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Ljubljana conference on Business and Human Rights in Central and Eastern Europe: Good practices and Challenges

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Monday, 5 June 2023

.....
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.....
Jože Pučnik Lecture Hall

.....
Mestni trg 23, 1000 Ljubljana

**New University (ARRS Project on the Holistic Approach to Business
and Human Rights)**

Jean Monnet Module on EU Business and Human Rights Law

cordially invite you to a conference dedicated to the Business and Human Rights in Central and Eastern Europe. A detailed program of the conference is attached bellow.

The conference will take place at the New University in Ljubljana on 5 June 2023.

Please confirm your attendance at the conference no later than Friday, 27 May at: pr@nova-uni.si.

With best wishes,

Professor Jernej Letnar Černič

Faculty of Government and
European Studies, New University



**Sofinancira
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arrs

SLOVENIAN RESEARCH AGENCY



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Objectives of the conference

The conference on Business and Human Rights in Central and Eastern Europe explores the region's current regime for business and human rights. Only a little attention has so far been paid to business and human rights in Central and Eastern Europe. The region is one of five regional groups in the United Nations system. It is differentiated from the rest of the European states based on its shared history. The region's initial approaches to business and human rights have been scattered. As a result, the conference will fill the gap by discussing current challenges also good practices to reform domestic and international legal frameworks in corporate responsibility for human rights.

The central research problem represents a holistic approach to designing a theoretical and normative business and human rights regulation model by reforming domestic and international legal normative orders. Various experts agree that corporations must respect human rights (J. Nolan, E. George, S. Deva, L. Backer, J. Ruggie, D. Augenstein, and D. Kinley). However, the current business and human rights system has been inadequate, insufficient, and inappropriate in Central and Eastern Europe and international legal order since it needs to clearly establish a framework for corporate obligations to respect human rights and enforce corporate accountability. Therefore, in recent years, civil society has voiced concerns and argued to strengthen existing regulations by adopting binding corporate human rights obligations at domestic and international levels. This conference places itself in business and human rights, which requires a highly comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach as it was theoretically developed by leading experts such as S. Deva, J. Ruggie, D. Bilchitz, S. Leader, A. Clapham, R. McCorquodale, O. de Schutter, D. Augenstein and others.

The conference aims to incentivize policymakers and politicians to translate comparative experience within and outside Central and Eastern Europe to domestic systems. Most Central and Eastern Europe countries have not adopted National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights. Those states could, through peer learning, take up good practices from countries such



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as the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovenia to bring about reforms of state policies on business and human rights in their domestic systems. Companies in Central and Eastern Europe should develop similar initiatives in introducing human rights and environmental due diligence in corporate global supply chains and by submitting to mandatory due diligence laws and their supervision in domestic systems. This conference aims to respond to shortcomings in business and human rights as one of the most pressing problems in Central and Eastern Europe. As such, it will contribute to building and strengthening the capacity of business and human rights in the domestic system for rights-holders to enforce accountability for business-related human rights abuses.

The conference will critically investigate the shortcomings of the current domestic legal systems frameworks to develop a holistic theoretical and normative model for improving business and human rights regulation in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond.

The conference will occur on Monday, 5 June 2023, between 9:00 and 16:00 at New University, Mestni trg 23, Ljubljana, Slovenia.



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Conference: Monday, 5 June 2023

Program

Introduction: **Jernej Letnar Čerňič**, New University, Nova Gorica/Ljubljana

Panel 1: 9.15 – 10.45

1. **Business and Human Rights in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond: Good practices and Challenges**

Jelena Aparac, Legal Action Worldwide, Geneva

Ana Dangova Hug, INTER-PARTES Law Firm, Skopje

Beata Faracik, Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business, Warsaw

Chair: **Gorazd Justinek**, New University, Nova Gorica/Ljubljana



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10.45-11:00: Coffee break

Panel 2: 11.15 – 13:00

2. Business and Human Rights in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond: The Role of international Organizations and Businesses

Karin Buhmann, University of Southern Denmark/Copenhagen Business School, Copenhagen

Tanja Lindell, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, Belgrade

Siniša Milatović, United Nations Development Programme, New York

Julia Schellhaas, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Vienna

Petra Weingerl, University of Maribor, Maribor

Chair: **Katarina Vatovec**, New University, Nova Gorica/Ljubljana

13:00 – 14:30: lunch

Panel 3: 14:30-16h00



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3. Business and human rights in Slovenia

Ana Strojín Štampar, New University, Nova Gorica/Ljubljana

Bojan Žalec, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana

Rok Svetlič, Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana

Katja Triller Vrtovec, New University, New University, Nova Gorica/Ljubljana

Gregor Maučec, New University, New University, Nova Gorica/Ljubljana

Gorazd Justinek, New University, New University, Nova Gorica/Ljubljana

Chair: **Erazem Bohinc**, New University, New University, Nova Gorica/Ljubljana

16:00 Conclusions



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