

TOGETHER, WE MUST CARE FOR CREATION

A call from Faith Leaders for corporate accountability



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This press kit was prepared by the members of the CIDSE Corporate Power Working Group:



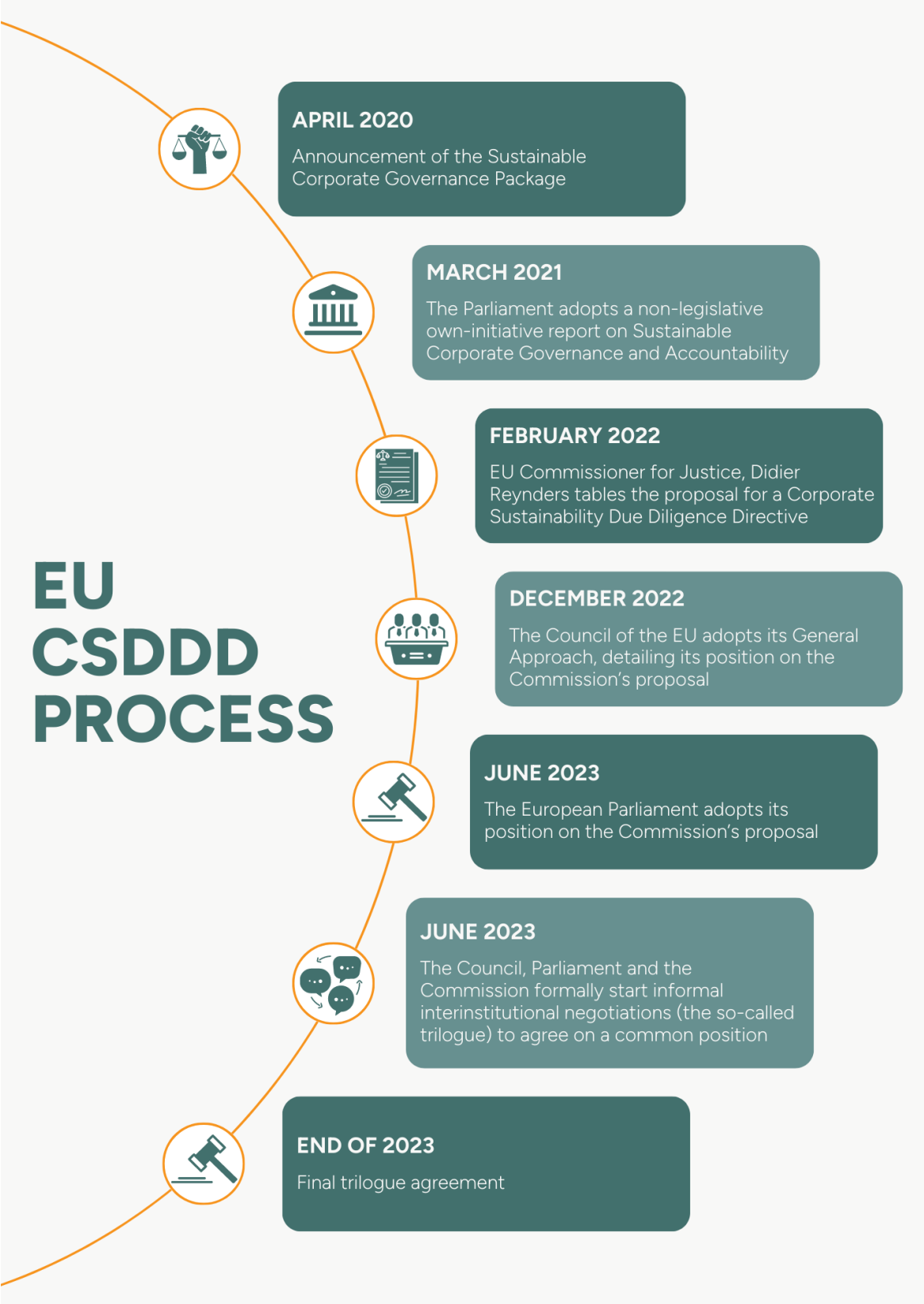
1. Background and Context

Civil society groups, trade unions, social movements and NGOs have been calling for laws mandating companies to prevent and remedy the adverse human rights and environmental impacts of their activities for decades. The international consensus on the danger of irresponsible corporate activities for people and the planet has resulted, over the last decades, in the adoption of voluntary standards such as the [United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) and the [OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct](#) for multinational enterprises.

These voluntary measures have largely failed in preventing grave abuses. From the [Brumadinho dam collapse in 2019](#), to the [Repsol oil spill in Peru in 2022](#) unregulated business activities have continued to pollute the environment and abuse peoples' and communities' rights. The recent rise of fast-fashion brands like Shein, amongst disconcert aimed at its labour practices, shows that we are far away from a world where business act in an ethical and sustainable way.

Such concerns inspired years of campaigning from civil society groups. CIDSE, its members and allies have been of the forefront of the ask for new mandatory laws for corporations in the EU. Civil society pressure led to the announcement in 2022 from EU justice commissioner, Didier Reynders of a package of measures to introduce mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence for companies. The main element of such package, the draft EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (EU CSDDD) was tabled in February 2022. Since then, both the Council of the EU and the European Parliament have adopted their positions on the file. The draft law is currently undergoing interinstitutional trilogue negotiations, which are expected to come to a close by the end of the year.

2. The Legislative Process



3. The Faith Leaders' Statement

The Faith Leaders' Statement comes out of years of engagement on the side of the CIDSE network, its partners in Africa, Latin America and Asia and the communities they work with. Our larger community of faith-based organisations has often been walking hand in hand with peasants, Indigenous People, women and other peoples affected by corporate abuse – providing space for hope and community organising.

An effective and strong legal instrument that can prevent corporate abuse and provide effective and timely remedy to victims has been a priority of CIDSE, its member organisations and a large part of our global Catholic family.

In 2020, more than 230 Catholic Bishops worldwide signed a [statement](#) calling for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence laws. Their asks were focussed on the rights and needs of local communities and of those affected, or at risk of being affected, by corporate abuse.

This [new statement](#) (also available in [ES](#) / [FR](#) / [DE](#)), signed by leaders of other faith groups, including many women signatories, renews the previous calls and adds more details. The recommendations focus specifically on the EU CSDDD proposal and are based on the experiences and plight of those affected by corporate abuse.

Quotes from signatories



"I am convinced that we need not only to protect Indigenous and other peoples from corporate abuses but all creatures – particularly in view of the rapidly increasing loss of biodiversity.

Even here in the Netherlands, communities – not only human, but also plant and animal communities - are threatened by the continuing pollution of the natural environment by large companies."

Kees Nieuwerth, Quaker, former President of the Council of Churches of the Netherlands



"This is a call to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. We must raise the voices of the grassroots and bring them to the table of decision-makers. It is important that we listen carefully a peasant leader from Apurimac, in Peru who asked: Do we have to die for our country to have money? expressing the feeling of many of those facing corporate impunity.

Do people have to die so that companies can make money without thinking about the planet and the people?"

Sr. Maamalifar M. Poreku, Executive Co-Secretary of the JPIC (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation) Commission USG and UISG



“Our land in Africa is threatened on a daily basis by corporate activities - often linked to businesses in richer parts of the world. We need the EU to assume its responsibilities and agree on a strong law.”

Most Rev. Stephen Dami MAMZA, Bishop of Yola (Nigeria)
President of SECAM Justice, Peace and Development Commission

4. The Asks to EU Policy-makers

1. The proposal should expand its coverage of environmental risks and impacts to account for the wide range of negative effects caused by corporations.
2. Legislators should remove barriers to justice faced by victims when seeking remedy for harm, and the civility liability provisions should be strengthened. The draft needs to address barriers to justice faced by victims and strengthen civil liability provisions.
3. Companies need to prioritise caring for the environment and take substantial action to address climate change risks and impacts. The current proposal falls short and undermines the urgent need for climate action.
4. The proposal must recognise the specific impact of human rights abuses on women and indigenous people, and involve stakeholders throughout the due diligence process as outlined in international standards.
5. Expand the Directive's scope to prevent harm: the Commission and the Council proposals only affect a small minority of EU businesses, leaving out Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) but also financial institutions and investors.
6. Protecting people and the planet globally requires action beyond the EU's borders. The EU and its Member States should actively participate in the ongoing negotiations for a UN Binding Treaty on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises.

5. Additional Resources

Cases and Resources



Repsol oil spill in Peru (2022) - Video also available in [IT](#) and [ES](#).

- [Remembering the victims of the Brumadinho dam collapse – CIDSE](#)
- [Human rights and environmental abuses by the Belgian company SIAT – CIDSE \(EN – FR\)](#)
- [From rights to reality – Ensuring a rights-holder-centered application of the French Duty of vigilance Law – CCFD-Terre Solidaire, ECHHR, ProDESC \(EN – FR\)](#)
- [Make responsibility mandatory on the example of iron ore imports from Brazil – DKA \(EN – DE\)](#)
- [“Repsol: ¡Hazte cargo!”: Peru is experiencing one of the worst cases of oil spills in its history – CIDSE \(EN – IT\)](#)
- [L’agroindustrie met le feu au Brésil – Entraide et Fraternité \(FR\)](#)
- [Global solutions to global problems – Why an EU legislation and a UN instrument on corporate accountability must be complementary – CIDSE, ECCJ, ECCHR, FIDH, FOEE](#)
- [Justice is Everybody’s Business campaign](#)

CIDSE’s positions and Statements

- Policy Brief: [Raising the Stakes for People and the Planet – CIDSE](#)
- Joint Open Letter : [Ensuring a gender-responsive and effective Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence legislation – CIDSE](#)
- Press Release: [Catholic civil society organisations welcome the European Parliament’s position on the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence directive – CIDSE](#)
- Press Release: [EP vote on EU CSDD Directive – CIDSE](#)

6. About CIDSE

CIDSE is an international family of Catholic social justice organisations. We work with global partners and allies to promote justice, harnessing the power of global solidarity to achieve transformational change for people and the planet. We challenge systemic injustice and its destructive impacts through connecting, mobilising, influencing and telling stories of change. We promote environmentally and socially just alternatives to allow everyone to thrive in our common home. CIDSE's work is guided by Catholic Social Teaching and Gospel values.

CIDSE's work promotes food sovereignty and land justice, addresses impunity and corporate power and explores the relationship between energy and extractivism, all the while striving for a model of sufficiency. We take a systemic approach to our thematic work, with a focus on human rights, decolonisation, feminism, climate and biodiversity justice, as well as on challenging prevailing economic and political systems and exploring alternatives.

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