

# : Programme

## **sef: Policy Lunch**

### **Bridging the gap – How to reconcile the EU with a UN treaty on business and human rights**

**19 November 2019, 12.00-13.45 hrs**

#### **Brussels**

Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU  
Rue Montoyer 47, Brussels

**Conference language:** English

#### **Cooperating partner**



#### **Supported by**

Minister for Federal, European  
and International Affairs  
of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia



**#sefLunch**

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## BACKGROUND

In 2014, the United Nations Human Rights Council established the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. At that time, it seemed feasible to increase the accountability of businesses for the protection of human rights. Creating a binding UN treaty could enhance the access to effective remedy for victims of business-related human rights violations. In July 2018, the Working Group presented a zero draft of a legally binding treaty on business and human rights.

There has been strong support for such a treaty from developing and emerging economies. However, Western countries and entities including the European Union have shown scepticism towards a UN treaty throughout the negotiations. The European Union even disassociated itself from the conclusions of the working group reached at its fourth session.

During the fifth session in October 2019, the members of the open-ended working group will negotiate a revised version of last year's zero draft. The Policy Lunch will provide first-hand insights into the negotiations from observers and participants in the debate. How was the revised draft received by the advocates of a treaty and the sceptics? Does it show the way to close the gap between developing countries that support a binding treaty in opposition to developed countries? And with a newly elected European Parliament and incoming Commission, what role will the European Union play in the negotiations?

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**12.00 HRS**

**REGISTRATION AND LIGHT LUNCH**

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**12.30 HRS**

**WELCOME**

**Susanne Metzler**

Deputy Director  
Representation of the State of  
North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU, Brussels

**Dr Gerd Harms**

Deputy Chairperson of the Executive Committee  
Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

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**12.40 HRS**

**ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

**Dr Nadia Bernaz**

Associate Professor of Law  
University of Wageningen

**Kinda Mohamadieh**

Legal Advisor and Senior Researcher  
Third World Network, Geneva

**Luisa Ragher**

Head of Division EEAS Global.1 Human Rights  
European External Action Service (EEAS), Brussels

Chair

**Denise Auclair**

Senior Advisor  
Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la  
Solidarité (CIDSE), Brussels

Followed by discussion with the audience

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**13.45 HRS**

**END OF EVENT**