



## AGENDA

### 3rd UN Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

10-11 November 2022

07:00 - 15:30 Central European Time (CET) | 9:00 - 17:30 Istanbul Time

Interpretation available in Russian and English

Istanbul/Online ([registration link](#))

### About the event

In 2011, the UN Human Rights Council unanimously endorsed the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), which have strengthened its position as the authoritative global framework on business and human rights (BHR) and provide a fundamental basis for governments and businesses to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, implementation of the UNGPs in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECIS) region remains uneven. The numerous crises in the region further complicate the effective implementation of the Guidelines. The current situation imposes additional responsibilities on both authorities and companies to comply with internationally recognized human rights standards and corresponding constitutional guarantees in times of conflict. The UNDP scoping study on the state of implementation of the UNGPs on business and human rights in Europe and Central Asia, which will be presented during the event, addresses some of these challenges and seeks to identify current trends and key developments in the region. One of the main issues in this context is the responsibility of companies to conduct heightened human rights due diligence (hHRDD) in times of crisis.

**The 3rd UN Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia will take place on 10-11 November 2022 in Istanbul (in a hybrid format).** The event is organized by UNDP, the UN Working Group on BHR and other partners. This is the annual UN meeting which follows the [1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Forums on Business and Human Rights](#) held in 2020 and 2021 and seeks to serve as the ECIS BHR regional platform that allows exchanges among the ECIS countries about their experiences and challenges in advancing the business and human rights agenda. The platform gathers representatives of national governments, multilaterals, civil society, NHRIs, trade unions, academia, and businesses (of all kinds, state-owned enterprises, extractive industry companies, transnational supply chains and SMEs).

The 3rd UN Regional Forum will discuss the key challenges to the implementation of the UNGPs in the region, with a focus on the obstacles arising from the crises. These will include the development of laws and policies, the introduction and implementation of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) by businesses, and the role of the State as an economic actor in crisis decision-making. In addition, it will address key regional trends, challenges and

opportunities for the business and human rights agenda in the ECIS region, with particular attention to the implications brought by conflicts and other crises, including the war in Ukraine on the political, economic, and human rights situation in the region; upcoming EU's directive on HRDD, human rights protection in extractive industries, the role of trade unions, persistent discrimination and inequalities in business practices, and shrinking civic space for human rights defenders. The event will also explore views on the development of a regional roadmap for scaling up implementation of the UNGPs over the next decade.

**Forum format:** The Forum will be held in a hybrid format, with up to 50 persons participating in person and the remainder online on Day 1, 10 November 2022, between 07:00-15:30 Central European Time (CET)/09:00-17:30 Istanbul time (TRT). On Day 2, 11 November 2022, there will be an internal session for UN agencies on strategizing their work on business and human rights in the region (hybrid format) between 07:00-10:00 Central European Time (CET)/09:00-13:00 Istanbul time (TRT). The Forum will be hosted by UNDP and the UNWG in the offices of the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub. The virtual Forum will enable a mix between traditional panel discussions and more interactive sessions to allow the broader participation of all relevant stakeholders from the ECIS region and beyond.

## Draft Agenda

10-11 November 2022

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### DAY 1

**Thursday, 10 November 2022/Istanbul Time (TRT)**

**9:00 – 09:35** Registration and introduction of the Forum platform

**09:35 – 10:20** *High-Level Opening Plenary*

**Objective:** The opening plenary will set out the key global and regional business and human rights trends to be discussed in the 3rd UN Forum on Business and Human Rights for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. It will set out the challenges amidst the crises besetting the region while presenting the key challenges to be tackled in the region in the short and medium term. The session will feature a panel discussion that will frame the business and human rights work in the region in the context of key developments such as the wave of mandatory human rights due diligence legislation and policies in jurisdictions including the EU, Japan and beyond, the ongoing conflicts in the region, environmental degradation, concomitant citizens' movements, and others.

**Moderator: Robert Bernardo**, Governance and Peacebuilding Team Leader, UNDP IRH

#### Speakers:

- **Gerd Trogemann**, Manager of the UNDP Regional Hub for Europe and Central Asia
- **Elżbieta Karska**, Member, United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights, remote
- **Renate Hornung-Draus**, BDA Managing Director, Economic and International Affairs & IOE Vice-President to the ILO, remote
- **Tatyana Zinovich**, Director of Public Foundation "Center for Legal Policy Research", Kazakhstan, remote

10:20-10:35 Break

**10:35– 11:35** *Session I – Business and Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: the state of play*

**Objective:** To frame the discussion on the state of play to business and human rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, this session will feature the launch of the **UNDP Scoping Study findings on the Implementation of UNGPs in Eastern Europe and Central Asia**. The Scoping Study, conducted in 2021 and finalized in 2022 by a team of leading BHR academics and researchers in the region, sets out the key trends in, and challenges to, the BHR agenda in the region. It will be followed by a discussion on key regional challenges, the multitude of crises present in the region and the opportunities presented for accelerating the business and human rights agenda.

**Moderator:** **Ainura Bekkoenova**, Policy Specialist, Rule of Law, Human Rights and Security, UNDP IRH

**Speakers:**

- **Beata Faracik**, LL.M., BHR Expert, President of the Board of the Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business
- **Olena Uvarova**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Chair of the International Business and Human Rights Lab, Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University, Ukraine
- **Jernej Letnar Čerňič**, Professor of Constitutional Law & Human Rights, Ljubljana, Slovenia

**Discussants:**

- **Maryna Saprykina**, Sustainability Consultant/ Head of the Board for CSR Ukraine
- **Çiğdem Çımrın**, Ph.D., Co-Founder & Chairperson at Minerva Business and Human Rights Association, Türkiye

11:35 – 11:50 Break

**11:50 – 13:00** *Session II - Mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence (mHRDD) developments in the EU and beyond: The implications for Eastern Europe and Central Asia*

**Objective:** In its Roadmap for the Next Decade of Business and Human Rights, issued in November 2021, the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights urged countries to “seize the wave” of mandatory human rights due diligence, which has principally been generated by countries in the European Economic Area (EEA), such as the Netherlands, Norway, Germany and France. Following their adoption of mHRDD laws, the EU itself issued its draft Mandatory and Environmental Human Rights Due Diligence Directive in February 2022. In addition, the Government of Japan recently issued its own draft guidelines on the subject, demonstrating that companies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia wanting to do business in, or with, major markets will increasingly have to introduce HRDD in their operations. This session will explore the principal implications of this trend for governments, businesses, workers and other regional stakeholders.

**Moderator:** **Nicolaj Sonderbye**, Senior Democracy and Human Rights Advisor, UNDP IRH

**Speakers:**

- **Robert McCorquodale**, Member, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, remote

- **Salome Zurabishvili**, Chair, UN Global Compact, Regional Network Council for Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- **Julia Schellhaas**, Senior Adviser Procurement & Supply Chains, Office of the Special Representative & Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, OSCE
- **Katarina Sætersdal**, Assistant Director International Department in the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise, remote
- **Daisuke Takahashi**, Officer, Business and Human Rights Lawyers Network Japan / Partner Attorney, Shinwa Law, Tokyo, remote
- **Mehmet Gün**, Founder and Chairman at the Better Justice Association; Founder Gün + Partners Law Firm

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

**14:00 – 15:10 *Session III – Heightened Human Rights Due Diligence (hHRDD): unpacking the responsibilities of businesses in conflict-affected contexts***

**Objective:** Eastern Europe and Central Asia are home to a number of ongoing and protracted conflicts. Businesses and states have heightened responsibilities in conflict-affected contexts; chief among these is the responsibility of businesses to carry out hHRDD. In June 2022, the UNWG and UNDP issued a Guide on hHRDD; this session will unpack what this responsibility entails – and what it will require from businesses, states, the UN and other stakeholders.

**Moderator:** **Robert McCorquodale**, Member, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, remote

**Speakers:**

- **Siniša Milatović**, Ph.D., Business and Human Rights Specialist, UNDP
- **Heidi Hautala**, Vice-President, EU parliament, remote
- **Olena Uvarova**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Chair of the International Business and Human Rights Lab, Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University, Ukraine

*Discussants:*

- **Ella Skybenko**, Senior Researcher & Representative for Eastern Europe & Central Asia, Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, remote
- **Ashley Reynolds**, Associate, Office of the Economic Advisor, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), remote

**15:10-16:00 *Session IV –The responsibilities of states and businesses in alleviating the consequences of crises in Eastern Europe and Central Asia***

**Objective:** Eastern Europe and Central Asia have been beset by myriad crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, and ongoing armed conflicts. This session will highlight the consequences of these crises, including **widespread joblessness, increasing poverty levels, outflows of refugees and migrants**, and so on. It will further examine the responsibilities of states and businesses in this regard under the framework of the UNGPs and consider what steps should be taken by these and other actors to alleviate these consequences.

**Moderator:** **Mindia Vashakmadze**, Human Rights Programme Specialist, UNDP IRH

**Speakers:**

- **Ben Slay**, Senior Economist, Regional Bureau for Europe and Central Asia, UNDP
- **Kate Watters**, Director, Crude Accountability, remote
- **Olena Kolobrodova**, Representative on Social and Economic Rights, Ombudsperson's Office, Ukraine, remote
- **Askat Azarbekov**, Chief of Staff, Ombudsperson's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic

16:00 – 16:20 Break

**16:20-17:20 Session V – The path to a regional Roadmap in Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

**Objective:** Following the launch of the UNGPs 10+ Roadmap of the Next Decade on Business and Human Rights in November 2021, the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights is aiming to develop regional roadmaps. As part of this process, this session will be used to consider stakeholder perspectives on the path forward on the implementation of the UNGPs in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

**Moderator: Maria Garcia Torrente**, Human Rights Officer, Secretariat of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights, OHCHR

Speakers:

- **Ana Dangova Hug**, BHR Lawyer, Law firm INTER PARTES Skopje, North Macedonia
- **Sergey Solianik**, Coordinator of Eco-China Info, Kazakhstan, remote
- **Anna Liubyma**, Director of the International Cooperation Department of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ukraine, remote
- **Rashad Novruzov**, Head of civil and political rights protection sector, Ombudsperson's Office, Republic of Azerbaijan

The way forward - **Beata Faracik**, LL.M., BHR Expert, President of the Board of the Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business

**17:20 - 17:30 Closure of the Forum**

- **Ekaterina Paniklova**, Regional Programme Coordinator, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub

**DAY 2**

**Friday, 11 November 2022/Istanbul Time (TRT)**

**09:00 - 13:00 Session VI – Session for UN agencies and partners on business and human rights (offline)**

**Objective:** This session will provide an opportunity for UN agencies and their partners active in business and human rights to strategize on possible joint programming, build their capacities on chosen topics, such as human rights due diligence, and to engage in peer-learning.

**Deep dive into the concept of UNGPs on BHR (1 hour)**

- **Maria Garcia Torrente**, Human Rights Officer, Secretariat of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights, OHCHR
- **Siniša Milatović**, Business and Human Rights Specialist, UNDP

10:15 – 10:30 Coffee break

10:30 – 12:00 **Group work** to identify priorities for action in the region, challenges and opportunities for stakeholders to deliver on the priority areas and map needs for support by the Working Group on BHR, UNDP and OHCHR in assisting stakeholders in their efforts to deliver on the priority areas.

- 3 groups (divided per Turkish, Russian and English language speaking)
- 3 questions (1) priorities for action in the region, 2) challenges and opportunities for stakeholders to deliver on the priority areas and 3) needs for support

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00– 13:30 **Briefing on communications for special procedures** (for civil society and NHRIs only)

- **Maria Garcia Torrente**, Human Rights Officer, Secretariat of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights, OHCHR

13:30 – 14:30 **An internal session for UN staff** (strategize on further actions for joint programming and R&M)

- **Exploring BHR donor interest in the region** – IRH Partnership + Inclusive Growth Sections
- Strategizing on the next steps at regional and national levels