

Business and Human Rights Developments in Portugal



Hugo Dionísio

Lawyer - Advocate

Snr Researcher at CGTP-IN Research Department

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