



Call for papers

Social sciences and the compliance spectrum in international law: From non-compliance to beyond compliance

Pre-workshop to 2024 ESIL Annual Conference in Vilnius
4 September 2024

Why do actors comply with international legal rules? Why do they not? And why do some go beyond what is required of them? What are the conditions that motivate compliance, or lack thereof? Traditionally, questions concerning compliance with or breaches of international law have been addressed theoretically, usually building upon assumptions from rationalist and constructivist approaches.

Yet, the growing cross-fertilization of international law and the social sciences promises novel and empirically driven insights. First, social science insights can help explain the actual drivers behind compliance levels. Second, they can help better understand the impact of different compliance levels on states and affected social groups. Third, they can help foster compliance, increase prosocial behavior, or support principled resistance.

Aimed at opening avenues for young and senior researchers interested in promoting interdisciplinary engagements, the research workshop will address different dimensions of compliance at the intersection of international law and the social sciences. Potential contributors are invited to submit proposals that apply social science insights to: (a) *explain* the factors accounting for different compliance levels – including non-compliance and behavior beyond compliance – with international legal rules; (b) *better understand* the impact of different compliance levels – including non-compliance and beyond compliance – on international actors or other entities; or (c) identify avenues for fostering compliance and mapping spaces for contestation of international law.

(a) Drivers behind the compliance spectrum: Participants may resort to social science methods to engage with different sets of factors accounting for different compliance

levels, including non-compliance and beyond compliance, with international law. They are welcome to address questions such as: What actual drivers underlie different compliance levels with international law? How do different regulatory designs affect compliance levels? Do and, if so, how do these drivers differ in different fields of international law?

(b) Effects of different levels of compliance: Participants are invited to use social science methods to assess actual effects of different compliance levels on states and other actors. What are the political, economic, social, and/or cultural ramifications of abiding with or violating international law on affected communities? What is the interplay between international obligations and domestic governance? Which actors and interests does (non-)compliance empower, and which others does it undermine?

(c) Promoting or resisting compliance: Participants may apply social science methods to suggest avenues to foster compliance with international law or to go beyond what is required, as well as map spaces for contestation of international rules. How can we promote compliance and prosocial behavior by international legal actors in the absence of strong enforcement mechanisms? How can we make sure that compliance with international law comports with the political, economic, social, and/or cultural context of national societies? Can (non)compliance with international law be weaponized by some actors or social groups to the detriment of others? And how can scientific and recent technological advances contribute to or curtail international law abidance?

Participants are encouraged to pursue these lines of inquiry while *clearly* articulating the social science-inspired method they (intend to) apply. Such methods may draw from psychology, political science, behavioral science, sociology, economics or any other relevant social science discipline and include methods ranging from (but not limited to) large-N studies, comparative studies, interviews, experiments, to participant observations. Potential contributors are welcome to address a particular instance of compliance levels or engage in multi-level analysis, and explore the international system as a whole, a specific branch of international law or certain norms across fields of international law.

Details

The workshop will be held in-person in Vilnius, with possibly one or two fully online panels. It is scheduled to take place on 4 September 2024 (time slot TBC).

We are looking for participants who are willing to present 'think pieces' of approximately 2-3,000 words¹ or draft articles of max. 8,000 words that will structure the discussion and debate at the meeting. The IG meeting will be held in a conventional workshop-style format.

If you wish to contribute, please send us an abstract which includes a title, an abstract of maximum 300 words (covering the core question, sources of data and methods, if applicable, and key argument/findings) and short bio (in the same file) to esilsocsci@gmail.com. Please CC the IG convenors, Moshe Hirsch (moshe.hirsch@huji.ac.il), Zuzanna Godzimirska

¹ Please note that, due to their short length, the think pieces will not be eligible for the ESIL Early-Career Scholar Prize 2024.

(zuzanna.godzimirska@jur.ku.dk), Tommaso Soave (soavet@ceu.edu), Ezgi Yildiz (ezgi.yildiz@csulb.edu), and Eva van der Zee (eva.leora.van.der.zee@uni-hamburg.de), write 'ESIL SSIL Abstract - Social sciences and the compliance spectrum in IL' in the e-mail's subject field and note in your email, whether you expect to participate in-person in the workshop.

Abstracts should be received by **19 April 2024**. Submitters will be advised of the outcome of selection procedure by the end of April.

Depending on the number and quality of the submissions, the IG convenors may consider turning workshop contributions into a series of blog posts on EJIL:Talk! and/or a Special Issue in an internationally renowned journal.

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 to attend only the IG workshops; however, all participants are warmly invited to attend the entire event.

Selected speakers should indicate their interest in being considered for the ESIL Early-Career Scholar Prize, if they meet the [eligibility conditions](#) as stated on the ESIL website. The [ESIL Secretariat](#) must be informed of all selected speakers who wish to be considered for the Prize before 30 April.