



E-newsletter April 2011

Working for economic justice, human rights and environmental sustainability

Dear ECCR members, partners and friends

In this e-newsletter:

Corporate engagement and advocacy

- The Banks and Society: advocacy and engagement
- ECCR adds voice to church investor concerns at BP AGM
- Cordaid urges multi-stakeholder dialogue to address Niger Delta problems
- Quakers to boycott products from Israeli settlements
- ECCR supports calls for better regulation of worker protection
- US nuns challenge Goldman Sachs over executive pay
- Philippines mine protesters attacked, reports ECCR Board member Frank Nally
- Rio Tinto heavily criticised on environment and human rights

Responsible and sustainable investment

- Government guidance needed to clarify fiduciary responsibility, says FairPensions

Events

- St Paul's Institute Robin Hood tax debate now on video
- Has the pay of chief executives increased too much? JustShare debate, 19 April, London
- JustPay! Living Wages campaign launch, 2 May, London
- The cost and ethics of safety, 24 May, Manchester
- A drought in your portfolio? 7 June, London

Special announcement

- Traidcraft seeks a new Chair

Corporate engagement and advocacy

The Banks and Society: advocacy and engagement

ECCR has sent its recently published report [The Banks and Society: Rebuilding Trust](#) to government ministers, parliamentary committees, MPs, regulators and policy-makers. Secretary of State for Business Vince Cable has welcomed ECCR's report as 'a valuable contribution to the debate on what more needs to be done'. Financial Services Authority Chief Executive Hector Sants has told us: 'I will ensure [ECCR's report] is input into our current review of our supervisory approach which we are undertaking as part of the government's regulatory reform agenda.' The report has received good coverage from church, financial and corporate/investor responsibility media.

ECCR has begun to meet with major banks to discuss the report's findings and recommendations. We also hope that members and others will use the report's 13 sets of questions to ask banks as the basis for their own engagement. Further guidance on dialogue with banks is provided on [ECCR's website](#). [Suzanne Ismail](#) (020 7663 1055) would welcome comments on the report and feedback on any engagement you have.

ECCR adds voice to church investor concerns at BP AGM

ECCR was among church and responsible investors and shareholder advocates voicing concerns about BP's risk management at the company's AGM yesterday (14 April). Led by Christian Brothers of the US Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, many had agreed not to file a shareholder resolution on the understanding that in the wake of last year's Deepwater disaster BP will reassure investors about its operational risk and safety management in the coming months. Ahead of the AGM, the US-led group had issued a [statement](#) critical of BP's annual report and a [joint press release](#) with the UK Church Investors Group.

The AGM vote included 43% abstaining/voting against re-election of the head of BP's safety committee, 25% abstaining/voting against the remuneration report, and 15% abstaining/voting against BP's annual report.

Two Canadian First Nations representatives raised questions at the meeting about BP's oil (tar) sands operations. ECCR challenged the company about oil-sands-related risks to human health, citing research by the Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers). Further information is available from [Miles Litvinoff](#).

Cordaid urges multi-stakeholder dialogue to address Niger Delta problems

ECCR's donor-partner Cordaid has addressed Dutch Parliament hearings about the long-standing impacts of oil extraction in the Niger Delta by Shell and other international companies. Cordaid urged the importance of dialogue involving oil companies, the Nigerian Government and civil society focused on improving the prevention and clean-up of oil pollution and compensation for affected communities. Cordaid has asked the Dutch Government to facilitate such a dialogue and called on Royal Dutch Shell and Shell Nigeria to actively support it. [Read more](#).

Quakers to boycott products from Israeli settlements

ECCR member the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain has agreed to boycott products from the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. The settlements are illegal under international law. The decision was made on 2 April by the representative decision-making body for Quakers in Britain, which heard that most Jewish Israeli peace groups support a boycott of settlement products. Quakers consider this a nonviolent move for peace for Israelis and Palestinians, and the decision makes clear that Quakers are not boycotting Israel. [Read more](#). ECCR is urging members and others to [contact supermarkets and draw their attention to concerns about Israeli settlement goods](#).

ECCR supports calls for better regulation of worker protection

ECCR has joined a civil society coalition calling on the UK Government to enhance the protection of vulnerable workers by bringing the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate under the management of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority and adopting the GLA's approach of targeted, intelligence-led enforcement across all industry sectors. The Institute for Human Rights and Business, Anti-Slavery International, Oxfam GB, the Ethical Trading Initiative, the Association of Labour Providers and ECCR have submitted a [proposal to Minister for Employment Relations Ed Davey](#) as a contribution to the government's review of workplace rights. ECCR published its report [Vulnerable Migrant Workers](#) in 2009.

US nuns challenge Goldman Sachs over executive pay

Sisters of St Francis and members of ECCR's US partner, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, will attend Goldman Sachs's AGM on 6 May supporting a shareholder resolution that calls on the bank to review excessive pay deals, give shareholders more detail and justify its remuneration policy. 'There is a culture of greed and this culture tells me there is a philosophical and ethical divide between these corporations and the ordinary person on the street,' spokesperson Sr Nora Nash is quoted as saying. [Read more.](#)

Philippines mine protesters attacked, reports ECCR Board member Frank Nally

Fr Sean Martin and Fr Frank Nally have reported on the frequent killings and intimidation of individuals and communities peacefully protesting against mining company operations in the southern Philippines. 'People are concerned that their livelihoods in agriculture and fisheries will be destroyed by numerous large scale mining projects dotting the country,' they write in the [Independent Catholic News](#). The 2009 Working Group on Mining in the Philippines report *Philippines: Mining or Food?* is available at www.eccr.org.uk/mininginthephilippines.

Rio Tinto heavily criticised on environment and human rights

At Rio Tinto's AGM in London yesterday (14 April) the mining company's environmental and social record came under heavy criticism from advocates and community representatives citing operations in Indonesia, the US (Michigan and Utah), Mongolia and elsewhere. Questioners raised concerns about the Rio Tinto's position on the rights of Indigenous Peoples to withhold their consent for mining projects, including at the [Pebble project](#) in Alaska. [London Mining Network report.](#)

Responsible and sustainable investment

Government guidance needed to clarify fiduciary responsibility, says FairPensions

ECCR member FairPensions has published a new report, *Protecting Our Best Interests: Rediscovering Fiduciary Obligation*, arguing that a fresh look at fiduciary obligation is a vital part of the solution to debates about short-termism and agency problems in the investment sphere. The report argues that our understanding of fiduciary obligation has lost its way and may not be delivering in beneficiaries' best interests. It challenges misconceptions surrounding investors' fiduciary duties, particularly regarding responsible and ethical investment, and makes a case for an 'enlightened fiduciary' model for investors. [Read more.](#)

Events

St Paul's Institute Robin Hood tax debate now on video

St Paul's Institute, in conjunction with CAFOD, Tearfund and The Salvation Army, hosted a debate at St Paul's Cathedral in March on issues raised by the Robin Hood tax campaign. For those who weren't able to make it, full video of the debate is now available on the Institute website and can be viewed (in three parts) through at www.stpaulsinstitute.org.uk/Videos. The debate is also available on the Cathedral's [YouTube channel](#).

Has the pay of chief executives increased too much? JustShare debate, 19 April, London

Average remuneration of FTSE 100 chief executives has grown by 15% a year from less than

£1m in 1998 to about £4m today. As bankers' bonuses hit the headlines again, two eminent speakers debate whether the pay of CEOs has increased too much. Speakers: Sir Paul Judge, Chairman of Schroder Income Growth Fund plc and Standard Bank Group Ltd of South Africa and former Director General of the Conservative Party; and Mark Littlewood, Director General of the Institute of Economic Affairs and former Head of Media for the Liberal Democrats and Campaigns Director of human rights group Liberty. Tuesday 19 April, 1.05 pm, All Hallows by the Tower, Byward Street. For details please contact [Rachel Lindley](mailto:Rachel.Lindley@eccr.org) (07732 014181).

JustPay! Living Wages campaign launch, 2 May, London

FairPensions is launching a major new campaign to spread Living Wage standards across the FTSE 100 using the power of people's savings and investments. The campaign aims to permanently embed Living Wage standards in the UK's private sector, beginning with the biggest companies on the London Stock Exchange. The launch will be a key element in the Citizens UK assembly celebrating 10 years of action on Living Wages. Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, SW1H 9NH, Monday 2 May, 1.45 - 4pm. The assembly is free but ticketed. To attend, please apply via [Louise Rouse](mailto:Louise.Rouse@eccr.org) (020 7403 7812).

The cost and ethics of safety, 24 May, Manchester

Miles Litvinoff of ECCR will speak on 'Health, safety and risk in the extractive industries: a human rights perspective' at this Institute of Mechanical Engineers / Safety & Reliability Society event. Intended for engineers, environmentalists, budget holders and corporate and social responsibility practitioners, the meeting will explore costs, ethical decisions and safety in high-hazard industries. 'High-profile ethical failures, not least within the financial services ... mean that professional activities are under increased scrutiny and the old assumption of trust is declining. Engineering is by no means immune to this effect,' say the organisers. One Central Park, Manchester, Tuesday 24 May, 9 am - 5.15 pm. [Further details and booking](#). ECCR members can book at the reduced IMechE members' rate.

A drought in your portfolio? 7 June, London

A free half-day investor conference to learn more about the investment risks and opportunities arising from water scarcity. The conference marks the launch of EIRIS's new global water risk criteria for responsible investors. Speakers from the UN World Water Assessment Programme, WaterAid, World Resources Institute, Robeco and EIRIS. Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR, Tuesday 7 June, 1.30 pm for 2 pm start – 5 pm. [More details](#).

<i>Special announcement</i>

Traidcraft seeks a new Chair

ECCR corporate member Traidcraft, one of the world's foremost practitioners of fair trade, is seeking a new Chair of its board, covering both the company (Traidcraft plc) and the charity (Traidcraft Exchange). Traidcraft is committed to pragmatic and constructive engagement with mainstream businesses. With its supporter and customer bases drawn overwhelmingly from within the UK Christian community, Traidcraft recognises that it has a particular role in mobilising Christians to be active in the arena of trade justice. For more information about Traidcraft, the role of chair and how to apply, please contact [Saxton Bampfylde](mailto:Saxton.Bampfylde@traidcraft.org) using the code UQTB to access the relevant information. Deadline to indicate interest in this role: noon on 4 May 2011.

With all good wishes.

The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility

PO Box 500, Oxford OX1 1ZL, UK

www.eccr.org.uk

info@eccr.org.uk

t. +44 (0)1865 245349

Miles Litvinoff, Co-ordinator

miles.litvinoff@eccr.org.uk

t. +44 (0)20 8965 9682

m. +44 (0)7984 720103

ECCR's e-newsletter reaches more than 600 people in the UK, Ireland and internationally each month, with bimonthly issues published in July/August and December/January. Members and partners are welcome to submit brief news items for inclusion. Views expressed are not necessarily those of ECCR.

If you do not wish to receive future ECCR e-newsletters, please reply to this message with Unsubscribe in the subject line. You can also subscribe or unsubscribe [here](#).

ECCR is a registered charity (No. 1139618), a company limited by guarantee in England & Wales (No. 2764183) and a Body in Association with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Registered office: New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square, Oxford OX1 1LQ.