

CALL FOR PAPERS

2nd International Conference

THE CROSSROAD OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Paradoxes of energy transition and global inequalities

Barcelona, 3 - 4 September 2025



Universitat Oberta de Catalunya



Centre d'Estudis de Dret Ambiental de Tarragona



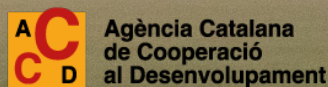
Universitat de Barcelona



International Catalan Institute for Peace



Universidad de La Laguna



Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament



Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya



Generalitat de Catalunya

Generalitat de Catalunya



ESIL Interest Group on the European & International Rule of Law



ESIL Interest Group on International Environmental Law



gLAWcal - Global Law Initiatives for Sustainable Development



Grant PID2023-146791NB-I00 funded by MCIU /AEI /10.13039/501100011033 / ERDF, EU.

Introduction

The need for an energy transition has never been more urgent than in the context of the ongoing climate and environmental crises. As global temperatures continue to rise, driven by the over-exploitation of fossil fuels, the consequences of inaction are becoming increasingly devastating. Climate change is not only a threat to natural ecosystems but also to human life, as extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and disruptions to food and water supplies disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, particularly in the Global South. The shift towards renewable energy is critical to mitigating the worst effects of climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come. However, this transition must be carefully managed to prevent the perpetuation of existing inequalities and ensure that it does not come at the cost of human rights, social justice, or environmental degradation in the regions already most affected by industrial exploitation and resource extraction.

The energy transition towards renewable energy sources, primarily driven by the Global North, has led to an increase in conflicts in the Global South, particularly due to the negative impacts on human rights and the environment stemming from the planning and implementation of renewable energy projects. Additionally, the extraction of essential minerals for renewable energy production, such as lithium, cobalt, and copper, is often linked to social and environmental conflicts in the Global South. These activities, both in renewable energy projects and mineral extraction, reflect the continuation of the extractivist logic characteristic of fossil fuel-based models, reproducing neocolonial dynamics of wealth accumulation.

In this context, the energy transition raises complex challenges, particularly when considering its environmental and social impacts. While the transition to renewable energy is necessary, it should not ignore the adverse effects it can have on human rights and the environment, especially in the Global South. The production and extraction of raw materials for renewable energy technologies – such as cobalt, lithium, and other minerals – often lead to severe social and environmental consequences. These impacts include violations of workers' rights, displacement of local communities, destruction of ecosystems, and the exacerbation of existing socio-economic inequalities. Moreover, these environmental and social issues are frequently exacerbated by the failure of States to adequately incorporate human rights and environmental considerations into their policies, allowing business interests to take precedence over the welfare of affected communities.

Despite the growing recognition of these issues, many State policies fail to adequately address or prioritize the social and environmental impacts of renewable energy projects and mineral extraction. This oversight reflects a broader tendency for governments to prioritize economic growth and energy independence over the human rights and environmental consequences of their policies. The lack of comprehensive environmental and social assessments, coupled with weak regulatory frameworks, has allowed business actors to exploit natural resources without due consideration for the communities affected. In many instances, the State's role in facilitating or even promoting such activities, without enforcing robust human rights and environmental standards, exacerbates the negative consequences faced by vulnerable populations.

Call for Papers

The Scientific Committee of the **International Conference “The crossroad of international environmental law: Paradoxes of energy transition and global inequalities”** invites contributions that explore the complex intersection of energy transition, environmental law, and human rights. We seek papers that critically examine the tensions, challenges, and potential synergies arising from the global shift to renewable energy, with a focus on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of this transition, particularly in the Global South.

Possible topics to be addressed:

- “Just transition”: Balancing economic growth, social justice, and environmental protection in the Global South.
- Neocolonialism in the energy transition: Exploitation of resources in the Global South.
- Impact of renewable energy projects on human rights in the Global South.
- Corporate responsibility in the energy transition.
- Environmental justice in the energy transition.
- The role of states in the energy transition.
- The paradox of clean energy: Conflicts in the green economy.
- Integrating human rights and environmental protection in global energy governance.
- The future of fossil fuels and its effects on social and environmental justice.
- Planetary boundaries and the negative effects of the energy transition in the Global South.
- Trade and investment in the energy transition: Impacts on human rights and environmental enforcement

Submission Guidelines

I. ABSTRACT SUBMISSION:

The deadline for abstract submission is **May 10, 2025**. Abstracts may be submitted via e-mail to the following email addresses: ielconference@uoc.edu. Please include the following information, in separate documents:

- Document 1: **Anonymized abstract** (500-700-word).
- Document 2: **Authors’ information**:
 - Name, affiliation and contact details (e-mail and phone number).
 - Title of the abstract.
 - A short CV, including a list of relevant publications, if applicable.

Both senior and junior scholars are invited to participate in the call for papers. Multiple abstracts can be submitted, but only one abstract per author will be accepted.

2nd THE CROSSROAD OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

II. BLIND REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE:

Applications will be submitted to a process of blind review, and all applicants will be informed of the decision of the selection committee by **June 5, 2025**.

III. PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES: DRAFT SUBMISSION

The conference organizers have publication plans for the presented papers. The precise nature and format of the publication will be discussed in more detail during the conference. Among the options already available at the time of the call for papers, the organizers envisage to publish a book collection or a special issue/symposium in relevant peer-review journals.

A provisional draft of the paper should be submitted by **July 30, 2025**. The deadline and format of the final drafts will be discussed during the conference.

Registration, Venue, and dates

The International Conference will take place in person, on the premises of the Open University of Catalonia (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya), Barcelona, Spain on **September 3-4, 2025**.

We are pleased to offer an **optional dinner event** on **September 3**. Kindly note that participants are responsible for covering the cost of their own dinner (maximum cost: 45 €)*.

Registration ([available here](#)) will be open **from March 1, 2025 until July 15, 2025**.

Registration fee for members of the ESIL	20 €
Registration fee for non-members of the ESIL	60 €

**During registration, attendees will be asked to indicate whether they will attend the dinner event.*

Organizing Institutions

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

Universitat de Barcelona

Universidad de La Laguna

Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya

Centre d'Estudis de Dret Ambiental de Tarragona

ESIL Interest Group on the European & International Rule of Law

ESIL Interest Group on International Environmental Law

gLAWcal - Global Law Initiatives for Sustainable Development

Conference Chairs and Coordinators

Mariona Cardona-Vallès, *Open University of Catalonia*

Bettina Steible, *Open University of Catalonia*

Daniel Iglesias Márquez, *University of La Laguna*

Mar Campins Eritja, *University of Barcelona*

Antoni Pigrau Solé, *University Rovira i Virgili - Centre d'Estudis de Dret Ambiental de Tarragona (CEDAT)*

Paolo Davide Farah, *West Virginia University & gLAWcal – Global Law Initiatives for Sustainable Development, UK*

Ana Garcia Juanatey, *CEI International Affairs*