



Challenges of Corporate Sustainability and Due Diligence ***Workshop, 23 September 2024***

On September 23, 2024, the Connecticut/ Baden Württemberg Human Rights Research Consortium hosted an all-day workshop on the “Challenges of Corporate Sustainability and Due Diligence” involving representatives of German federal and state government, businesses, NGOs, and law firms involved in related work, together with US and European academics from variety of disciplines.

The convening took place at the Harnack Haus of the Max Planck Society in Berlin, Germany, and followed the Chatham House Rules. This meant that representatives agreed to take part in an off-the-record exchange aimed at fostering robust dialogue and building a community of shared practice on these issues, partly in anticipation of a more public conference the Consortium will host at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies on broader human rights issue in June 2025: [Human Rights in the Balance: Safeguarding Social and Environmental Sustainability](#).

Our aim at the Harnack Haus workshop was to explore how different parties have experienced the unfolding of a wave of new legal developments – including the emergence of the German Supply Chain Act, the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). We paid particular focus to the implications for human rights protection at the local level in global supply chains.

This was a room of leading practitioners with decades of combined experience: people who have managed complex business and regulatory challenges and/or have built popular awareness of labor and environmental rights impact through grassroots advocacy networks spanning increasingly complex global supply networks. There was bound to be some disagreement on the scope, form, nature and/or consequences of the new laws and their potentially unintended consequences. But there were also moments of shared interest in finding new ways to measure impact, new cases of potential best practice, new forms of exchange (like the workshop itself) for sharing ideas and forging connections with people beyond one’s own professional arena tasked with advancing work in this domain.