
SustainEUorPlanet – Jean Monnet Chair Project

presents

SustainEUorPlanet Seminars in Bologna

with

Pierfrancesco Mattiolo

PhD Candidate, University of Antwerp

***“Foreign Subsidies and
Strategic Assets: From WTO
Law to EU Law”***

Monday 13th April 2026, h. 9-11

AULA L BELMEORO

Edificio in Bo, Via Beniamino Andreatta, 8 - Bologna

Introductory Remarks and Discussant

Prof. Elisa Baroncini

SustainEUorPlanet Jean Monnet Chair

Abstract: The advent of the 'permacrisis' has ushered in a new normality wherein governments are compelled to intervene in the economy to sustain growth. The convergence of challenges such as the clean and just transition, the Covid-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, and soaring energy prices has led many governments to grant subsidies to enterprises. These subsidies are used to either 'save' ailing undertakings or secure the production of strategic goods and technologies on their soil. Critics argue that the existing remedies within the WTO framework are insufficient to counteract the protectionist repercussions of subsidization, or the policies of 'State capitalist economies'. In response to this issue, the EU has introduced a novel autonomous instrument, Regulation (EU) 2022/2560 on foreign subsidies that distort the internal market (FSR).

After providing an overview of the issue of foreign subsidies and the current WTO framework, the seminar delves into the FSR and other EU instruments designed to counter them. The different interests at stakes – from ensuring a level playing field to empowering States to answer crises and drive change – will be discussed, alongside how EU law try to balance them. Ultimately, the audience is encouraged to assess the effectiveness and coherence of the EU's approach towards subsidization. How can the EU mitigate the risk of a global subsidy race? Does the FSR present a paradigm shift in addressing the subsidy issue effectively?

Pierfrancesco Mattiolo: Pierfrancesco is a Graduate Teaching and Research Assistant specialising in European and International Economic Law at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. His primary research interests encompass competition law and policy, international trade law and policy and economic diplomacy. Pierfrancesco is currently conducting a doctoral research project on the EU Foreign Subsidies Regulation and its interaction with EU competition law, trade defence and industrial policy. In the context of this research, he conducted a research stay at the Europa-Institut of Saarland University, with the support of a grant of the Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO). He also collaborates with Sciences Po Paris for the teaching of EU Law for their summer programmes. Before starting his PhD, Pierfrancesco gained experience as a policy assistant trainee at the Permanent Representation of Italy to the EU in Brussels. Here, he followed closely various FTA negotiations and legislative processes. His professional journey also includes prior work with think tanks and news agencies in Rome.

Prof. Elisa Baroncini: Full Professor of International Law, Elisa Baroncini is a Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague (since October 2025). She has been elected (December 2023) Member of the Executive Council of the Society of International Economic Law (SIEL) and, in 2019, she founded DIEcon, the Interest Group on International Economic Law of the Italian Society of International Law (SIDI), which she currently coordinates after having been Co-Chair of the Interest Group on International Economic Law of the European Society of International Law for ten years (2013-2022). Member of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Advanced Studies (ISA) of the Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna, in June 2022 Elisa Baroncini was appointed by the European Commission "TSD Expert" to settle disputes within the Trade and Sustainable Development Chapters (TSD Chapters) of the new EU Trade Agreements, and, in May 2025, accepted by the International Law Association to be member of the ILA Committee on the Contributions of International Law to the Global Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2030 Agenda. In May 2023, she was appointed by the Italian Government as an Independent Non-executive Director on the Board of Administration of Eni S.p.a., the Italian energy company. Elisa holds a cum laude Law Degree and a PhD in EU Law from the University of Bologna. After many years of EU Law and International Law teaching, she currently teaches International Trade and Investment Law (Re-Globe), International Law on Sustainable Development, and International Energy Law in Bologna and Ravenna, has been Visiting Professor at the China-EU School of Law, speaker in many international conferences, Visiting Researcher at the European University Institute. Elisa, currently Jean Monnet Chair of the Project SustainEUorPlanet (2025-2028), coordinates and participates in international, EU, and national research projects: inter alia Coordinator of the Jean Monnet Module Re-Globe (2022-2025), the Seed Funding Una Europa Project ImprovEUorGlobe (2023), the Seed Funding Una Europa Project WHC@50 (2022), the Projects "L'Organizzazione mondiale del commercio quale protagonista dello sviluppo sostenibile nel rilancio del sistema multilaterale" (2024-2025) and "Il sistema multilaterale degli scambi come piattaforma per affrontare le sfide globali: gli Accordi e le Iniziative plurilaterali dell'OMC quali strumenti di governance del nuovo ordine economico mondiale" (2025-2026), both financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She published extensively on EU External Relations Law, EU Trade Policy, and International Economic Law, mainly in English and Italian. Her main fields of research include: the WTO reform process; the relation between free trade and non-trade values; transparency in International Economic Law; the role of the European Parliament and the European Commission in the conclusion of international trade and investment agreements; EU trade policy and the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda; the bilateral dispute settlement mechanisms of the new EU Trade Agreements; UNESCO and International Economic Law; critical minerals and International Economic Law; International and EU Energy Law.

SustainEUorPlanet: The Project proposes an interdisciplinary and critical analysis of the EU's international policies and legal frameworks directed to economic and social fairness, respect for the environment, access to clean energy and essential goods, while looking for security to overcome geopolitical tensions and asymmetries. SustainEUorPlanet has a twofold purpose. On one side, it offers a set of activities envisaging the promotion of a ruling and academic class of excellence, involving EU, national and international civil servants, politicians, NGOs, local businesses and public administration. On the other side, SustainEUorPlanet shows the leading role of the EU as a global actor in constantly promoting a sustainable agenda for trade, environment, energy and climate policies, highlighting the importance of economic operators' accountability and the relevance that EU citizens can have in shaping and enforcing EU's external tools through participation and transparency. Likewise, the Project focuses on political security policies in world economy. More information available on the Project's [website](#) and on [LinkedIn](#).

