



ESIL Interest Group on International Organizations

Call for Papers | ESIL Annual Conference 2024 | Vilnius

The ESIL Interest Group on International Organizations welcomes submissions for the interest group workshop taking place as part of the ESIL Annual Conference on **Wednesday, 4 September 2024, 09.00-12.00**, in Vilnius (Room TBC) and online.

THEME:

Defining the Role of International Organizations in the Digital Age

As the world has fully embraced the digital age, the participants in the international legal system grappling to re-define their place in the face of rapid technological change. International organizations take centerstage in this process in at least two ways that correspond to their traditional roles as fora for states and actors in international law in their own right. On the one hand, international organizations have supported states in their efforts to adopt international law to new technological challenges. The United Nations (UN) has facilitated the discussions on whether and how international law applies in cyberspace through different Groups of Governmental Experts (since 2004) and Open-Ended Working Groups (since 2021) at the level of the First Committee of the General Assembly. The African Union adopted a Common Position on the Application of International Law in Cyberspace in January 2024. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) has hosted an Artificial Intelligence for Global Good Summit since 2017, and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s Recommendation on the Ethics of AI represents the first global standards on effective and ethical AI governance. While the AI Recommendation is non-binding, the Council of Europe Committee on Artificial Intelligence recently finalized a draft Convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law. A notable challenge in these negotiations is the role of the private sector (notably big tech corporations) as participants in the negotiations and as subjects of governmental regulation. Therefore, UN Secretary-General proposed

the adoption of a Global Digital Compact to be agreed at the Summit of the Future in September 2024, which involves all stakeholders: governments, the United Nations system, the private sector, civil society, grass-roots organizations, academia, and individuals, including youth.

At the same time, international organizations have also advanced the digital agenda in their capacity as actors on the international stage. While the European Union's (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is intended to protect natural persons regarding the processing of personal data within the EU's legal space, the interconnected nature of global economic relations and the fact data circulate transnationally via the Internet has led to a 'Brussels effect' beyond European territorial boundaries. The EU's proposed AI Act may similarly de facto externalize EU legislation, which raises issues regarding the legitimacy of international law-making, particularly from a Global South perspective. International organizations also use digital technologies such as blockchain and AI for predictive analytics, image or voice recognition, natural language processing, and/or workflow automation. In 2020, the UN Secretary-General adopted a Data Strategy to "focus on building the data, digital, technology and innovation capabilities the UN needs to succeed in the 21st century". In turn, reliance on digital technologies exposes international organizations to cyber threats. International organizations repeatedly report cyber attacks, such as the most recent unprecedented cyber attack on the International Criminal Court in October 2023. Like states and other actors in the digital space, international organizations have to fortify their cyber defences to ensure and safe use of digital technologies.

We invite papers that discuss the role of international organizations in the digital age. Some suggested sub-themes are as follows:

- International organizations as fora to facilitate technological change and global cooperation in the use of AI;
- How does the digital transformation affect the status of private actors (notably tech corporations) in international organizations;
- The role of technology (cyberspace, blockchain, AI, virtual reality) in the operations of international organizations;
- International organizations and cyber threats
- The role of international organizations in supporting informed decision-making processes through the use of new technologies.
- How international organizations can help in reducing the digital divide between the global North and the South

The abstracts should be between 500 and 600 words, and be submitted, alongside a short biography of 200 words maximum in the same document, to igioesil@gmail.com. The deadline for submission of the abstract is Friday, 12 April 2024. Participants will be expected to submit an extended abstract of 3,000 words ahead of the Conference.

Given the aims and format of the panels adopted by ESIL, the Interest Group will select abstracts pursuant to the following criteria:

- Submissions by early-career scholars
- Originality and innovativeness of the work
- Relevance to the Panel theme
- Geographical and gender balance

The following information must be provided with each abstract:

- The author's name and any affiliation
- Small biography (should be included in the same document)
- The author's contact details
- Whether the author is a current ESIL member

The ESIL encourages anyone participating in its activities to become a member, as the Society relies primarily on membership contributions to ensure its sustainability.

Organising Committee

- Christiane Ahlborn (Assistant Professor, Trinity College Dublin)
- Laura Luisa Huici Sancho (Senior Lecturer in international law, University of Barcelona)
- Lorenzo Gasbarri (Assistant Professor, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna)
- Mara Tignino (Senior Lecturer, University of Geneva)
- Miša Zgonec-Rozej (Legal Officer, International Criminal Court)

The Interest Group is unable to provide funding for travel and accommodation. Selected speakers will be expected to bear the costs of their own travel and accommodation. Some [ESIL travel grants](#) and [ESIL carers' grants](#) will be available to offer partial financial support to speakers who have exhausted other potential sources of funding.

Please see the [ESIL website](#) for all relevant information about the conference.

All participants at ESIL Interest Group workshops are required to register for the Annual Conference. There will be an option to register just to attend the IG workshops; however, all participants are warmly invited to attend the entire event.

ESIL Early-Career Scholar Prize

Papers accepted for this interest group workshop will be eligible for the ESIL ECSP. Candidates have to be ESIL members at the time of the submission of the abstract. More details about the prize, eligibility and procedure can be found here: <https://esil-sedi.eu/esil-early-career-scholar-prize/>