



Press Release: Companies pushing for Finland to adopt mandatory human rights due diligence legislation

#ykkösketjuun* campaign launched today

More than 70 companies, civil society organisations and trade unions are calling for a Finnish law on mandatory human rights due diligence. The campaign reminds politicians that Finland is being left behind in the global trend towards binding regulation on business and human rights.

“Many companies already implement human rights principles. Supply chain transparency and responsibility benefit both customers and suppliers. We have nothing to hide, and the same should apply to all Finnish companies,” says **Tommi Tervanen**, CEO of Kotipizza Group.

The #ykkösketjuun campaign sets out to promote a law that would obligate companies to map their human rights impacts and take steps to prevent and mitigate possible adverse impacts. Such a law would be based on the concept of human rights due diligence defined in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The responsibility for monitoring value chains should be shifted from customers to companies themselves.

“Nobody wants to knowingly buy products that support irresponsible business, but an individual consumer is powerless amidst various kinds of claims of sustainable or ethical company behaviour. Consumers must be able to trust that the products they are thinking of buying have not been produced by child or forced labour, or by any other means that violate human rights,” says **Juha Beurling**, Secretary General of the Consumers’ Union of Finland.

The #ykkösketjuun campaign calls for the law on mandatory human rights due diligence to be included in the legislative agenda of Finland’s next government.

“Human rights are a big deal and advancing them through binding regulation benefits everyone. Common rules on human rights create a fair operating environment for companies,” says Fazer Group’s Director on Corporate Responsibility **Nina Elomaa**.

Several countries including France, Switzerland and the Netherlands have already taken steps towards mandatory human rights due diligence.

“It is time for Finland to step up its game and follow the example set by many other European countries. We want Finland to be one of the forerunners of corporate social responsibility,” says **Sonja Vartiala**, Executive Director of Finnwatch, which is coordinating the campaign.

“Binding regulation on corporate responsibility would also increase the competitiveness of Finnish labour,” reminds **Jarkko Eloranta**, President of the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK.

The campaign calls on all members of the society to join forces. Parliamentary candidates as well as companies, civil society organisations and private citizens can join the #ykkösketjuun team on the campaign's website.

“The campaign brings together a large group of social actors as human rights are too important to be left to company discretion alone. We want everyone on board,” says **Irene Leino**, UNICEF Finland's Corporate Social Responsibility advisor.

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** 'Ykkösketjuun' is a Finnish term meaning 'to the first line' as in the lines in ice hockey. It also includes the Finnish word for 'chain' as in value chain, '(arvo)ketju'.*