



**Call for Papers and Invitation to the IBHR IG Workshop**  
Annual Conference of the European Society of International Law  
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens  
12<sup>th</sup> September 2019

**Sovereignty and the Extraterritorial Obligations of States under International Human Rights Law**

The theme of the 15<sup>th</sup> ESIL Annual Conference leads with sovereignty, and to what extent this fundamental concept of public international law is under strain due to multiple challenges, ranging from an increasing number of territorial disputes, the vanishing of territories due to climate change and the diminishing of independence due to globalisation. Against this background, the Workshop organized by the ESIL Interest Group on International Business and Human Rights seeks to re-examine the extraterritorial obligations of States under international human rights law to regulate business entities that operate transnationally.

There is a tension between sovereignty and extraterritoriality because on the one hand, sovereignty implies the exclusive competence of States to prescribe and enforce laws over a territory and the persons living there. On the other hand, there is a corresponding duty of non-intervention in the affairs of other States. The presumption against extraterritoriality further limits the reach of a State's domestic laws beyond its territory. The aim of the Workshop is to assess whether, how, and to what extent this tension impacts on the State duty to protect human rights, the corporate responsibility to respect human rights, as well as on the right to access remedies and compensation for rights-holders.

The workshop will approach this theme from five directions:

1. **Do** States have obligations under international human rights law to regulate the extraterritorial activities of business entities domiciled in their territory? What is the role of *soft law* in this context? What is the current status of domestic legislation that imposes extraterritorial liability for human rights violations committed abroad? How do

recent developments – particularly in the field of international environmental law – inform this discussion? Does extraterritoriality operate differently within areas of international law relevant to the regulation of business activities (e.g. human rights law, investment law, trade law, or the protection of general interests such as the environment)?

2. **How** can other areas of international law – such as jurisdiction, State responsibility and due diligence – have an impact on the accountability of transnational corporations?
3. **What** is the ambit of application and what are the inherent limits of extraterritorial jurisdiction?
4. **Why** is there a tension between State sovereignty and extraterritoriality? Can this tension be reconciled? How should this be achieved?
5. **How** is this issue dealt with by the treaty on business and human rights, currently under negotiation? Does it provide for adequate and /or innovative solutions?

Please more information about the conference here: [theme](#) | [programme](#).

## Time and location

12<sup>th</sup> September 2019 | Time: TBC

Place: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

## Programme

The Workshop is composed of two parts. The first part will be dedicated to the presentation and discussion of two to four papers. After the networking break, we will have a discussion with a special guest and a business meeting with IG members. The detailed programme will be announced at the beginning of May 2019.

## Call for papers

The discussion in the IBHR Interest Group will have the objective to foster an interdisciplinary exchange with leading experts from diverse academic disciplines and communities of practice.

The IG co-conveners will take the decision of acceptance and the applicants will be informed at the end of April 2019. After the conference, ESIL provides the opportunity to publish papers in the ESIL SSRN Series.

## Guidelines

### ESIL selection criteria:

- Originality and innovativeness
- Relevance to the theme
- Geographical and gender balance

### How to submit:

- CV & abstract (max 300 words) in PDF
- Submission date: 20th April 2019
- Decision announced: 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019
- Please email to:  
mihaela.barnes@graduateinstitute.ch

We wish everyone a successful academic year and are looking forward to meeting you at our annual seminar! For any questions, please email us at bordignon.hric@gmail.com.

*Your conveners:*

*Dr. Marta Bordignon, Temple University Rome*

*Dr. Mara Tignino, University of Geneva*

*Prof. Angelica Bonfanti, University of Milan*

*Dr. Mihaela Barnes, Graduate Institute, Geneva*

The Interest Group is unable to provide funding for travel and accommodation. Please see the ESIL website for information about [travel grants](#) and [carers' grants](#) offered to ESIL members, and other relevant information about the conference.

Selected speakers are strongly encouraged to become members of the Society and to register for the Annual Conference; please note, however, that the Society is unable to offer reduced conference registration fees to speakers at pre-conference events (please do not register as agora speakers).

Selected speakers can indicate their interest in being considered for the ESIL Young Scholar Prize, if they meet the eligibility conditions as stated on the [ESIL website](#). The [ESIL Secretariat](#) must be informed of all speakers who wish to be considered for the Prize by 15 May at the very latest.