

## Press release after the conference on October 2, 2017

**On 2 October, 2017 the Ministry of Economic Development hosted a conference on the execution of the *Polish National Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights 2017-2020*.**

Over the last decade, the international community, including such organizations as the UN, OECD, European Union and European Council, has initiated numerous projects and undertaken practical actions in the aim of defining the role and responsibility of governments, business, and society in ensuring the protection of and respect for human rights.

A particular place in this context is occupied by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights adopted by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011, based upon three pillars:

1. The state duty to protect human rights
2. The corporate responsibility to respect human rights
3. Access to remedy

One result of efforts striving for their implementation at the national level has been the ***Polish National Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights 2017-2020*** (NAP on BHR), adopted by the Council of Ministers on 29 May, 2017.

In accordance with the entries of the NAP on BHR, the relevant ministries are obligated to prepare an implementation schedule for particular actions by the end of 2017, whereas the first progress report within the scope of implementation of the UN Guiding Principles and a good practices catalogue will be prepared by the end of 2018.

The conference entitled “*UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights – execution of the Polish National Action Plan*” was the first meeting directed at first and foremost members of the public administration, but also at representatives of business and non-governmental organizations, which had the goal of presenting the issues of the newly-adopted Polish National Action Plan in a complex manner, as well as providing an arena for collective discussion on the topic of the most effective methods for implementing the NAP on BHR, potential partner activities, and necessary legislative action that will ensure the full realization of the UN Guiding Principles.

The conference was opened by speeches from **Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Economic Development, Jadwiga Emilewicz**, and **Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Joanna Wronecka**. An introduction to the issues of human rights in business was presented by **Beata Faracik, President of the Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business**.

Among the themes that were given the most attention were such issues as combatting modern slavery and forced labour, activities aimed at providing protection for whistle-blowers, ensuring work-life balance, respecting human rights in the context of public procurements, increasing protection of children against sexual exploitation in the context of the tourism services sector, and responsibility of internet providers in content published online.

The conference was co-organized by the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland, and the Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business. Among the conference speakers and panellists were representatives of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Digital Affairs, the Public Procurement Office, the University of Warsaw, as well as the following organizations: La Strada Foundation against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery, Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business, Empowering Children Foundation, Stefan Batory Foundation, Foundation of the “Fair Trade Coalition” – Fairtrade Polska, Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law.