



## **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ESIL INTEREST GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS 2023/24**

*Coordinating Committee: Prof. Belen Olmos Giupponi (Kingston University), Dr. Emanuela Orlando (Sussex University), Nina M. Hart (King's College London) and Prof. Cristina Elena Popa Tache (Romanian Academy).*

The Interest Group on Business and Human Rights (IG BHR) is pleased to submit this report to our members and stakeholders. The membership of the IG BHR counts 398 members at the time of writing this Report.

### **1. Activities during 2023**

In 2023, we worked on the organisation of the annual workshop of the IG, which took place in Aix-en-Provence on the 30 August 2023, in occasion of the 18th Annual Conference of the European Society of International Law. The workshop was delivered in hybrid format and was well attended both in person and online. In line with the theme of the ESIL Annual Conference, which this year focussed on the question, 'Is international Law Fair?', the theme of the workshop was 'Fairness in International Law of Business and Human Rights'. In that framework, the workshop featured several interesting presentations which explored the question of fairness in international business and human rights law through different perspectives, including as a cross-cutting general principle, with specific respect to questions of companies' due diligence and corporate accountability and liability, and as a procedural principle in public interest and environmental litigation.

We would like to take this occasion to thank again the participants and particularly our speakers: Nico Krisch (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies) for delivering the keynote speech; Jannika Jahn (Max Planck Institute of Comparative Public Law and International Law); Inbal Djalovski (Office of Prosecutor, International Criminal Court); Giuseppe Corsaro (University of Catania); Alessandra De Tommaso (Middlesex University); Omer Erkut Bulut (King's College London); Raas Nabel (Research Society of International Law); Izabela Schiffauer (Adam Mickiewicz University); Alina Gentimir and Ada-Iuliana Popescu (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University); and Maciej Gajos (University of Wroclaw).

At the end of the year, the IG was very pleased to welcome two new members to the IG Coordinating Committee: Nina Hart and Cristina Elena Popa Tache.

Nina is a PhD candidate at King's College London, Dickson Poon School of Law, as well as a New York qualified lawyer and qualified solicitor for England and Wales. She has previous experience serving as legal counsel for treaty disputes and negotiations and advising policy-makers in the field of international law, including among others international human rights law, international economic law and international criminal law.

Cristina is a researcher in Romanian Academy, associate professor of public international law at the Law Department of the 'Andrei Șaguna' University and Bucharest University of Economic Studies, with expertise in various areas of international investment law, human rights, business law, as well as communication and new technologies and transdisciplinarity. She is also a researcher member of Centre International de Recherches et Études Transdisciplinaires (CIRET), Paris and Vice-President of Research and International Relations of the Society of Juridical and Administrative Sciences, Adjuris, Editor at Taylor & Francis and Routledge, and Editor-in-chief of the International Investment Law Journal by Adjuris.

In December 2023, both Cristina and Nina successfully joined Emanuela Orlando and Belen Olmos Giupponi as members of the IG on International Business and Human Rights Coordinating Committee. Belen was also re-elected in December 2023.

## 2. Activities during 2024

In 2024, we worked on the organisation of the annual workshop of the IG, which took place in Vilnius on the 4th of September 2024 as part of the 19th Annual Conference of the European Society of International Law. The workshop was delivered in hybrid format and was well attended both in person and online. In line with the theme of the ESIL Annual Conference, which this year focussed on the question 'Technological Change and International Law', the workshop's focus was on 'New frontiers of International Business and Human Rights Law in the face of Technological Innovations'. In that framework, the workshop featured several interesting presentations which explored the question of technological changes in international business and human rights law through different perspectives, *inter alia*: due diligence, just energy transition, artificial intelligence, environmental protection, supply chain, human rights and consumer protection.

We would like to take this occasion to thank again the participants and particularly our speakers: *Alessandra De Tommaso (Middlesex University, London School of Law); Antoine Duval and Klaas Eller (Asser Institute and University of Amsterdam); Maciej Gajos (University of Wrocław); Zuzanna Choińska (University of Warsaw); Esmeralda Columbo (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Post-doc, European Institute on Economics and the Environment); Sissy Katsoni (Rüth-Universität Bochum); Iris Benöhr (Southampton Law School) and Elise Vâlcu (National University of Science and Technology 'Politehnica' Bucharest).*

After the workshop we discussed different possibilities for publication of papers, including with the ESIL Proceedings, New ESIL Papers Series.

The captured moments from the event can be seen here: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/V5DVbNxX6Y1V7tA89>.

At the same time, we promoted our annual conference, discussed new activities and updated our group Blog: [igbusinessandhumanrights – ESIL International Business and Human Rights Interest Group](https://igbusinessandhumanrights.wordpress.com/2024/08/29/workshop-at-esil-annual-conference/) webpage: <https://igbusinessandhumanrights.wordpress.com/2024/08/29/workshop-at-esil-annual-conference/>.

## 3. Agenda for the remaining of 2024

Since the workshop in September 2024, we are currently focussing on the following priorities:

- Organisation of the 2025 annual workshop in occasion of the ESIL Annual Conference, which will have the theme 'Reconstructing International Law' in Berlin.
- Support Members' activities in the field of Business and Human Rights. In terms of prospective activities, we would also like to sponsor a workshop during the next months.

- Increasing the visibility of the IG BHR by using social media platforms for the posting of news and events. We will maintain the blog updated and are open to members' suggestions.
- Following the meeting with the Board, we will enhance efforts to increase participation and representation of colleagues in the IG BHR, including through requesting people to self-identify as to whether they are members when they register for events or respond to CfPs and promoting membership during events.

#### **4. Members' Queries and Participation**

We welcome proposals from our Members for the organisation of conferences, seminars, research fora and other similar events concerning Business and Human Rights generally.

If you have any other queries or any of the members of our IG would like to make any proposals in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Members of the Coordinating Committee by email:

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- Drd. Nina M. Hart: [nina.m.hart@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:nina.m.hart@kcl.ac.uk)

We also encourage contributions to the website content of the IG IBHR for participation from our members. We welcome contributions in the form of short blog pieces, book reviews, reports from conferences, research seminars, and other similar items which will be posted on <https://igbusinessandhumanrights.wordpress.com/>