



International Economic Law
Interest Group

2025 ESIL

International Economic Law Interest Group Workshop

Call for abstracts

Reconstructing International Economic Law

The Interest Group on International Economic Law is organizing a pre-conference workshop on **Reconstructing International Economic Law**. This workshop will take place in person in Berlin on Wednesday 10 September 2025, 15:00-18:00, prior to the start of the ESIL 2025 Conference.

Theme of the workshop

2025 marks the 30th anniversary of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Over the past three decades, the organization has navigated the curiosity of its early years, the growth spurts of adolescence, and, more recently, the existential uncertainty of its twenties. However, in the last decade, the WTO has faced mounting challenges not only to its internal functioning but also from increasingly bold trade-restrictive measures adopted by its own Members. As an institution, the WTO has gradually lost its central role in international economic cooperation.

This decline is evident in the deadlock over the reappointment of Appellate Body Members, which has crippled the dispute settlement system, as well as the broader shift from multilateral trade negotiations to plurilateral agreements involving only subsets of engaged WTO Members. Meanwhile, WTO Members have become more assertive in testing the boundaries of their exceptions to non-discrimination and market access obligations. Trade wars, first launched under the Trump administration and again looming in his second term, exemplify this trend. Additionally, an increasing number of export restrictions—on key technologies due to national security concerns, on agricultural products in response to food security fears, and on cross-border data flows for privacy and security reasons—underscore the extent to which States are prioritizing domestic policy objectives over WTO commitments. At 30, the WTO stands at a crossroads, raising pressing questions about its future relevance in the global economic order.

Similar turmoil is being experienced in other areas of international economic law. In international investment law, the legitimacy of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanisms is increasingly questioned due to concerns over arbitral bias,

inconsistent rulings, and constraints on States' sovereign right to regulate. Efforts to reform ISDS, such as the creation of a multilateral investment court, face political and legal hurdles, for example in the works of UNCITRAL. Recently, States have been withdrawing from investment treaties, looking for different ways to attract foreign investment while maintaining their regulatory autonomy in relation to, for example, environmental protection.

In international financial and monetary law, institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) struggle to address financial instability, currency manipulation, and debt crises, especially amid geopolitical tensions and the rise of digital currencies. The fragmentation of global financial governance and the lack of enforceable rules for capital flows further complicate monetary stability and coordination.

In this workshop, in line with the ESIL 2025 conference theme, we want to explore (re)constructive responses to these challenges and foster forward-looking discussions. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Critically assessing the role of plurilateral trade agreements and the desirability of reinvigorating multilateral trade negotiations
- The use (and abuse) of security exceptions in trade law and their implications for the multilateral trading system
- The intersection of WTO law and unilateral economic sanctions and the impact of geopolitical tensions on trade governance
- Reinvigorating discussions on trade and sustainability and what role the WTO can exercise in climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Evaluating alternatives to ISDS and working towards sustainable solutions to international investment law disputes
- The increased withdrawal by States from investment treaties and the related implications for global investment governance
- National security exceptions in international investment agreements
- The regulatory divergence in digital trade regulation, the rise in digital domestic regulation, and the future of cooperation
- The role of the IMF in managing global financial stability, currency wars, and the regulation of digital currencies
- How to reconstruct global economic governance: proposals for institutional and normative reforms to strengthen international economic law
- The role of international economic law institutions in the future of food security
- Critical reflection on the methodological approaches that international economic law (IEL) scholarship applies—or should apply—to better understand and contribute to the reconstruction of this legal field.

Submission of abstracts and timeline

The deadline for submitting abstracts is **15 April 2025 (23:59 CET)**.

Abstracts may be submitted in English or French. Submissions must not exceed 400 words, and should be submitted through this form:

<https://forms.gle/vnrw2Wu1XbDCzeBB6>

The following information must be provided with the abstract:

- The author's name and affiliation
- A short biographical note of maximum 300 words
- The author's contact details, including email address and phone number
- Whether the author is an ESIL member
- Whether the author is an early-career scholar (see [eligibility conditions](#) on the ESIL website) and, if so, whether they are interested in being considered for the ESIL Early-Career Scholar Prize.

Authors of selected abstracts will be notified by **30 April 2025**. Authors of accepted abstracts should submit a draft paper of approximately 4,000 words by **3 September 2025**. The draft will be circulated among the workshop participants. According to ESIL's event guidelines, accepted speakers are expected to attend in person in Berlin.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at iwillem@stanford.edu.

Important information

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 [2025 ESIL conference 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.

Convenors

Ines Willemys, Stanford University
Maria Laura Marceddu, ECIGL Edinburgh
Patrick Abel, University of Passau
Carlo de Stefano, Roma Tre University
Gustavo Prieto, FWO - Ghent University