challenges and Multilateral projects, Council of Europe

- Mr Mher Grigoryan, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia
- **Director General of DGI or Director DGI**, *video address*
- Ms Anahit Manasyan, Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia

Session I: BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

09:45 – 11:00 Sub session 1: International Framework and National Action Plans

- State obligations in Human Rights protection in Business Operations
- Council of Europe instruments related to human rights and business
- National Action Plans development and implementation: challenges and best practices in implementation

Moderator: Mr Tigran Karapetyan, Council of Europe, Head of Division, Transversal Challenges and Multilateral projects

Speakers:

- Ms Anahit Manasyan, Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia
- Ms Srбуhi Galyan, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Armenia [tbc]
- Ambassador Marieke Harriet Monroy-Winter, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Armenia
- Ms Eva Nullens, Human Rights Officer, Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs of Belgium
- Ms Anaïs Tobalagba, Ph.D., Senior Legal Advisor/ Natural Resources Lead, Beyond Human Rights Compliance
- Mr Sergey Ghazinyan, former member of CoE Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), [tbc]
- Mr Daniel Pap, Administrator at the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH), CoE

11:00 – 11:20 Coffee break

11:20 – 12:30 Sub Session 2: National Regulatory Frameworks

- Overview of national regulatory frameworks and remedies
- Belgian Representative.
- French regulation: *Loi de Vigilance* (Corporate Duty of Vigilance Law)
- German regulation
- Norwegian regulation

Moderator: Ms Anaïs Tobalagba, Ph.D., Senior Legal Advisor/ Natural Resources Lead, Beyond Human Rights Compliance

Speakers:

- Ms Elise Groulx Diggs, French lawyer
- Ms Eva Nullens, Human Rights Officer, Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs of Belgium
- Prof. Dr. Adam Sagan, M.J. (Oxon) Chair of Civil Law, European and German Labor Law
- Ms Nina Pirumyan, HRDO representative [tbc]
- Ms Tsovinar Vardanyan, Member of Parliament, RA [tbc]
- Ms Kristel Tonstad, Policy Director / Head of Secretariat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

Session II: FOREIGN INVESTMENTS: RESPECT AND PROTECT

13:30 – 14:50 Sub session 1: Human Rights and Environment Respect by Investors

- Foreign investments: view of national stakeholders
- Environmental Impact Assessment: standards in the ECtHR case law

Moderator: Ms Elena Yurkina, Council of Europe

Speakers:

- Mr Gevorg Papoyan, Minister of Economy [tbc]
- Mr Hakob Simidyan, Minister of Environment [tbc]
- Ms Anaïs Tobalagba, Ph.D., Senior Legal Advisor/ Natural Resources Lead, Beyond Human Rights Compliance
- Ms Natalia Kobylarz, ECtHR
- Ms Babken Tunyan, Member of Parliament, RA [tbc]

14:50 – 15:10 Coffee break

15:10 – 16:30 Sub Session 2: Human Rights protection in the context of foreign investment

- Taxation: overview of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights
- Investor-state dispute settlement

Moderator: Human Rights Defender

Speakers:

- Mr Daniel Pap, Council of Europe, Administrator at the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH), by video
- Mr Liparit Drmeyan, a.i. Head of Office of the Representative on Legal International Matters (the Government Agent), Republic of Armenia
- Mr Stephane Brabant, Senior Partner at Trinity International AARPI
- Ms Marie-Camille Pitton, Foreign investments disputes expert
- Ms Natalia Vorobyeva, Senior Lawyer, Registry of the European Court of Human Rights
- State Revenue Committee [tbc]

16:30 Closing Remarks

- Mr Maxime Longangue, Head of Yerevan Office, Council of Europe
- HRDO Representative [tbc]