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Complaint dismissed by the Norwegian OECD National Contact Point

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The Norwegian OECD National Contact Point (NCP) will not handle a complaint against the Norwegian Church Aid.

The Norwegian NCP concludes that the complaint is not against a “company” as understood in the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) and will therefore be dismissed. The complaint was against the Norwegian Church Aid for running camps with health hazards for internally displaced Roma in Kosovo.

That the Norwegian Church Aid is being blamed for failing to help Roma that may have been poisoned by lead in a camp in Kosovo is not a case for the National Contact Point for Responsible Business, says the Chair of the NCP, professor Hans Petter Graver.

The Norwegian NCP received the complaint on June 22, 2011. The complaint was submitted by the American attorney Dianne Post, on behalf of 129 people that claim to have been exposed to hazardous conditions in three camps for Roma people in Kosovo. Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) has done what was in their power to ameliorate the situation, the aid organization says in its response to the complaint.

– The NCP assesses complaints regarding breaches of the OECD Guidelines for MNEs. We have consulted with the OECD Investment Committee that supports our view, says the leader of the secretariat of the NCP. This case clearly does not fall within the range of the Guidelines.

The OECD Guidelines for MNEs are recommendations from OECD-countries on how companies should address human rights and environmental issues, among other things.

In line with the procedural guidance of the Guidelines, an assessment has been made as to whether the case merits further consideration. Dianne Post, the American attorney representing the 129 Roma people, and NCA, have been informed of the decision to dismiss the case.

Norwegian Contact Point for Responsible Business

As a member of the OECD, Norway is required to establish a national contact point, a complaint mechanism to address alleged breaches of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The contact point is not a legal body, but can assess the extent to which a company has breached the Guidelines.

The complaint against NCA is the second case considered by the NCP that was reformed in March this year. The first case, involving mediation between Cermaq, the Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature and the Forum for Environment and Development (ForUM), was concluded this summer.

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