

Global Fellows Forum
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Improving the Accountability of Companies in the EU: The Ideology of Corporate Social Responsibility and its Limits

Abstract

The research proposes to examine the notion of corporate social responsibility as it has been put forward within the European Union since 2001, and as it has been discussed by business, NGOs and unions in the recently completed "Multistakeholder Forum on CSR" hosted by the European Commission. The presentation will attempt to address the limitations of the CSR concept and explore what may be more promising ways to improve the accountability of corporations domiciled in the EU. The thesis which will be presented is that market-based mechanisms for the improvement of CSR are insufficient, and that regulatory interventions are required alongside the "voluntary commitments" of companies. That thesis will be related to the wider debate on the role of developed States in channeling economic globalization into a form of development more conducive of human rights.