



International Business  
and Human Rights  
Interest Group



20<sup>th</sup> ESIL Annual Conference

## RECONSTRUCTING INTERNATIONAL LAW

Berlin, Germany | 10–13 September 2025

(Interest Group Workshops: 10 & 11 September 2025)

HYBRID WORKSHOP

### Reconstructing International Law: Structural Shifts Under the UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights

International Business and Human Rights Annual Workshop

20th ESIL Annual Conference

11 September 2025

From 09:00 to 12:00 (CEST)

#### Workshop Overview

Aligned with the theme of the ESIL Conference, ‘Reconstructing International Law’, this workshop examines the potential of the UN Treaty on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Respect to Human Rights to reshape the relationship between international business and human rights. The treaty seeks to go beyond the voluntary framework of the 2011 UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by introducing binding corporate accountability mechanisms. This entails changes to the architecture of International Business and Human Rights Law (IBHRL), with potential spillover effects on other branches of international law.

Discussions will explore how this instrument can address existing gaps in international law, considering both the impact of transnational corporations on fundamental rights and the opposition of some states and corporations, which argue that the treaty could negatively affect investments and competition.

The workshop will bring together inter-, pluri-, and transdisciplinary perspectives to examine how the treaty may contribute to the reconstruction of the international legal landscape, the strengthening of corporate legal responsibility, and the protection of vulnerable communities. Among other aspects, it will assess the treaty’s implications for international business law, enforcement mechanisms, and the balance between international regulations and global economic interests.

Online participation

Please click here to join us [online](#)

**Welcome and Introduction**  
**The Coordinating Committee**  
**09.00-09.05**

**Panel I: Geopolitical Repositioning and Conceptual Transformations in International Law**

*(The UN Treaty among global powers and shifts in legal thinking) 09.05-10.00*

**Chair:** Professor Dr Belen Olmos Giupponi

1. **Larry Catá Backer**, *Pennsylvania State University*  
*Title: Internationalism in Four Tracks: The UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights Between the E.U., China, and the U.S. in the 2nd Quarter of the 21st Century*
2. **Panagiota Kotzamani**, *Sheffield University*  
*Title: From Liberal Foundations to Global Dialogue: Rethinking Universality in the UN Business and Human Rights Treaty*
3. **Valeria Fappani**, *University of Trento*  
*Title: From Norm Taker to Norm Shaper: China's Strategic Engagement with the UN Business and Human Rights Treaty*

**Panel II: Extraterritorial Corporate Accountability and International Cooperation**

*(Liability frameworks and transnational justice) 10.00-11.00*

**Chair:** Senior Lecturer Dr Emanuela Orlando & Ms Nina Hart

1. **Leonardo Bortolozzo Rossi**, *Sao Paulo State University*  
*Title: Extraterritorial Corporate Accountability and the UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights: Lessons from the Mariana Dam Disaster*
2. **Alessandra Aceti**, *Bocconi University*  
*Title: Transnational Environmental Crime and Extraterritorial Corporate Criminal Liability: Exploring the Potential and Assessing the Practical and Legal Obstacles to International Cooperation*
3. **Yahel Gerlic**, *Tel Aviv University*  
*Title: Ripple Effects and Legal Convergence: How the UN Binding Treaty Could Institutionalize Cross-border Accountability for Corporations*

**Panel III: Expanding Domains of Business and Human Rights Law**

*(Outer space activities, digital governance, and private sector health systems) 11.00-11.35*

**Chair:** Associate Professor Dr Cristina Elena Popa Tache

1. **Zuzanna Kulińska-Kępa**, *University of Warsaw*  
*Title: BHR in Outer Space: A New Frontier for the UN Business and Human Rights Treaty*
2. **Carlotta Manz**, *Free University of Brussels*  
*Title: Digital Health in Private Hands: Addressing Threats to Human Rights through the UN Binding Treaty*

**Closing Discussion / Roundtable & Conclusions**

**Theme:** *What future for the UN Binding Treaty? Implementation, cooperation and resistance.*

**Proposed duration:** 20–25 minutes

**Format:** Open session with short interventions from the speakers and Q&A with the audience

We wish everyone a productive academic year and look forward to meeting you!

For any inquiries, please email us at: [esilighbhr@gmail.com](mailto:esilighbhr@gmail.com).