Business and Human Rights Developments in Portugal

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COVID – 19 AS A TRIGGER...

Noticed Human Rights violations

- Right to privacy;
- Right to freedom of opinion and expression;
- Right to freedom of association;
- Right to equal treatment and non-discrimination;
- Right to work;
- Right to just and favourable conditions at work;
- Right to join unions and other collective rights;
- Right to health.
Most important examples

- Workers were sent away from work without being informed about: wages; suspension term; dismissals…
- Use of Covid-19 crisis to promote trade unionists collective dismissals;
- Use of Covid-19 to promote moral harassment and fear of unemployment;
- Privacy violations during tele-working;
- Lack of protection and prevention against Covid-19 inside companies;
- Companies (not only) avoid to work with trade unions.
Due Diligence in Portuguese Companies...

- Human rights are not a real concern in working context;
- Only a small number of companies show any concern about this issue, linking it to Social Responsibility and Business Ethics;
- Most of cases the concern towards human rights at work, is rather related to “communication policy” than about the right to decent working conditions;
- Covid-19 was a real test to the solidity of Human rights and Social Responsibility policies at work.

*Unfortunately we cannot say that companies passed the test*
And the workers?

- Workers doesn’t link working rights abuse to a human rights perspective;
- Workers are not familiarized with the legal instruments they have in order to enforce human rights at work;
- Labour inspection has serious practical difficulties, specially in a pandemic environment;
- Human rights at work are not a mainstream concern for politicians, media or justice professionals.
THANK YOU