



Media opportunity, EMBARGO: 25 January 2006, 4 pm

The Public Eye Awards 2006 - A Dubious Distinction

Speech by Sonja Ribi, Pro Natura – Friends of the Earth Switzerland

Dear members of the press,

Today, on the opening day of the World Economic Forum 2006 (WEF) the Berne Declaration and Pro Natura will confer "The Public Eye Awards" for irresponsible corporate behavior for the second time. The "Public Eye" was launched in the year 2000 and has been carried out annually since. Held at the same time as the WEF and the only true alternative, it has already become an institution. The organizers offer a public platform at which the dark side of a uniquely profit oriented globalization is illuminated.

What you can expect at today's award ceremony

A serious and nonetheless entertaining afternoon with quite a few satirical elements awaits us again this year. Dr. Gret Haller, publicist and former president of the Swiss National Council will open the event with her keynote speech "Responsible Corporations: A Contradiction in Terms?" at 2 pm. The well-known Swiss actor and comedian Patrick Frey will moderate the subsequent award ceremony. Experts who are well acquainted with the misdeeds of this year's award winners will impressively portray how on site reality stands in blatant contrast to the corporations PR on responsibility. Moreover we will have the honor of welcoming a very special guest.

"The Public Eye Awards" message

"The Public Eye Awards" aim to remind WEF members and other corporations that the public expects more environmental responsibility, demands the respect of human and labor rights and does not accept tax avoidance.

The subject matter "corporate responsibility" has been receiving increased attention in corporate circles. Until now, most corporations have only gone as far as paying it lip service. Pro Natura and the Berne Declaration have been calling for binding international legislation to monitor corporate responsibility for a long time. The corporations nominated for "The Public Eye Award", or more precisely for their irresponsible social and ecological deeds clearly demonstrate that enforcement mechanisms are direly needed.

The Dubious Distinctions

The "Public Eye" organizers have chosen one winner among the nominees for each of the three categories Environment, Social Rights (Human and Labor Rights) and Taxes. The magnitude of the irresponsible corporate misconduct as well as the degree of its immediate concern were decisive for the choices. Nevertheless all the nominees warrant our attention. The winners are model cases and not of outstanding character. But now to the awards:

A Project of The Berne Declaration (coordination) and Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth Switzerland

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The "Public Eye Award" in the category Environment goes to the Chevron Corp. During almost 30 years the Chevron Corp. (formerly Chevron Texaco) contaminated large parts of the pristine Amazon rainforests in northern Ecuador.

Chevron Corp. was nominated by the Californian environmental organization Amazon Watch. **Jennifer DeLury Ciplet**, Managing Director of the **Clean Up Ecuador Campaign**, will tell you why. *See separate speech.*

The winner in the Social Rights category is The Walt Disney Company. Serious labor and human rights violations by South Chinese Walt Disney subcontractors tarnish the carefree image that the entertainment giant normally tries to project with its films and cartoon figures.

Parry Leung from **Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior (SACOM)**, an organization which keenly observes the doings of a number of transnational corporations from its seat in Hong Kong, will tell us more. *See separate speech.*

In the third category Taxes the winner 2006 is Citigroup Inc. Citigroup subsidiary Citibank has helped wealthy individuals, corporations, corrupt dictators and criminals to discretely avoid tax authorities and invest their money abroad. In many cases the funds flowed into Citigroup offshore companies in tax havens.

Lucy Komisar from **Tax Justice Network**, to which the Berne Declaration also adheres to, will give us a taste. *See separate speech.*

Oliver Classen from the Berne Declaration will present a **further highlight** of this event, the **"Positive Award"**, which will be granted for the first time today.

Sonja Ribi

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Our Innovation 2006: The “Positive Award”

Speech by Oliver Classen, Berne Declaration

Dear members of the press,

As you know, the World Economic Forum has chosen „The Creative Imperative“ as the theme of its conference in Davos this year. There will surely be a lot of talk about creativity over at the congress center – in fact, nothing *but* talk. We on the other hand have actually created something new for our alternative event: the ‚Positive Award‘.

We originally thought we would present this new award to a corporation that was behaving responsibly and started to look around for a worthy winner. But after talking to our partner organisations we changed our mind. They usually nominate the award candidates and know the companies in their field much better than we do. Yes, they said, some corporations have indeed improved their performance in recent years, but even the best of them still have a long way to go until anyone would consider calling them socially aware or environmentally sound. And to award a prize just for trying – well none of us wanted to set the bar that low.

So why did we insist on the idea of a positive award? Partly because we liked the idea of offering encouragement and showing hopeful perspectives and partly because we suddenly realized where to look for worthy candidates: as NGOs know only too well, transnational corporations only clean up their act if someone keeps them on their toes. And more often than not that someone is a local or global initiative that says enough is enough. And so, for the first time, we are giving out an award for citizen activists – people who took it upon them to conduct a campaign against irresponsible corporate behavior and prevailed.

The first „Positive Award“ goes, jointly, to the Mexican labor union SNRTE and the two German NGOs Germanwatch and FIAN (Food First Information & Action Network). In a well-coordinated campaign the three organizations successfully opposed the illegal closing of the Euzkadi-plant of the multinational tire manufacturer Continental in El Salto, Mexico. Exemplary NGO-coordination and professional lobbying as well as direct contacts with Continental not only led to the reopening of the plant but also made the workers part owners of the tire factory in which they work. Union activist Jesus Torres Nuño, Cornelia Heydenreich of Germanwatch and Martin Wolpold-Bosien of FIAN will now give you their view of this unusual success story.

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Program and complete list of the nominations at www.publiceye.ch

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