



European companies in indigenous
territories of Latin America: from conflict
to understanding through Prior
Consultation

Public Hearing at the European Parliament
February 9, 2017

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EVENT

The presence of European companies in indigenous territories of Latin America has grown in recent decades in parallel with **the development of international standards for the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples**. Similarly, the EU's commitment to the rights of indigenous peoples and to the integration and respect of human rights in business has continued to evolve consistently with its firm commitment to the promotion of human rights in the world and the protection of vulnerable groups. The Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean in Support of the UN Global Compact and the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation have for years been committed to the rights of indigenous peoples through the promotion of the **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Global Compact Initiative**. For several years, they have jointly collaborated in **promoting the implementation of the right to prior, free and informed consultation of indigenous peoples** in projects promoted by companies as a mechanism to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples and as a tool for construction of a multi-sectoral dialogue.

The initiative to organize a public hearing comes as a result of **the interest of several MEPs including Ramón Jáuregui and D^a. Beatriz Becerra** who want to launch a parliamentary debate on how various European actors and companies are respecting the right to prior, free and informed consultation of indigenous peoples in the development of projects within their territories and on how to European institutions can promote the respect for this right. In this sense, the public hearing aims to analyse how **European companies with a presence in Latin America** relate to the indigenous communities where they operate and in a more specific way how their activity is affecting, in one way or another, the exercise of the right to prior consultation of indigenous peoples.

In addition, the public hearing also intends to take into **account the role of member state and European institutions responsible for legislating corporate and human rights issues** and relations between Europe and Latin America, with the aim of generating a **real debate** on the difficulties faced by different actors in addressing the establishment of a foreign company in territories belonging to indigenous communities. Major factors that directly affect the exercise of human rights will be addressed such as: public and private sector collaboration, investment needed to tackle the issues, impact on local legislation, and the need to turn processes into binding agreements.

2. EVENT OBJECTIVES

The public hearing has the following objectives:

1. **Analyse relations** between European companies and indigenous peoples in Latin America, with a special focus on the implementation of prior consultations and generate a dialogue around experiences and proposals to improve these relations.
2. **Define proposals and recommendations** on the role that EU institutions and member states can play in promoting the respect for the rights of indigenous peoples when European companies develop projects in their territories.

3. METHODOLOGY

A **participatory methodology** between the speakers and the public attending the event is expected. The duration of the event has been planned over the course of 3 hours so that there can be an important space for dialogue and exchange.

The timing of the sessions has been divided into three main parts. The event will be opened with introductory remarks from MEPs Ramón Jáuregui and D^a. Beatriz Becerra. A second part will include various presentations by experts in the field, indigenous experts with diverse positions in the United Nations, European cooperation agencies and companies operating in indigenous territories in various countries of Latin America. The final part will be an open dialogue with all participants in the public hearing.

The event aims to attract MEPs from various committees, representatives of European institutions and member states, representatives of European social organizations working with indigenous peoples, European and Latin American business organizations, and European and Latin American companies operating in Indigenous territories.

4. PUBLIC HEARING PROGRAM - FEBRUARY 9, 2017

9:00h Reception and accreditations. Room ASP 3G-2 at the European Parliament's headquarters in Brussels (Rue Wiertz / Wiertzstraat 60).

9: 10h Opening and Welcome.

Mr Ramón Jáuregui, President Committee on EU-Latin America relations.

Mrs. Beatriz Becerra, Vice-President Committee on Human Rights.

9: 30h Indigenous peoples and businesses. Recommendations for guaranteeing rights and Prior Consultation in business projects.

Diana Chávez, Director of the Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean in Support of the UN Global Compact. Reflections on the implementation of previous consultations from the experiences of the Regional Centre of Support to the UN Global Compact for Latin America and the Caribbean. 10 minutes.

Mikel Berraondo, International expert on the rights of indigenous peoples. Coordinator of the Prior Consultation, Governance and Business in Latin America project, promoted by AECID, SEGIB and the Regional Centre. European instruments for the promotion of indigenous rights in business projects. 10 minutes.

Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, The role of European cooperation agencies and European cooperation instruments in the promotion of indigenous rights and business projects consistent with human rights. 10 minutes.

Vicky Tauli Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Leader of the Philippines. Recommendations to promote from the European Parliament and the European institutions respect for indigenous rights in the actions of European companies. 15 minutes.

Álvaro Pop, Member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of the United Nations. Indigenous Leader of Guatemala. The needs of indigenous peoples in Latin America for business projects to respect their human rights. 15 minutes.

European Enterprise, lessons learned from business projects respectful of the rights of indigenous peoples. 15 minutes.

Latin American Company, lessons learned from business projects that respect indigenous rights. 15 minutes.

11:00h Dialogue with participants.

12:00h Closing and cocktail.