



ESIL Interest Group on International Health Law

Hybrid workshop, 10 September 2025, 15:00 – 17:30 CEST (Berlin)

Global Health Law under Pressure: Facing Acute and Chronic Challenges

The field of global health law faces a crossroads. Two countries, the United States of America (US) and Argentina, have recently announced their withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO), and the US is also retreating from other organizations whose activities are related to health. In addition, several governments have substantially reduced international aid, leading to the sudden elimination of key global health programmes that provided life-saving medical treatment and products to vulnerable populations. This raises key questions of potential human rights violations. Moreover, the future of the pandemic agreement currently hangs by a thread, because negotiations are stalled on several key issues, including: Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing; Equity; Technology Transfer; One Health; and Financial Mechanisms. Furthermore, the amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR) of 2005 approved in 2024 are expected to enter into force in September 2025; nevertheless, the complex nature of the IHR's new and reformed provisions highlights the need for further clarity on their future implementation. These acute problems are compounded by other chronic challenges, such as the neglect of meaningful reforms, for instance to strengthen healthcare systems, or for the financing of bilateral humanitarian aid around the world.

The list of challenges mentioned above is by no means exhaustive, but rather exemplifies the ongoing overarching challenges that strike at the core of Global Health Law. Core tenets of the field, such as interstate cooperation and good faith fulfilment of obligations, are being undermined. There is, therefore, a need to offer scholarly analysis that may offer broader, longer-term perspectives, including existing and novel interpretations of norms. The current crossroads may bring new prospects for the field.

The current pre-conference workshop aims to offer a platform for discussing pressing problems in global health law. Legal analysis can shed light upon the range of options available, through both existing and new norms and mechanisms to better prepare against future contestations of global health law. For the purpose of discussion, global health law is understood as including not only those legal norms that emerge from the WHO; but rather, all fields of international law that strive for the protection of human health – including its intersections with animal and environmental health. (ie One Health).

ESIL Members are hereby invited to submit abstracts touching upon a range of subjects related to Global Health Law, including:

- Legal aspects of current contestations of the WHO and other international organizations. This includes doctrinal analysis, historical perspectives and normative studies.
- The current state of the Agreement on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (“Pandemic Agreement”) negotiated at the WHO. The workshop will take place after the deadline of May 2025 for its approval. As indicated above, we particularly welcome abstracts dealing with: Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing; Equity; Technology Transfer; One Health; and Financial Mechanisms
- All features of the amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) approved in 2024.
- Recent and ongoing human rights issues directly related to the field of health.
- The law of international organizations and the current debacle of the WHO and other organizations whose mandate touches upon health.
- The present and future of social protection for strengthening healthcare systems around the world.
- Trends in the reduction of bilateral (humanitarian) aid concerning global health matters.

Interested persons should submit abstracts which are no longer than **500 words**. A short biography of maximum **200 words** including the name and affiliation of the author(s) should be added. Early career scholars¹ (PhD students, post-doc) are particularly encouraged to answer this call.

Abstracts can be submitted to either of the following e-mail addresses: esil.igihl@gmail.com; Pedro.Villarreal@swp-berlin.org; stephanie.dagron@unige.ch

The deadline for the submission of abstracts is **10 May 2025**. The results of the selection process will be notified by **15 May**. Authors should then submit either an extended abstract of 1,500 words or a draft paper of maximum 8,000 words by **15 August**.

¹ In accordance with the definition adopted by the ESIL, “Early-career scholars are (i) candidates for a postgraduate degree in law; (ii) PhD candidates or those who have had their oral defence no longer than 3 years prior to the submission of an abstract; or (iii) those who are within the first 5 years of their career following the award of their last academic degree and who can provide evidence of their contribution to legal scholarship through academic publication”.

Venue : The event will take place in a hybrid mode, with its in-person component at the Free University of Berlin, **Henry-Ford-Building, Garystraße 35 - 14195 Berlin**. The exact room will be communicated in advance of the meeting.

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. The deadline to apply for ESIL grants is 15 June 2025.

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.

Eligibility: All ESIL Members are invited to submit abstracts. Non ESIL Members are also eligible to submit, but ESIL membership will be required if the abstract is selected. Speakers will also be required to register for the Annual Conference.

Abstracts will be selected pursuant to the following criteria:

- Originality and innovativeness of the proposal
- Relevance of the proposal to the topic of the event
- Geographical and gender balance

Steering Committee

Prof. Gian Luca Burci, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland.

Prof. Stéphanie Dagrón, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Medicine, University of Geneva, Switzerland.

Ashwinee Kumar, Free University of Brussels, Belgium.

Prof. Stefania Negri, School of law, University of Salerno, Italy.

Dr. Pedro A. Villarreal, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Germany.