

Terms of Reference

Strategic Legal & Policy Advisor – Competence Centre for Human Rights Due Diligence

Publication of Terms of Reference: Friday, 20th June 2025

Deadline for applications: Friday, 18th July 2025, 17:00 CET

About

We are building a team to launch the new trade union Competence Centre for Human Rights Due Diligence, starting with three key positions: Head of the Centre, Strategic Legal and Policy Advisor, and Programme Manager. All positions are listed here: <https://uniglobalunion.org/jobs/>

The Competence Centre's mission is to ensure that human rights due diligence strengthens respect for workers' rights throughout value chains, especially the enabling rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining.

With the shift from voluntary to mandatory human rights due diligence (HRDD) in Europe and beyond, there is a significant opportunity for trade unions to utilize HRDD laws to hold companies accountable for respecting workers' rights. Trade unions need to strengthen their capacity and strategies to fully leverage new legal frameworks, including deepening their knowledge of the laws and promoting awareness of best practices, as well as integrating HRDD strategies into their global networks. UNI Global Union, IndustriALL Global Union, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and the German trade union confederation DGB have joined forces to establish the Competence Centre, which will develop this capacity across the global trade union movement.

The Competence Centre will be set up as a non-profit Foundation in the Netherlands. There will be no physical office, so the team will work remotely or potentially from the office of a partner trade union.

The priorities for 2025-27 include establishing an HRDD Helpdesk to provide guidance, support, and training for trade unions worldwide, and implementing pilot programs in two priority value chains (garments and critical minerals) to test and refine HRDD strategies within global union networks.

The Initiative for Global Solidarity (IGS) has been supporting the establishment of the Competence Centre since July 2024. IGS is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ.

The role

The Strategic Legal & Policy Advisor will establish and manage the Centre's Helpdesk, providing expert legal and strategic advice to trade unions on using human rights due diligence (HRDD) to strengthen workers' rights across global value chains. The Helpdesk will offer legal and practical support, including responses to specific cases and requests for training, and will connect unions to appropriate referral partners when needed. As part of a small, cross-functional team, the

Advisor will also contribute to the Centre's advocacy, communications, and knowledge-sharing efforts.

Key responsibilities include:

- Develop and maintain the Helpdesk's legal knowledge base, procedures, and referral partnerships.
- Respond to incoming Helpdesk queries and coordinate cross-referrals to expert partners where relevant.
- Provide legal and strategic advice on applying HRDD laws and instruments to support union engagement or secure a remedy.
- Contribute legal expertise to training content and capacity-building activities.
- Monitor HRDD legislation and enforcement developments across jurisdictions.
- Support the Centre's advocacy efforts by shaping legal strategy and policy messaging.
- Contribute to communications and learning outputs, including case studies, guidance notes, or reports.
- Collaborate closely with the Programme Manager and Helpdesk team to ensure integrated delivery.
- Report to the Head of the Competence Centre.

Skills & Experience

The Strategic Legal & Policy Advisor will bring a strong legal background, with at least 7–10 years of relevant professional experience in labour rights, human rights law, or policy advocacy. The ideal candidate will combine deep legal expertise in human rights due diligence (HRDD) with a practical understanding of trade unions and global value chains. They will be strategic, self-directed, and collaborative, with a demonstrated commitment to advancing workers' rights through legal and institutional channels.

Key Criteria

The recruitment panel will assess candidates based on the following criteria:

- **Education:** A law degree (LLB, JD, or equivalent) is required. An advanced legal qualification such as an LLM, bar admission, or postgraduate specialization in human rights or labour law is strongly preferred.
- **Professional Experience:** At least 7–10 years of professional experience in legal advisory work, labour rights advocacy, or human rights law at the national or international level, ideally within or alongside trade union or civil society movements.
- **HRDD Expertise:** Demonstrated knowledge and application of human rights due diligence instruments and frameworks, including national and EU legislation (e.g., the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, the German Supply Chain Act, the French Duty of Vigilance).
- **Access to Remedy:** Experience engaging with judicial and non-judicial mechanisms for addressing labour rights abuses (e.g., OECD National Contact Points, grievance mechanisms, administrative complaints, or litigation).
- **Trade Union Understanding:** A solid understanding of the global trade union movement and experience working with or supporting trade unions, federations, or allied labour rights organizations.

- **Training and Capacity Building:** Proven experience in developing and delivering legal or policy training and workshops, both online and in person, tailored to union or grassroots audiences.
- **Strategic Thinking & Initiative:** Ability to contribute to new initiatives, navigate uncertain or dynamic contexts, and develop systems or processes from inception.
- **Language Skills:** Fluency in English is required. Proficiency in additional languages—mainly German, Spanish, or French—is a strong asset.

Hiring process

To apply for this role, please submit a CV (maximum three pages) and a cover letter (maximum two pages) in English, describing your motivation, skills, and experience, to hr@uniglobalunion.org.

Deadline for applications: Friday, 18th July 2025, 17:00 CET

Interviews

The Steering Committee will review and shortlist applications according to the criteria above. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an online interview in August.

Hiring terms and conditions

The successful candidate will be hired as an independent contractor or on secondment¹ for the first 18 months of setting up the Competence Centre. The contract will initially be with UNI Global Union as the main grant-holder for the Competence Centre's funding.

Location: The preferred location is within Europe, and candidates must have the right to work in the country where they are based.

The role is envisaged as a part-time role. Competitive compensation will be offered, depending on skills and experience.

For questions about this role, please get in touch with alke.boessiger@uniglobalunion.org

¹ Candidates may apply for this role as a secondment from their current employer. In this case, please specify this in your application.