To:

Mr Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President of the European Commission  

Ms Federica Mogherini  
Vice-President of the European Commission  
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy  

Ms Elżbieta Bieńkowska  
Commissioner - Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs  

Ms Věra Jourová  
Commissioner - Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality  

Cc  

Ms Mercedes Garcia Perez  
Head of Unit – Human Rights, European External Action Service  

Brussels, 8 June 2018

Dear Vice-President Timmermans,  
Dear HRVP Mogherini,  
Dear Commissioners Bieńkowska and Jourová,

We, the undersigned NGOs, are pleased to provide for your earnest consideration the following suggested elements for an EU Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct.

An EU Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct remains a long-outstanding commitment of the EU. Its development has for years been eagerly anticipated and called-for by numerous stakeholders and Member States.

We echo the call that such an Action Plan is a crucial means by which the EU can prove global leadership and operationalize its legal duty to protect and promote human rights. In the context of responsible business, this can be achieved by adopting a legislative approach to corporate human rights due diligence and a more considered and proactive application of trade and investment tools for the advancement of human rights. The EU can make bolder efforts to secure the protection and safety of the civic space and human rights defenders abroad; provide more meaningful rules to make access to judicial remedy a reality for victims of business malpractice; and continue to build on steady advancements in the realm of corporate transparency.

In addition to operationalizing the legal duty to protect and promote human rights, it should now be well-recognized that responsible business conduct is a prerequisite for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. We therefore sincerely welcome the opportunity for dialogue in order to help continue to advance, and give meaningful effect to, the EU’s now seven-year long commitment to the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights.
We remain at your disposal to elaborate and clarify any elements of the attached paper, and we thank you for your earnest work and efforts in this direction so far.

Sincerely yours,

Neelanjana Mukhia
Head of Global Engagement Team
ActionAid

Iverna McGowan
Head of European Institutions Office and Advocacy Director
Amnesty International

Klara Skrivankova,
Senior Private Sector Adviser
Anti-Slavery International

Ben Vanpeperstraete
Lobby and Advocacy Coordinator
Clean Clothes Campaign International Office

Claudia Saller
Coordinator
European Coalition for Corporate Justice

Gaelle Dusepulchre
Permanent representative to the EU
FIDH / International Federation for Human Rights