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## SOMO News - November 2008

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### What's going on in the financial sector?



The financial crisis and bail-out of the financial industry has not been a enormous surprise for SOMO. In 2005, a SOMO report already signalled a worldwide spreading of many high-risk financial products, strategies and concentration by the financial industry without sufficient regulation and supervision at the international level. In recent months, SOMO has been warning about the contribution of liberalisation of financial services to both the worldwide financial crisis and the food crisis in developing countries. What is SOMO's analysis of this issue and what is happening at the international level?

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### Ask your Mobile Phone Company to take responsibility for better working conditions

Send a [postcard message to your Mobile Phone Company](#) to make sure that workers in factories making parts for your phones are paid a living wage for a normal working week.

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### Positive reaction electronics industry on makeITfair



Pollution, child labour and high death rates in the mines were among the problems exposed by makeITfair last year in mining areas that supply minerals to the electronics industry. Under pressure from the makeITfair campaign, the companies - which had earlier refused to take responsibility for the violation of environmental and human rights -, have agreed to improve these conditions. Mobile phone companies are organising a Round Table on November 19 in Washington DC. The electronics industry will be presenting its plans at this meeting to improve sustainability in the metal supply chain. MakeITfair will be stressing the need for concrete action, and Time to Turn will be delivering the signatures of concerned young Dutch people.

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### Lack of sustainability in European procurement



Social and environmental considerations in public IT procurement need to be vamped up. This is the conclusion of the latest ProcureITFair publication *Sustainable Procurement in a European Context: practices of IT*

*procurement in five EU countries.* The publication highlights the fact that the strong buying power of public institutions, a powerful tool for promoting sustainability, is currently under-utilised. The IT hardware sector exemplifies that labour and human rights conditions within production chains are currently not considered as criteria when purchasing products and services. ProcureITFair is calling on European governments to give sustainability a prominent place in their procurement mechanisms.

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## Fair price necessary for sustainable purchase of Natural Stone



The Initiative for Sustainable Trade (IDH) started on 23 October this year. The Dutch Working Group on Sustainable Natural Stone (WGDN) is one of the initiatives that is supported by the IDH, and aims to make the international supply chain of natural stone fully sustainable. However, there are some problems. WGDN is worried that the government is not implementing its sustainable policy on natural stone. Various projects have been initiated to stimulate the government to put their ideas into practice. SOMO contributes through additional research and through workshops and training courses for local stakeholders and researchers.

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## Round table meeting 'About a Living Wage'



A 'living wage' is a complicated concept for many companies. How do you define it? Which methods do you use? What kind of financial consequences does it have? What are the experiences of companies and sustainability initiatives in the clothing sector? On 13 November 2008, the SchoneKlerenKampagne, in cooperation with SOMO, will be organising a round table meeting 'About a Living Wage'. Representatives of companies and sustainability initiatives in the clothing sector have been invited to address questions relating to a living wage. On the basis of presentations of company and sector initiatives, participants will be discussing the opportunities and obstacles relating to payment of a living wage to workers in the supply chains.

[See also >](#)

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## Greenpeace awards red and green thermometers to E.ON and Eneco



With the presentation of the thermometers to E.ON and Eneco, respectively the dirtiest and cleanest power companies in the Netherlands, Greenpeace is seeking to call attention to power companies' plans for the construction of new coal power plants in the Netherlands. Greenpeace's campaign and ranking of power companies is based on the findings of research into the sustainability of Dutch power companies conducted by SOMO in the report *Sustainability in the Dutch Power Sector*.

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## GoodElectronics joins to protect labour rights



The GoodElectronics annual Round Table meeting took place this year in Jakarta, Indonesia. With over 50 participants from all over the world, the Round Table was a successful event, looking into developments that currently affect the electronics sector all over the world. The need to protect labour rights was at the core of all the discussions. Environmental issues were also discussed. A series of concrete plans was designed to streamline the exchange of information and research efforts, and to continue dialogue on issues such as e-waste, freedom of association and precarious employment.

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## New coordinator MVO Platform

Suzan van der Meij will be joining SOMO as of 1 December 2008. She will be taking on coordination of the MVO Platform, together with Martje Theuws. She is replacing Gemma Crijns in this position. Suzan van der Meij worked for ICCO for many years; in recent years she was seconded through this organisation as a lobbyist at Aprovev in Brussels. See [www.mvoplatform.nl](http://www.mvoplatform.nl)

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## **New publications**

- Sustainable Procurement in a European Context: practices of IT procurement in five EU countries
  - Taxation and Financing for Development
  - Mobile Connections: Supply Chain Responsibility of Five Mobile Phone Companies
  - Sustainability in the Dutch Power Sector: Fact Sheet Series
  - Corporate Social Responsibility: Whose Voice Is Heard?
  - Silenced to Deliver: Mobile phone manufacturing in China and the Philippines
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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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