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## “The Dark Side of Cyberspace”

**A new study reveals violations of workers' rights by suppliers for Dell, Fujitsu Siemens Computers and Lenovo.**

The non-governmental organisations WEED (World Economy, Ecology, and Development - Berlin) and SACOM (Students and Scholars against Corporate Misbehaviour – Hong Kong) are today publishing the study *“The Dark Side of Cyberspace - Inside the Sweatshops of China's Hardware Production”*. The study is based on 45 interviews conducted with employees of the two suppliers of well-known computer companies. It paints an alarming picture of the working conditions in this industry.

In the cases of the investigated suppliers Compeq Technology (supplier of Dell, Lenovo, a.o.) and Excelsior Electronics (supplier of Fujitsu Siemens Computers, a.o.) there are massive violations of national labour law, the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation, and the brand companies' own codes of conduct.

“The workers are under great stress. This is not only owed to overtime work, but also to the strict factory regime. Compeq even has rules stating how staff must move while in the factory, and how the hair must be worn”, says Charles Ho from SACOM.

Before today's publication, the brand companies were given the chance to react to the reproaches made by the study. According to Sarah Bormann of WEED, “the brand companies' conduct is disgraceful. That means that usually there are attempts to cover up business ties with the investigated factories and problems are played down. Not one of the brand companies has so far announced concrete measures for the improvement of the working conditions”.

WEED and SACOM demand from the brand companies that they assume responsibility for their supply chains. Through pricing pressure and tightly calculated delivery deadlines, they directly influence the working conditions. “The workforce represents the industry's buffer of flexibility. This is currently becoming apparent through the effects of the financial crisis which have also hit the Chinese export industry. Consequently, Compeq and Excelsior have also laid off migrant workers”, says Jenny Chan of SACOM.

In order to increase the pressure on brand companies, WEED has initiated the European campaign “ProcureITfair”. The objective is to implement social criteria in public institutions' IT tenders. “Public institutions are major customers for the computer companies. Instead of continuing the “thrifty is nifty” procurement philosophy, they should implement social criteria in public tenders as obligatory conditions. Through a socially responsible procurement policy, universities and communities can significantly contribute to better working conditions in the computer industry”, says Florian Butollo of WEED.

**The study „The Dark Side of Cyberspace“ and the brand companies' respective comments on the study's findings, as well as photos, are available for free use on this website:**

[www.pcglobal.org](http://www.pcglobal.org)

### Further information:

WEED – World Economy, Ecology, Development: [www.pcglobal.org](http://www.pcglobal.org) / [www.weed-online.org](http://www.weed-online.org) / [www.procureitfair](http://www.procureitfair)

SACOM – Students and Scholars against Corporate Misbehaviour: [www.sacom.hk](http://www.sacom.hk)

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