

# How to make Universal Standards work: More Questions than Answers?

Dr. Marianne Beisheim; Dr. Andrea Liese, Free University Berlin

Regulatory regimes of national welfare states are meant to correct market failures. Processes of globalization and deregulation weaken these national policies. More and more economic and other social processes (trade and financial flows, migration, emissions etc.) transcend political borders. Therefore, no single state is able to effectively deal with the resulting problems unilaterally, for example, no single country can stop climate change. Moreover, we witness rising competitive pressures on national standards. Hence, if we want to deal with such problems effectively, we need to create a “level playing field”, that is we need universal standards.

International Institutions, like UNEP or the ILO, have been set up to support international cooperation and to facilitate the negotiation and setting of universal norms as well as their implementation. In fact, we do already have an array of universal norms – but mostly “on paper”. Analyzing the debate on the ILO norms and on the establishment of an “United Nations Environment Organization” we discuss deficits and possible solutions to “make international norms work”. We identify a lack of ownership and norm acceptance by those actors involved in the implementation process (notably companies) as one major obstacle to norm effectiveness. Another obstacle derives from a lack capacity to implement international standards (notably by the national bureaucracy). New modes of governance and partnerships between public and private actors are seen as a way to overcome these obstacles. They help to integrate the relevant actors of the implementation process and bundle resources and are therefore meant to put global environmental and social standards into practice.

## **Curriculum Vitae**

**Andrea Liese** is a political scientist, with a particular interest in international relations theory, international organizations and institutions as well as human rights and workers' rights. She graduated in Frankfurt a.M. in 1995 and received her Ph.D. from Bremen University in 2001. In January 2001 she joined a research project on international regulation of work in times of globalization, where she investigated into the International Labour Organization's policy responses to the global problem of child labour. Since October 2001 she is Assistant Professor at the Free University of Berlin, where she analyzes the changing role of international intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) in new networks of governance.

**Marianne Beisheim** holds a Ph.D. in Political Science, her thesis investigates whether interest groups are "Fit for Global Governance" (2004). Marianne Beisheim was working for several years as a Research Associate at the University of Bremen and she is now with the Free University Berlin. She moreover works for the German Parliament, previously for the Enquete-Commission "Globalization" and now in the office of the Chairman of the Environment Committee, Dr. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker. Her work and her publications focus on globalization and privatization, global governance and forms of soft-law, the role of NGOs and questions of democratic legitimacy, and on environmental politics.

## **Contact**

Dr. Marianne Beisheim

Free University Berlin, Institute for Political Science;

Deutscher Bundestag, MdB-Büro Dr. E. U. von Weizsäcker

Email: mbeisheim@gmx.de

Dr. Andrea Liese

Free University Berlin, Institute for Political Science

Email: aliese@zedat.fu-berlin.de