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DIRECTORATE FOR FINANCIAL, FISCAL AND ENTERPRISE AFFAIRS
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**CONFERENCE ON THE OECD GUIDELINES FOR MULTINATIONAL
ENTERPRISES**

ANNOTATED AGENDA

(Budapest 16-18 November 1998)

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CONFERENCE ON
“THE OECD GUIDELINES FOR MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES”

Budapest 16-18 November 1998

AGENDA

Monday 16 November 1998

Registration: *afternoon 2.00 p.m.*

Opening Session (3 p.m.): Assessment of experience with the Guidelines

Welcoming remarks: Dr. Gábor Gulásci, State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Hungary

Opening remarks: Mr. Rainer Geiger, Deputy Director for Financial, Fiscal and Enterprise Affairs, OECD

Chair: Dr. Gábor Gulásci

- An assessment of the OECD Guidelines and other codes of conduct in current circumstances and of experiences in their implementation from the point of view of:
 - Governments: the role of National Contact Points: Ambassador Kjell Lillerud, Norway;
 - Business: integrating the Guidelines into corporate practices; the role of corporate codes of conduct; Mr. Andrew Berkeley, International Arbitrator, Representative of the Confederation of Business Industry (CBI), UK and the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC)
 - Trade unions: evolution of labour-management relations and the role of the Guidelines; Mr. John Evans, Secretary General, Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC)

Tuesday 17 November 1998

Morning Session: The role of the OECD Guidelines in a globalising economy

Chair: Ambassador Marino Baldi, Switzerland; Chairman of the OECD Committee on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises (CIME)

Lead speaker: Prof. Arghyrios Fatouros, Professor of International Law, Faculty of Political Science, University of Athens, Greece

Round table discussion

- Environment and sustainable development: Mr. Nick Mabey, WWF International, UK

- Labour relations:
 - Mr. A. Abate, Head of the Multinational Enterprise Division, International Labour Organisation
 - Mr. J.J. Doeblin, Co-ordinator for Eastern Europe, DANONE Group
- Competition and corporate governance: Mr. Rainer Geiger, OECD
- Bribery and corruption: Mr. Ádám Terták, Chairman of the Hungarian Chapter, Transparency International

Afternoon Session: Improving the effectiveness of the Guidelines

Chair: Mr. Marinus Sikkel, Head of Division, Investment Policy and International Organisations, Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Netherlands

Lead speaker: Mr. Olivier Ferrand, Ministry of Finance (France)

Round table discussion

- Implementation procedures and follow-up
 - Role of the National Contact Points: Mr. Roland Charlier, President of the National Contact Point, Belgium
 - Interest of the OECD Guidelines for non-OECD Members: Mrs. Victoria Aranda, UNCTAD
 - Promoting awareness and acceptance of the Guidelines among the business community, trade unions and civil society:
 - Mr. H. K. Van Egmond, Economic Adviser, Unilever;
 - Mr. Denis Jacquot, Confederal Secretary, Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT)

Wednesday 18 November 1998 (morning)

Concluding Session: Conclusions

Chair: Ambassador Marino Baldi

- Conclusions from previous sessions: rapporteurs
- Panel discussion: Recommendations for follow-up
- Closing of the Conference

Annotations to the Agenda

Objective

1. The Conference will assess the role of the Guidelines and their *modus operandi* from the point of view of governments, business, labour unions and non-governmental organisations. Ideas will be shared on ways of improving the Guidelines as a widely accepted yardstick for corporate conduct and furthering their application in practice.
2. The OECD Guidelines are a key component of the OECD policy aimed at strengthening international co-operation and mutual understanding in the field of international direct investment and at improving the climate for such investment. They are supported by business and labour. Since their adoption, 22 years ago, there has been evolution in interpreting and amending them to meet new developments and concerns. At the same time, a certain stability has been maintained.
3. The issue of corporate conduct, including codes of conduct, has enjoyed increasing attention over the past few years, notably in the fields of labour relations, the environment, illicit payments and accountability. Many MNEs have developed in-house codes. However, there have been few internationally accepted standards of reference. The UN draft Code of Conduct, under negotiation until 1990, was never adopted. The OECD Guidelines were developed to fulfil this function and their text and implementation procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure their continued relevance. A new review was launched in 26 June 1998. The review will be conducted by the Committee on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises (CIME), in consultation with BIAC and TUAC.
4. Against this background, the objectives of the Conference on the “OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises” will be to increase the influence of the Guidelines as an internationally accepted yardstick for corporate conduct and to discuss ways of making their implementation more effective. In addition, the Conference would also contribute to the current review of the Guidelines.

Programme

5. The Conference will start on Monday 16 November 1998 in the afternoon and will continue on Tuesday 17 November and Wednesday 18 November in the morning. It will comprise four plenary sessions. The opening session (16 November in the afternoon) will provide an opportunity for the OECD to introduce the Guidelines and for governments, business, trade unions, governmental and non-governmental organisations to make a first evaluation of their experience with the Guidelines. This will also be an opportunity to present other international guidelines (*e.g.* of the ILO) and codes of conduct of individual MNEs.
6. On the second day in the morning, participants will examine their effectiveness in the current circumstances will be addressed, also in view of the emergence of new actors (emerging home and host countries for FDI, increasing number of MNEs, increasing role of NGOs), in the areas of environment, employment and industrial relations, competition, bribery and corruption and corporate governance, taking into account relevant international developments
7. The third session in the afternoon will deal with ways to improve the effectiveness of the Guidelines and their implementation procedures. In the concluding session, the third day in the morning, a panel discussion with participants from business and labour, NGOs and National Contact Points will formulate conclusions based on the previous sessions and recommendations for follow-up addressing governments, governmental and non-governmental international organisations, business and labour.

Documentation

8. Documentation for the Conference will include two OECD Secretariat papers: an issues paper “The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises: Issues in the Review” [DAFFE/IME(98)14] and a background paper “Experience with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises” [DAFFE/IME(98)15]. It will also include notes from experts and submissions from participants.

9. General reference material will include:

i) Codes of conduct of some large Multinational Enterprises.

ii) Relevant OECD documents

- The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, OECD/GD(97)40, OECD, 1997;
- the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions;
- the OECD Recommendation on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions;
- the OECD Recommendation concerning effective action against hard core cartels.

iii) Environment and Sustainable development

- the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development;
- the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention;
- The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development;
- Agenda 21, Chapter 30: strengthening the Role of Business and Industry;
- the Business Charter for Sustainable Development;
- the CERES Principles.

iv) Employment and Industrial relations

- the ILO’s Tripartite Declaration on MNEs and social policy;
- the ILO Declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work;
- the European Works Council Directive on the rights of workers to information and consultation.

v) Competition

- the UN Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices.