




*Permanent Mission of Italy
to the International Organizations
10, Chemin de l'Impératrice
Geneva*

NOTE VERBALE

- 2542

The Permanent Mission of Italy to the Office of the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council Forum on Business and Human Rights and has the pleasure to forward an update on Italian initiatives aimed at promoting the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The Permanent Mission of Italy kindly requests the above information to be posted on the website of the Forum, and avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the HRC Forum on BHR the assurances of its highest consideration. 

Geneva, 29th November 2013



Secretariat of the Forum on Business and Human Rights
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

GENEVA

Italian initiatives on U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights promotion

1. Italy is currently finalizing the "Italian Action Plan on Business and Human Rights" according to the EU Commission's Communication N. 681 (2011). At present the Italian Action Plan Draft has assembled (under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) the written contributions originated by the following Italian Ministries: Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies; Ministry of Economic Development; Ministry of Economy and Finance; Ministry of the Environment; Ministry of Infrastructures and Transports; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. Mention should also be made of the Italian Public Administration School which expressed quite an active involvement in the exercise as far as human resources education and training are concerned.

Italy deems that the Action Plan and its implementation require a multiannual effort deserving an high and adequate political consideration. As a consequence, the Italian Public Administration has started the exercise through a careful analysis of the existing situation at institutional and normative levels so to individuate the strongest pillars on which to build the future sustainable flagship initiatives. The BHR Italian National Plan is currently being reviewed by prominent private sector and Civil Society organisations and deals with the following thematic issues felt as crucial by the Italian Public Administrations: agriculture; environment and sustainable development; labour and equal opportunities empowerment; State owned or controlled enterprises and economic operators in the privatized sectors; foreign direct investment and credit export; procurement; freedom of religion or belief; training activities for public human resources; access to remedy on State-based judicial and non-judicial mechanisms.

Before the end of the year, the Plan will be formally sent to the European Commission in Brussels.

2. The Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies has recently designated, upon request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an expert (Mr. Manlio De Silvio) to the important Council of Europe "Drafting Group on Human Rights and Business". The Group aims to elaborate:

- a) a non-binding instrument (in co-operation with the private sector and civil society and which may include a Good Practice Guide) addressing gaps in the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles at the European level (with adequate attention to remedial judicial access for victims of human rights abuses by corporates) to be submitted to the Committee of Ministers by 31 December 2015;
- b) a Declaration of the Committee of Ministers supporting the UN Guiding Principles. The text will be submitted to the said Committee by June 30th 2014.

3. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is proactively fostering a systematic and coherent reference to the U.N Guiding Principles on BHR within all the UN and

WB/IMF Institutions and -among others- the G-8 and the G-20; the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative; the KP Process Certification Scheme.

4. Italy is also pleased to inform that in the current month the "Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna" in Pisa (an internationally renowned academic body) has finalized an important scientific research: "Business and Human Rights: The Italian Case". The outcome document of the said research (which was commissioned by the Italian National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines) has been recently introduced at the Chamber of Deputies by the Deputy Foreign Minister, Honourable Lapo Pistelli, and the Under-Secretary of Economic Development, Mr. Claudio De Vincenti.

The document examines the adequacy of the Italian regulatory and institutional framework with respect to the new international standards in the BHR, identifying the strengths and weaknesses and putting forward specific recommendations on the steps to be taken. Moreover, it provides a BHR reference framework for companies wishing to move on to a responsible management within the existing regulatory context.

The foresaid event is a further demonstration that the human rights' issue is a political priority for the Italian Parliament.

5. Moreover, Italy wishes to stress that for 2014 further BHR awareness initiatives towards the Senate's "Extraordinary Commission for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights" and the Chamber of Deputies' "Permanent Committee on Human Rights" (established within the III "Foreign and European Community Affairs Committee") are under consideration.

6. We like also to underline that CSR Europe (the European Business Network for Corporate Social Responsibility) and Sodalitas Foundation (a prominent Italian ONG) organized yesterday an holistic workshop hosted by KPMG Italy in Milan focused on "Embedding human rights across departments". It was attended widely by a huge number of high-level representatives from the Italian business.

7. The Italian Society for International Organization (SIOI) and the research group "Human Rights and Economy" run by the University of Rome Tor Vergata will organize in Rome on November 28th a Seminar focused on: "Banks and Human Rights: a risk or an opportunity?". This exercise will be presented on the wake of the 2° United Nations BHR Forum in Geneva.

8. Last, but not least Italy wishes to inform that the "Inter-Ministerial Italian Committee on Human Rights" (which was temporarily suppressed) has been officially reinstalled. Its President is the Minister Plenipotentiary Gian Ludovico de Martino di Montegiordano. The Committee is based at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It will become a main Italian referee on BHR for the U.N. Secretariat in Geneva.