

The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies of KU Leuven

In the Framework of the Jean Monnet Network 'The European Union at the Crossroads of Global Order' (EUCROSS)

Launch the Present

CALL FOR PAPERS

for an International Conference on

The EU and its Partners in Global Governance: Trade, Investment, Tax and Sustainable Development

Hong Kong, 14-15 June 2018

The EUCROSS Network

The Jean Monnet Network 'The European Union at the Crossroads of Global Order' (EUCROSS), comprising 12 academic partner institutions from Europe, the United States, Brazil, China, India and Russia, investigates the challenges and opportunities that the European Union ('EU' or 'Union') and its main international partners face, as our conventional understanding of the global order is put into question and multilateralism is confronted with serious challenges. EUCROSS brings together international and interdisciplinary expertise and conducts research on the mutual relationships of the EU and its key international partners, with a specific focus on the opportunities and challenges that these partnerships face in the context of an international system that is increasingly seen as being 'out of order'.

Conference Theme

While global trade and investment have been reiterated as core interests in the European Commission's 2017 reflection paper 'Harnessing Globalization', as well as in its 2015 communication 'Trade for All', the EU's 2016 Global Strategy claims that 'prosperity must be shared [globally] and requires fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals worldwide'. Moreover, the Commission's 2016 communication 'an External Strategy for Effective Taxation' proposed a framework to support developing countries in improving their domestic capacity for tax collection, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The present international conference, co-organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies of KU Leuven, investigates how the EU can seek new partnerships to implement these critical objectives.

To this end we **invite paper proposals** that analyze the interrelationships of investment, trade, tax and sustainable development policies. The idea is to better understand the ways in which the EU and its international partners are involved in the governance of investment, trade tax and sustainable development: what are areas of convergence and divergence? How do the EU's efforts towards good global governance resemble or differ from those of its partners? How (and what) can the EU learn from its partners, and *vice versa*? What areas allow for significant global governance opportunities, and will the EU (and/or its international partners) seize these opportunities? Does the current political climate prevent the EU from playing a leading role in the global governance of investment, trade, tax and sustainable development?

More specifically, papers are expected to address one or more of the following questions:

1. The European Union

How does the EU itself address the nexus between investment, trade, tax and sustainable development in its external relations and global action, both within its bilateral relationships with key international partners, including the United States, China, Russia, Brazil, India and Japan, and in its actions in multilateral settings, such as the World Trade Organization ('WTO'), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund ('IMF'), the United Nations ('UN') and the G20? To which degree do the EU and its partners set different priorities in these areas? How does this relate to their efforts in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals ('SDGs')?

2. The European Union's Partners

How do partners of the EU address the nexus between investment, trade, tax and sustainable development in their policies towards key multilateral institutions, such as the WTO, IMF, World Bank, UN and G20? What are their priorities, interests and guiding norms and principles? How do they address this nexus in their bilateral relations with other partners, including the Union? What progress has the EU made with regard to international investment agreements negotiations since the European Court of Justice rendered its Opinion (2/15) on the competence of the EU to conclude the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Singapore? Has the Opinion affected ongoing negotiations and what will the impact be on the EU's attempts to regulate international investment? How does China involve the EU in the "Belt and Road Initiative", implemented since 2013?

3. Global Governance

Multilateral Level

How were sustainability concerns discussed and addressed at the 2017 Buenos Aires WTO Ministerial Conference (considering, for example the failed negotiations of a multilateral agreement on fisheries subsidies)? What is the G20's track record on investment, trade, tax and sustainable development and can tangible results be pointed out?

Bilateral Level

How can we make sense of the design of Trade and Sustainable Development Chapters in different trade agreements? What is the implementation record of environment and labour chapters in the context of specific bilateral agreements? Are there ways to strengthen the enforcement of the nexus

between trade/investment and sustainability? To what degree do voluntary partnership agreements which link environmental and social protection to trade, including the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade – Voluntary Partnership Agreement ('FLEGT-VPA'), serve as best practice? Are bilateral investment treaties able to effectively address sustainable development, and if so, how?

Unilateral Level

How effective are Generalized Scheme of Preferences ('GSP') schemes in enforcing the link between trade and sustainable development? What are the main challenges faced by exporters in developing countries in complying with preferential rules of origin, a key component of GSP? How do regulatory measures which influence access to markets impact on the nexus between investment, trade, tax and sustainable development? Which instruments exist to detect where and when violations in relation to social and environmental protection occur, and how can they help to address sustainability concerns in international trade? What is the track record of instruments that have been developed over the last couple of years, such as the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act of 2010, the EU Directive 2014/95/EU on disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large undertakings and groups, and the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015? What has been the effect of the 2014 Mauritius Convention on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration?

Submission Details: Paper abstracts (500 words) and short CVs (200 words) should be sent to info@ggs.kuleuven.be by **1st March 2018**. EUCROSS especially invites junior researchers (PhD candidates and postdocs) as well as early-career scholars and practitioners to apply. Selected paper presenters will be informed by mid-March 2018. The organizers can select presenters to receive a stipend up to a maximum of 900 Euros for mobility funding (partial or complete coverage of travel costs to Hong Kong).

Conference Format: The conference will bring together junior and senior scholars and practitioners from various disciplines, including Public and Private International Law, EU Law, International Relations, International Political Economy, European Studies and Political Science. Selected speakers will interact with established academics from EUCROSS partners. Successfully elaborated and presented papers may be selected for an international publication.

For more information, please visit <https://ghum.kuleuven.be/ggs/research/eucross>, or contact Dr. Kolja Raube (KU Leuven) at kolja.raube@kuleuven.be.