

Implementing International Framework Agreements on Corporate Social Responsibility within Multinational Companies: The Involvement of Local Actors Matters¹

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Abstract

International framework agreements in the field of corporate social responsibility benefit from a greater legitimacy than unilateral codes of conduct and are more likely to be effectively implemented. They may thus complement the existing labour law standards, in particular within multinational companies and global supply chains. However, given the lack of a legal framework for transnational collective bargaining, these agreements may not be considered as collective agreements as defined by national labour laws and are not legally binding. Their added value thus depends on the active involvement of the local managers and workers' representatives and the development of a collective ownership of the agreement among these local actors.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the role of local managers and workers' representatives in the negotiation and the implementation of an IFA and to suggest an analysis grid of these practices. This paper is based on an exploratory study of the local implementation of the agreement on corporate social responsibility negotiated in January 2005 between the French EDF Group, four global union federations as well as all major national trade unions in the countries where the group develops its economic activities.

Key words:

International framework agreements – transnational social dialogue – social regulation

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