



From Interdependence to Weaponisation: Energy Security and International Law

**Pre-Conference Workshop of the Interest Group on Energy and International Law
Convened by Elena Cima, Ilaria Espa, and Martin Švec**

2026 ESIL Annual Conference on “International Law and Conflict: An Enduring Tension?”

2 September 2026, 15:00-18:00

Facultad de Derecho, Bulevar Louis Pasteur, 26 (Campus de Teatinos), Málaga, Spain

Energy, once framed primarily as a source of mutual interdependence, is increasingly deployed as an instrument of power in an increasingly conflictual international order. Geopolitical tensions, security concerns, and technological change are reshaping energy relations and raising new questions for international law.

This workshop seeks to explore the different forms of conflict associated with these transformations, which may include military and security conflicts (such as attacks on energy infrastructure, cyber operations, or resource exploitation in situations of armed conflict), as well as economic and trade conflicts (including sanctions, export controls, transit disputes, and investment claims arising from security-driven energy measures).

More broadly, the workshop seeks to explore geopolitical rivalries, including the weaponisation of energy dependencies, competing regulatory spheres of influence, and sovereignty disputes over resources, as well as technological and transitional conflicts related to digitalisation, critical minerals, and the restructuring of global supply chains in the energy transition.

By doing so, the discussion will try to assess how international law responds to (and is re-shaped by) the securitisation of energy in an era marked by escalating confrontation and the erosion of multilateralism and rule-based frameworks.

Program

15:00–15:10	Welcome and Introduction Elena Cima , Senior Lecturer, University of Geneva Ilaria Espa , Associate Professor, Università della Svizzera Italiana Martin Švec , Assistant Professor, Masaryk University
Panel 1 Critical Minerals, Resource Control, and the Geopolitics of the Energy Transition	
15:10–16:05	Cédric Henet , Visiting Professor, UCLouvain; Lawyer, Simont Braun <i>Deep-Sea Mining of Critical Minerals: A Coming Conflict between EU Environmental Law and UNCLOS?</i> Sunayana Sasmal , Research Fellow, University of Sussex <i>Securing Critical Minerals Through “Predesigned Control” and “Tacit Influence”: International Law as a Tool of Geoeconomic Power</i> Nicolò Andreotti , PhD Graduate, University of Padua <i>Security Exception Clauses and Critical Minerals Governance: Reassessing Investment Treaty Constraints.</i> Discussion
16:05–16:20	Coffee Break
Panel 2 Investment Law, Sanctions, and the Weaponisation of Legal Instruments	
16:20–17:15	Lilit Nagapetyan , PhD Candidate, Queen Mary University of London <i>Arbitrating the Critical Minerals Arms Race: ISDS, Resource Nationalism, and the Weaponisation of Supply Chain Governance</i> Chen Yu , Assistant Professor, City University of Hong Kong <i>Reassessing the Modernization of International Investment Treaties through the Lens of the Energy Trilemma</i> Ted Gleason , Associate Professor, Grenoble Ecole de Management <i>Emerging Customary Climate Obligations and the Limits of Fossil Fuel Investment Protection: Insights from Recent Events in Venezuela</i> Bruno Garcia da Silva , Associate, Linklaters <i>The Unintended Consequences of EU Sanctions’ Legal Design on European Energy- Intensive Industries</i> Discussion

Panel 3

Energy Sovereignty, Regionalism, and Contested Legal Orders

17:15–18:00

Paolo Davide Farah, Visiting Professor of Law, University of Tulsa; Professor, West Virginia University; President, gLAWcal

Energy Sovereignty Under Constraint: Tribal Governance, Global Infrastructure, and the Politics of Knowledge in the Energy Transition

Urban Rusnak, Masaryk University

Do We Have a Carpathian Anomaly in the European Energy Security System?

Discussion & Conclusions