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## SOMO News - February 2009

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### Socially responsible investment: the limited application of CSR policy



The financial world is in the middle of a crisis. In recent years, banks took irresponsible financial risks with far-reaching negative consequences for confidence with the financial sector itself as well as among consumers. Apart from financial risks, banks are also faced with environmental, socio-economic and political risks. New research by SOMO into the investments of the five biggest Dutch retail banks and two sustainable banks shows that, despite the large-scale sustainability reports and the wide choice of sustainable investment products, socially responsible investment is still in its infancy at the major Dutch banks. The paper is only available in Dutch, the press release is available in English.

[Read more >](#)

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### Free trade agreements contributed to financial crisis

The financial crisis is provoking reactions from every corner of the globe. One solution often suggested is to tighten up regulation of the financial sector. This option was discussed at this year's World Economic Forum in Davos, and also at the ideological counterpart of this major economic event, the World Social Forum in Brazil, where SOMO participated.

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### Free webquest makeITfair for students



The makeITfair campaign wants young people across Europe to know about labour abuses and environmental problems in the supply chain for the electronics industry. We want young people to get active to make a difference! Our specially-designed webquest challenges students to start their own mobile phone shop – so they can see for themselves how to balance problems encountered along the supply chain with the demands of consumers.

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### Lectures by SOMO researchers

SOMO researchers Joseph Wilde-Ramsing and Joris Oldenziel spoke last week at a meeting on the theme of Corporate Social Responsibility in Oslo. This meeting was organised by the Forum for Environment and Development. Researcher Sanne van der Wal was in Brussels, where he took part in the dialogue on the development of the agriculture sector in Africa, and gave a lecture.

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## Fair, clean and green deeds in a jiffy



makeITfair works together closely with other organisations in the Netherlands and abroad. In the Netherlands, it has worked together on the Treemagotchi campaign and the Clean Call for Congo petition. Join in with Treemagotchi for your weekly fair and green deeds. A fun, interactive way to do something you actually always wanted to do, but perhaps never got around to. Clean Call for Congo calls on everyone to sign the petition, and thereby make all mobile telephones 'clean'.

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## New at SOMO

SOMO welcomes two new staff members and two new board members.

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## New websites

- [www.eerlijkehandel.nu](http://www.eerlijkehandel.nu) (only in Dutch)
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## New publications

- The dark side of cyberspace: inside the sweatshops of China's Computer Hardware Production
  - Dutch tax facilities for group financing: The use of the GFA regime and implications for new legislations
  - Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment: What Are the Costs?
  - A Sputtering Process: An Overview of the Platinum Group Metals Supply Chain
  - Socially responsible investment
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**Established in 1973, the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) is a non-profit Dutch research and advisory bureau. SOMO investigates the consequences of Multinational Enterprises' (MNEs) policies and the internationalisation of business worldwide.**

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