

Press release
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FTA
Foreign Trade Association

EUROPEAN COMMERCE CALLS ON EU INSTITUTIONS TO SUPPORT VOLUNTARY INITIATIVES OF BUSINESS, NOT INTRODUCE MORE CSR LEGISLATION

During a workshop on a new CSR agenda for Europe, organised on June 9 at the European Parliament and chaired by the MEP and rapporteur on CSR, Richard Howitt, the Business Social Compliance Initiative - representing more than 550 European retail, brand and importing companies committed to improving working conditions in the supply chain of commerce - underlined that European institutions should rather focus on supporting existing initiatives than contemplating more legislation.

Many European businesses are actively engaged in voluntary schemes to improve their corporate social responsibility. The Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI), launched by the Foreign Trade Association (FTA) in 2003, is the leading business platform to improve social compliance in the global supply chain. The BSCI welcomes the European Institutions' increased efforts to drive the CSR agenda forward. However, any measures the EU takes in this regard must support European business in their efforts to scale up social responsibility. In particular legislative measures must not hamper the good progress of business' voluntary initiatives such as the BSCI.

"We would welcome the European Commission stressing to governments of emerging markets that European business can only successfully make sustainable improvements if the governments and other key stakeholders in these sourcing countries for European business also do their homework", underlined Jan A. Eggert, FTA's Secretary General, with regard to the workshop on a new CSR agenda for Europe. "The BSCI recognises that European business is responsible, but in a global economy, this is a shared responsibility", says Jan Eggert.

There are many challenges still to tackle, for example cutting down excessive overtime in production facilities in Asia, but this will only work with the support from sourcing markets, and the EU should help European business in getting closer to this goal.

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The FTA is the association for European commerce that specialises in foreign trade issues. It is committed to achieving its goal of a true free trade environment. For 30 years it has supported its members, consisting of national trade associations and companies from all over Europe, by providing expertise and up-to-date information and by campaigning on their behalf against protectionist measures in the European and international arena.

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