

European Society of International Law  
Annual Conference (Malaga, 3-5 September 2026)

## Interest Group on International Economic Law Pre-Conference Workshop

### Call for Abstracts

#### International Economic Law and Conflict

The Interest Group on International Economic Law of the European Society of International Law (ESIL) organizes its pre-conference workshop on the theme **“International Economic Law and Conflict”**. The workshop will take place in-person in Malaga on **Wednesday 2 September 2026, 15:00-18:00**, prior to the commencement of the ESIL 2026 Annual Conference.

#### Theme of the Workshop

In the current context of disengagement from multilateralism, international economic law is increasingly marked by tension and reconfiguration. Armed conflicts, commercial wars, unilateral economic sanctions, and growing frictions between major economic actors now intersect with a renewed strategic focus on access to rare and critical minerals. This has accelerated a shift towards transactional, deal-making approaches in international economic relations, where ad hoc arrangements, bilateral bargains, and strategic partnerships increasingly supplement, or bypass, multilateral frameworks.

In international trade law, the rise in the adoption of unilateral war-related economic sanctions, the unprecedented increase in the application of tariff and non-tariff barriers by trading partners and the mounting US-China confrontation result in a situation of exceptional power-based disorder. Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have invoked the exception of national security in connection with armed conflicts pursuant to Article XXI of the General Agreement on Tariffs Trade (GATT) 1994, Article XIV bis of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and Article 73 of the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Moreover, numerous trading partners have suspended most-favoured nation (MFN) treatment towards belligerent States on reciprocity grounds. Against this background, the effective application of the basic rules and principles underpinning the WTO covered agreements becomes problematic and major economic powers are questioning their applicability also outside and beyond emergency situations with the aim to foster economic protectionism and support domestic industrial policies. In addition, in the past years, the WTO membership did not successfully overcome the semi-paralysis of the dispute settlement system due to the failure to appoint Appellate Body members.

Armed conflicts impact economic cooperation, trade and investment treaties. In international investment law, the war-related practice of arbitral tribunals grew exponentially. These developments may bring further clarity on typical definitions, provisions and substantive standards of treatment codified in international investment agreements, especially bilateral investment treaties. This is applicable to war loss



clauses, full protection and security, national security exceptions, denial of benefits provisions and the definition of “territory” of a Party in relation to occupied territories. For example, for what concerns denial of benefits clauses, numerous States have actioned the operation of Article 17 of the Energy Charter Treaty against belligerent Parties. More in general, military and defence policies and strategies intersect with the screening mechanisms of foreign direct investment (FDI), notably in relation to dual-use technological products.

In international financial and monetary law, currency manipulations and currency wars associated with enduring geopolitical tensions are not adequately addressed by the international financial institutions, and especially by the International Monetary Fund. The fragmentation in the global financial architecture aggravates further the attainment of the objectives of global financial stability.

In this workshop, in connection with the ESIL 2026 conference theme, the Interest Group on International Economic Law aims to explore the legal problems and solutions under international economic law in situations of conflict between economic powers. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- the relevance of unilateral economic sanctions in the performance of international trade and investment agreements
- the legal implications of transactional and ad-hoc arrangements for the coherence and legitimacy of international economic law
- international economic law and the law of treaties in relation to armed conflicts and conflicts in general
- the effects of armed conflicts on international economic cooperation and trade agreements
- national security exceptions in international trade law and (essential) security clauses in international investment law
- the suspension or revocation of MFN treatment under WTO law in geopolitical disputes
- effective remedies in the context of trade wars
- the intersection between (restrictions on) the commercial exploitation of natural resources, such as critical minerals, and armed conflicts
- the protection of foreign investment in occupied territories
- the denial of treaty-based benefits of foreign investors in international investment law
- the overlap between international investment law, international humanitarian law and territorial and maritime disputes
- the screening of FDI, especially in relation to dual-use products
- the role of investor-State dispute settlement as an element of lawfare strategy
- the impact of domestic legal frameworks and financial market infrastructures on currency conflicts and the functioning of the global financial architecture
- the role of non-state actors in international economic law in the context of conflicts
- economic and financial aspects related to the fight against climate change in the context of an armed conflict
- international economic law aspects of new technologies, including artificial intelligence, in situations of conflict



### Submission of Abstracts and Timeline

The deadline for submitting abstracts is **10 April 2026 (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/fvkRcw1EfkthJU8>

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 2026**. Authors of accepted abstracts should submit a working paper of approximately 4,000 words by **21 August 2026**. Working papers will be circulated among the workshop participants. According to the ESIL events guidelines, accepted speakers are expected to attend in person in Malaga.

For any questions, please contact [esilielig@gmail.com](mailto:esilielig@gmail.com) and [carlo.destefano@uniroma3.it](mailto:carlo.destefano@uniroma3.it).

### 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. [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, double-check the [ESIL 2026 Annual Conference](#) webpage for all relevant information.

All participants at ESIL Interest Groups' workshops are required to register for the Annual Conference. There will be an option to register to attend only the pre-conference workshops. At the same time, all participants are warmly invited to attend the entire event. ESIL members benefit from preferential registration fees for attending the Annual Conference.

### Convenors

Patrick Abel, University of Innsbruck  
 Carlo de Stefano, Roma Tre University  
 Maria Laura Marceddu, ECIGL Edinburgh  
 Gustavo Prieto, FWO – Ghent University  
 Ines Willems, Stanford University