

GoodElectronics is an international network on human rights and sustainability in electronics. GoodElectronics' objective is to contribute to the stringent implementation of labour and environmental standards throughout the overall production cycle of electronics, from extractives to e-waste and recycling. The member organisations of GoodElectronics - trade unions, human rights and environmental organisations, academics and other civil society stakeholders - have formulated a set of Common Demands, calling upon the electronics industry to improve its record. To learn more about GoodElectronics, visit www.goodelectronics.org, or contact us at info@goodelectronics.org. The digital GoodElectronics newsletter is distributed regularly amongst a wide range of interested stakeholders. You are invited to share you news, publications or events with us.

GoodElectronics News

WAC board member still fears arrest in the Philippines

February 2009. Workers' Assistance Centre (WAC)

On February 5, the case against six Philippines labour organisers has been ordered quashed by the Regional Trial Court (4th Judicial Region) Oriental Mindoro Branch. The six were immediately released from the Oriental Mindoro Provincial Jail. This ruling does, however, not cover the entire group of labour activists that was accused of murder and attempted murder in October 2008. Emmanuel "Manny" Asuncion, member of the Board of Trustees of the Philippines Workers Assistance Centre (WAC), for example, is still in hiding, for fear of being arrested. WAC decried the accusations and described them as politically motivated.

[Read more.](#)



GoodElectronics on global corp wiki

February 2009. SourceWatch

The [Global Corporations Portal](#), a SourceWatch initiative, is featuring a piece on the Good Electronics Network. This portal has a companion site in [Global Corporation Forum](#), a *wiki* site open for people to add information. The sites offer information on multinational corporations as well as on civil society organisations and are dedicated to enabling community organisations and social movements engaged in shared struggles to connect with each other. SourceWatch is a project of the [Centre for Media and Democracy](#).

Civil Society News

Extractives for Electronics

February 2009. makeITfair

In 2008, makeITfair developed a [list of principles](#) on how electronics companies should deal with the extractive phase of their supply chain. These principles were developed in coordination with a number of NGOs and initiatives that deal specifically with mining issues. [Companies' responses to this list of principles](#) were published on the makeITfair website. In November 2008, the Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition ([EICC](#)) and the Global e-Sustainability Initiative ([GeSI](#)) jointly organised two round tables in the USA, inviting civil society organisations. Topic of discussion was what initiatives the industry can take to address labour and environmental issues in the extractive phase of their value chains. The

industry has subsequently formulated goals to be achieved in 2009. makeITfair has asked for further explanation of the goals and a concrete action plan. A questionnaire was sent out to assess what progress companies have made so far. Key questions are how companies are effectively taking responsibility for their supply chains, as well as transparency & tracing schemes. This is specifically relevant for metals sourced from the Democratic Republic of Congo. makeITfair will publish the outcomes of the questionnaire in the beginning of March.

Metals in mobile phones help finance Congo atrocities

February 2009. Global Witness

Global Witness is calling on mobile phone manufacturers to audit their supply chains in order to exclude minerals financing the armed conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). There is a direct causal link between the metals trade in eastern DRC and atrocities perpetrated by armed groups against Congolese civilians. Recent work by Global Witness and the UN Group of Experts revealed that all of the main armed groups involved in the current fighting in eastern DRC finance themselves through the trade in high-value minerals. These minerals are processed into metals such as tin and tantalum, which are used in the manufacture of mobile phones. [Read more.](#)

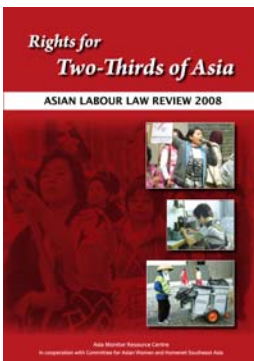
Indonesian company manager imprisoned for union-busting

February 2009. International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF)

An Indonesian union has won a historic case against a company manager found guilty of violating local and international labour regulations. Trade union FSPMI won the case against the electronic component manufacturer PT Kim Jim Nauruan (KJI). [Read more.](#)

Rights for two thirds of Asia

February 2009. Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC)



Who then are Asia's informal labourers? What are their rights under national laws – or what are the rights they have been deprived of? Can the system of social security be extended to them? Can the 'race to the bottom' that is driving the informalisation process be stopped? What can labour advocates and governments do to protect the dignity of the informal workers – be they in the ever-growing informal economy or in the shrinking formal sector? These are some of the questions that the [third AMRC Labour Law Review](#) seeks to answer.

makeITfair youth conference cooking up campaigning plans

March 2009. makeITfair

On 13-15 March, makeITfair is organising an international conference bringing together youth organisations from all over Europe. The meeting, which will take place in Amsterdam, is focusing on exchange of information and on elaborating campaigning plans. Mrs 'Lek' Junya Yimprasert of the Thai Labour Campaign and Mrs Cecille Tuico of the Philippines Workers' Assistance Centre will participate as key note speakers. In their presentations they will look into labour conditions in the production of electronics in their respective countries, and discuss successful strategies to organise workers and address companies.

Globalisation on a miniature scale

March 2009. Kigali Films

'Globalisation on a miniature scale', a documentary by [Mirjam Leuze and Ralph Weihermann](#) on the labour and environmental issues that occur during the life cycle of mobile phones will be screened on the [German television channel WDR](#), on March 1, from 4.25-4.55pm.

IMF lodges unprecedented ILO complaint against Mexico

February 2009. International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF)

Protection contracts violate ILO Convention 87, says a new [complaint](#) against Mexico submitted by IMF. The International Metalworkers' Federation ([IMF](#)) has lodged an unprecedented complaint against the Mexican Government to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Switzerland. The complaint calls on the ILO to condemn Mexican laws which prevent freedom of association and contravene ILO Convention 87, which guarantees core labour standards to all workers. Under Mexican law the vast majority of collective agreements are so-called "protection contracts" which force workers to join unions nominated by company management rather than one of their own choosing. In practice, the laws mean only unions that have the support of companies and government can operate in Mexico.

Ole Wolff continues to obstruct labour union despite international pressure

February 2009. Globalization Monitor

In November 2008, pressurised by the United Federation of Danish Workers [3F](#), and major buyer [Danfoss](#), the Danish electronics company [Ole Wolff](#) agreed to compensate workers who were unlawfully dismissed during 2008. Since then, however, the company has continued on its warpath: employment files are being withheld -



- disabling the worker concerned to find new employment; workers are refused written contracts; a worker who was interviewed by the Danish television was fired. At the same time, Ole Wolff has taken the deliberate step to move production to a new site and to further downsize the Yantai workforce to around 30 workers only. Among the remaining workers are 8 union members. On January 3, the All China Federation of Trade Unions ([ACFTU](#)) announced to 3F that elections for new

workers' representatives will be held at the factory. According to [the Hong Kong based NGO Globalization Monitor](#), ACFTU is practically writing off the Ole Wolff Yantai Workplace Union (OWYWU) in this way. To justify its step, ACFTU is using the argument that there are currently too few union members among the remaining workers. 3F and others, however, point out that even with few members there is no legal ground to hold new elections. Moreover, the leadership of OWYWU is still there. [Read more](#).

High Tech Misery in China: report and industry responses

February 2009. National Labor Committee (NLC)

The American National Labor Committee (NLC) has released a [60-page report](#), 'High Tech Misery in [China](#)', documenting the gruelling hours, low wages and draconian disciplinary measures at the Meitai factory in southern China. The 2,000 mostly-young women workers produce keyboards and other equipment for Hewlett-Packard, Dell, Lenovo, Microsoft and IBM. Along with worker interviews, photographs of primitive factory and dorm conditions and extensive internal company documents were smuggled out of the factory. According to the NLC the report gives 'an unprecedented view inside the prison-like conditions at high-tech sweatshop in China producing for HP, Dell, Lenovo, Microsoft and IBM.' The Business & Human Rights Resource Centre has solicited [the companies concerned to react to the NLC report](#).

makeITfair web quest

February 2009. makeITfair

makeITfair has designed a [web quest](#) challenging students (14-16 year) to start their own mobile phone shop – so they can see for themselves how to balance problems encountered along the supply chain for the electronics industry with the demands of consumers."



"I have no idea where my mobile phone is made... I didn't know that my telephone might have been made by poor people who have to work really hard."
Charlotte, 14, student, Amsterdam

Applicable legal framework for EU companies in their operations abroad

February 2009. European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ)

February 10, [ECCJ](#) participated in the European Commission's Multistakeholder Forum on CSR. One of the main results of the meeting was the announcement that the European Commission will conduct a study to assess and clarify the applicable legal framework for EU companies in their operations abroad. ECCJ has been requesting the European Commission to carry on such study in order to clarify the rules of the game for EU companies but also to identify where gaps exist which are allowing these companies to violate Human Rights and environmental rights in their operations abroad. ECCJ welcomes this announcement and looks forward to engage with the Commission in drafting the terms of reference for it. [Read more.](#)

Vulnerable Indian IT workers find comfort in union tradition

February 2009. FinancialTimes.com/AsiaPacific

Karthik Shekhar was scoffed at by workers three years ago when he began trying to unionise information-technology and call-centre employees in Bangalore, India's IT capital. In the then booming sector, with its seemingly insatiable appetite for labour, workers felt they had sufficient negotiating leverage and plenty of options if they were unhappy in their jobs. Unites Professionals, is now flooded with anxious calls from young Indians as their employers seek to pare headcount in the face of the global slowdown. Read [full article.](#)

Company and ministry side by side in anti-union campaign in Thailand

February 2009. Electronics and Electrical Appliances Relation Labour Union (EEALU)

Recently, the Electronics and Electrical Appliances Relation Labour Union (EEALU) was deregistered by the Thai Ministry of Labour. In this move, the ministry was reportedly supported by the management of Hoya Glass Disk (Thailand). EEALU was faulted for having supervisors or line leaders in the union leadership, which is formally not allowed according to Thai labour law, but which is normal practice in Thailand. Thai civil society organisations say that the executive power of the supervisors in the EEALU leadership was deliberately inflated to make this case. While in reality the power of the EEALU leaders as supervisors was limited, the ministry of labour made the refutable claim that they had the right to hire and fire workers. In response, a new union was formed, this time with no supervisors in the leadership. As the same time, the old union, which is not yet completely dissolved, is still fighting the deregistration in court. Despite the resilience of the workers cum union activists involved, the anti-union campaign carried out by Hoya and the ministry has born (bitter) fruit: of the more than 3,000 members of the old union, only 800 have joined the new union. Many workers fear the consequences of being involved in the ongoing conflict. The agreement reached in November 2008 between Hoya Glass Disk (Thailand) and EEALU seems to have become a dead letter.

makeITfair capacity building workshop in Budapest

February 2009. makeITfair

On February 17, makeITfair organised a capacity building training in Budapest, Hungary. The objective of the meeting was to raise awareness about developmental issues in the production of consumer electronics, such as mobile phones, MP3 players and laptops among NGOs, social activists and researchers in Hungary. Also, the workshop aimed to forge links for further collaboration.

Multistakeholder initiative for Indian IT sector

February 2009. Association For Stimulating Know How (ASK) /Vérité

On February 9, the Indian ICTE Forum for Improving Workplace Standards held its first formal meeting, in Delhi. From the civil society side [ToxicLink](#) and [Cividep](#) were present. Hewlett Packard India gave its input regarding the forum over the phone. The participants to the meeting decided to first develop a concept note that will, among other things, set definitions for a multi stakeholder approach, the ICTE sector, and for improving workplace standards.

HP/EDS “frozen day” was a success throughout Europe

February 2009. uni Global Union



The second European action day organised by trade unions throughout the continent to protest against HP/EDS restructuring plan, and its consequent salary freeze, benefit cuts and redundancies proved to be a success. The action was named “frozen day” in reference to the announced salary freeze.

HP and EDS workers fight against management greed. [EDS](#) is the technology services business group of [HP](#). [Read more.](#)

India is a cultivation ground for e-waste

February 2009. ToxicLink/ www.expressbuzz.com

India generated 330,000 tonnes of e-waste in 2007. The figure is all set to increase in the next five years. With the IT boom, India has become a cultivation ground for e-waste and is short-listed by the US and European countries to dump their own e-waste. About 50,000 tonnes of e-waste is brought into the country every year under the pretext of charity and donation, say NGOs. Out of the 330,000 ton that is generated in India, only 19,000 ton is recycled, retained and reused. Read [full article](#).

Invisible burden, good reasons to get rid of PBT chemicals

January 2009. WWF, HEAL and CHEM Trust

PBT chemicals are used in a wide variety of products, including electronics. In a [detailed fact sheet on PBT chemicals](#) that threaten health and environment, WWF, HEAL and CHEM Trust call for the common sense, “better safe than sorry” approach for PBT and vPvB chemicals management. This includes replacing chemicals with these properties whenever safer alternatives are available as a matter of urgency, and phasing them out over the long term. After years of discussion, the European Union finally adopted a new chemicals law (REACH) in order to improve protection of human health and the environment whilst maintaining the competitiveness of the European chemicals industry. This law has been in place since 2007, but is only now identifying the first ‘candidate list’ of chemicals of very high concern, that will be subject to tighter controls in the form of requiring prior authorisation before they can be used, according to [WWF](#), [Heal](#) and [CHEM Trust](#).

Call for papers on the ethics of waste in the information society

January 2009. International Center for Information Ethics (ICIE)

The IRIE, the official journal of the International Center for Information Ethics ([ICIE](#)) is calling for papers for Volume 11. Deadline for extended abstracts is May 1. Publication is scheduled for August 2009. The IRIE envisions an international as well as intercultural discussion focusing on the ethical impacts of information technology on human practices and thinking, social interaction, other areas of science and research and the society itself.

Korean company reverts to intimidation to break Polish trade union

January 2009. NSZZ Solidarnosc



Since March 2008, the Polish trade union [NSZZ Solidarnosc](#) has been involved in a collective dispute with the management of the Korean owned electronics company Dong Yang, concerning wages demands. When negotiations and mediation proved fruitless, the trade union decided to strike. A first referendum was held in August 2008, within the premises of the company. According to the union, workers were intimidated during the referendum: managers made lists of people voting, and at a certain point more employer's representatives were present than workers. As a result, the workers did not take over the proposal to strike. A second referendum was organised, outside the company. At this referendum, were company representatives were also invited, workers univocally approved the proposal to go on strike. The strike then took place between 16 October and 28 November 2008, but the company, referring to the first referendum, proclaimed the strike to be illegal. Workers who would not join the strike were proposed 5% wage increase as well as proper amendment of their contracts. About 200 workers were dismissed, including three trade union leaders on disciplinary grounds. Dong Yang Electronics and LG Electronics are both based in Mława Special Economic Zone. The workers in this zone are represented by a supra-company trade union organisation. Most of the members of this supra-company trade union were employed at Dong Yang. The massive dismissal of 200 workers cum union leaders effectively crippled the union in Mława Special Economic Zone. About 80 of the dismissed workers were replaced by new employees on fixed-term contracts. During the strike, two demonstrations were staged. Participating workers were filmed. Thus far, the company has refused to reinstate workers. Court proceedings are ongoing. Both the European Metalworkers' Federation ([EMF](#)) and the International Metal workers' Federation ([IMF](#)) have reported on the ongoing labour dispute.

Gender equality at the heart of ILO decent work campaign

January 2009. International Labour Organization(ILO)

The year 2009 is significant in many ways for the International Labour Organization (ILO). It is the 90th anniversary of the founding of the ILO, the 10th anniversary of its gender equality action plan and the year the International Labour Conference (ILC) will hold a general discussion on "Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work". In the lead-up to this discussion, the ILO is launching [a global campaign on gender equality](#) and the world of work.

Electronics companies score high in ethical quotation system

January 2009. Covalence

Geneva-based Covalence tracks the ethical reputation of multinationals by sourcing information from the media, civil society, and companies. Covalence' 2008 annual ethical ranking covers 541 multinationals

within 18 sectors, based on a calculation methodology combining 'popularity' and 'diversified performance'. The following companies enter the top 10: Xerox (5th), General Electric (8th), and DuPont (10th), replacing IBM (14th), Hewlett-Packard (30th), and Toyota (34th). Leaders are HSBC, Intel, and Unilever.

Read Covalence' [press release](#).

Study of call centre employees in India

December 2008. Cornell University and Institute for Human Development

Rukmini Tankha, Research Associate at the Indian Institute for Human Development has undertaken an exploratory study of call centre employees, looking into wages, labour conditions and the role of trade unions. The study was published under the title 'Work, Work Organisation and Freedom: Findings from an Exploratory Study of Call Centre Employees' and was presented during the international conference on development, freedom and welfare, organised in honour of the 75th anniversary of Dr Amartya Sen, in Delhi, December 2008. Concluding observation by the researcher: "The nature of employment as occurring in call centres brings to the fore a peculiar divergence in the freedoms enjoyed by such call centre employees. While such jobs have increased opportunities to be absorbed into gainful income earning employment, the process aspect has been neglected, with freedoms at the workplace being sidelined." The researcher speaks of 'apathy' among employees towards the conditions of their work.

[Read more](#).

European Commission addressed on social considerations in public procurement

December 2008. procureITfair

The European Commission should show its commitment to sustainability by including clear social criteria in the forthcoming guide on socially responsible public procurement, is the message of procureITfair in an [open letter to the European Commission](#). National and local authorities need clear guidance on socially responsible procurement from the European Commission. The current consultation process for the development of a guide on socially responsible procurement by the EC is not transparent and does not allow for input from civil society groups, national and local governments, trade unions and business associations.

NGOs criticize weak European Commission proposal on hazardous substances

December 2008. Coalition of NGOs including EEB, ChemSec and the Health & Environment Alliance

The European Commission has rejected calls for a strengthened Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) Directive (Directive 2002/95/EC) that would have set targets for phasing out additional hazardous substances in electronic products. "Today's proposed rejection of both NGOs and progressive companies support for additional substance bans has done a great disservice to those companies that are working hard to achieve green design", [stated Mr Jerker Ligthart, project coordinator at ChemSec](#). "The current Directive has been the leading legislative policy for phasing out six of the most dangerous chemical groups used in electronics. The Commission has effectively set back the clock on further innovation in this important industry sector."

Indian union fights 'extended working hours' in the IT-BPO sector

November 2008. Rediff News

The Indian arm of the Union for Information & Technology Enabled Services ([UNITES](#)) is planning to file a public interest litigation against the alleged 'arbitrary policy' of many Indian and multinational IT/ITeS firms in India who have, for the past two months, reportedly been enforcing longer working hours that violate the daily eight-hour working mandate of the Indian Factories Act, 1948. UNITES, the country's first union in the IT-Business Processes Outsourcing (BPO) sector, is affiliated to the Indian National Trade Union Congress. It claims to have around 10 per cent of the total IT-BPO workforce of 2 million as members, and said the numbers have been dramatically rising over the last two months on the back of lay-offs in the sector. Read [full article](#).

Industry News

HP/EDS Australia meets with union

February 2009. [www.ZDnet.com.au](#)

Australian EDS union APESMA has met with representatives of HP and EDS following the news that employees in Australia will be facing pay cuts, as part of a global announcement. Hewlett Packard global CEO Mark Hurd [said he would take a 20 per cent cut to his salary](#), which was US\$1.45 million last financial year, as well as US\$42 million in bonuses, according to documents lodged with the US Security and Exchange Commission. Senior executives' pay would be cut by between 10 to 15 per cent, while other employees' base salaries would also be cut by between 2.5 to 5 per cent, he said.

Job losses announced by major electronics companies

February 2009. Hewlett Packard, Dell, Philips, Lenovo, Ericsson, TT Electronics

In the previous weeks, several major electronics companies have announced job cuts, including Lenovo, Dell, Ericsson and Philips. [Philips](#) announced to cut up to 6,000 jobs worldwide this year. [Lenovo](#) clinched its plan for laying off about 550 employees in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. In the UK, with the impending closure of computer giant [Dell](#), 400 jobs will be lost in North Cork. Redundancies are looming for hundreds of workers at two of the world's electronic powerhouses, [Ericsson and TT Electronics](#). [Toshiba](#), on the other hand, is expanding production of solid state devices (SSD), hard-disk drive-like devices, in the Laguna Technopark Economic Zone in the Philippines, creating jobs.

HP begins second phase of e-waste project

February 2009. Hewlett Packard (HP)

A pilot [e-waste recycling project set up by HP](#) in Cape Town, South Africa, has seen successful results, according to the company, generating income and creating employment. HP has been working with the Global Digital Solidarity Fund ([DSF](#)) and the Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Testing and Research ([EMPA](#)) to tackle the mounting problem of e-waste in Africa, which often gets used as a dumping ground for old IT equipment. The Cape Town trial was coupled with research in Morocco and Kenya. Research in Kenya showed that although the country is producing 3,000 tonnes of e-waste per year there is a lack of legislative framework and practical management systems. Read [full article](#).

Fujitsu agency staff in UK sacked with half an hour notice and no redundancy

February 2009. [www.fairtoagencyworkers.org](#)

Staff at computer giant Fujitsu were in tears after suddenly being told to clear their desks and being escorted from the premises. Some had worked as data processing staff for up to eight years – but they were ushered from the Fujitsu building without being entitled to a single penny in redundancy money. To

highlight the plight of these workers, the North West Trade Union Congress ([TUC](#)) begun a campaign and launched [a web site to demand fair treatment for agency staff](#) throughout the region.

EICC Code of conduct

December 2008. EICC

The Electronics Industry Citizenship Coalition ([EICC](#)) is working on improving its code of conduct. Several participants to the GoodElectronics network have used the opportunity to (again) provide EICC with their comments concerning the code. The International Metalworkers' Federation ([IMF](#)) and [SOMO](#), among others, have in their contributions stressed the need to reinforce the code on freedom of association, collective bargaining etcetera.

The further review process is as follows: between January and March 2009, the EICC membership will review, evaluate, and vote on proposed revisions to the code. Results will be shared with members and stakeholders within one month of the vote. Between April and June 2009, approved revisions to the code and supporting documentation will be facilitated by the EICC Code Management Work Group and shared with members and stakeholders by 31 July, 2009.



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