



**BUSINESS
CLASS**

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Corporate influence

in the G20 and other
international policy fora

Workshop at the Global Solidarity Summit
Hamburg, Kampnagel, room KX

6 July 2017, 11:00-13:00

Brot
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Corporate influence

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Transnational corporations and their national and international associations and lobby groups are using the G20 process as important opportunity to engage with the world's most powerful governments, shape their discourse, and influence their decisions.

Corporations and their interest groups have become powerful actors in international policy debates on sustainable development and human rights as well. They are positioning themselves as more flexible, efficient and un-bureaucratic than states and are promoting “multi-stakeholder initiatives” and “public-private partnerships” as innovative models to tackle global problems. This rise of corporate influence goes along with a fundamental shift in economic thinking. Since the 1970s neoliberal and neoclassical thoughts became predominant. Many economists promote competition and market solutions while alternatives that include emancipatory and ecological considerations are suppressed in mainstream economics.

Business groups are constantly preaching economic growth as a panacea and a sine qua non condition for prosperity, ignoring more sophisticated concepts of sustainability; they urge the G20 to “optimize” and “re-evaluate” regulations intended to lessen the risk of another global financial crisis; they call on governments to strengthen investment protection and promotion agreements that de facto give priority to investors' rights over human rights and the environment; they promote PPPs that minimize the risk for the private investor at the expense of the public; and they push for preferential treatment for the business lobby in global governance. Corporate actors often use a double strategy to achieve their goals. On the one hand they demonstrate their willingness to cooperate by participating in non-binding dialogues and multi-stakeholder initiatives. On the other hand, they use various methods to influence discourses and massive legal and political pressure against governments to avoid compulsory regulation.

The workshop assesses the extent of corporate influence in the G20, as well as in the United Nations debates on business and human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It discusses policies and safeguards to counteract corporate power and presents related civil society initiatives.

Speakers include:

Jens Martens, Global Policy Forum
Nancy Alexander, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung
Klaus Schilder, Misereor
Sarah Lincoln, Brot für die Welt
Theresa Neef, „Was ist Ökonomie?“ Berlin
Facilitator: *Heike Löschmann*, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

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