
SustainEUorPlanet – Jean Monnet Chair Project

presents

SustainEUorPlanet Seminar

Tuesday, April 14th 2026, from 11.00 to 13.00 (CEST)

AULA 3 SPISA, Piano Terra, via Belmeloro, 10, Bologna

***The WTO
after its
14th Ministerial Conference***

Prof. Carlo Cantore

Attorney-at-law, Adjunct Professor of International Trade Law
at the University of Neuchâtel

Introductory Remarks and Discussant

Prof. Elisa Baroncini

University of Bologna, Scientific Coordinator of the UNIBO-MAECI Project
and SustainEUorPlanet Jean Monnet Chair

The event is in blended form

For people not in Bologna the Teams Link is [here](#)

The event is organised as part of the UNIBO-MAECI Project “The Multilateral Trading System as a Platform for Addressing Global Challenges: Plurilateral WTO Agreements and Initiatives as Governance Instruments of the New World Economic Order”, co-financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and of the activities of the SustainEUorPlanet – Jean Monnet Chair Project, co-financed by the European Union. The information and views delivered during this seminar are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation or of the EU or any of its Institutions.

Abstract: In March 2026, the World Trade Organization (WTO) held its 14th biannual Ministerial Conference (MC14) in Yaoundé (Cameroon). At a time when big players are weaponizing trade tools to advance their domestic and foreign policy agendas, and middle powers are trapped in the midst of major geopolitical shifts, it was hard to imagine that Members could reach major decisions by consensus. Unsurprisingly, the outcome of MC14 is in line with the low expectations of the weeks before.

Delegations left Yaoundé with no tangible results. No decisions were reached on many longstanding negotiating dossiers. Moreover, and contrary to previous MCs, Members could not even agree on the renewal of two moratoria that have been traditionally extended by two more years at every recent MCs: The one on the imposition of customs duties on electronic transmissions and the one on non-violation complaints in intellectual property disputes. The only three documents labeled as “decisions” that came out of the meeting are simply commitments to talk.

The only tangible result achieved in Yaoundé is a declaration by a subset of WTO Members on “interim arrangements” on the E-Commerce Agreement. In a nutshell, participants aim to complete the required domestic procedures for the acceptance of the agreement, aiming for its entry into force at the earliest possible date. In parallel, participants will continue to seek a decision by consensus to incorporate the agreement into Annex IV of the WTO Agreement, trying to persuade vocal opponents to lift their objections.

The seminar will discuss the implications of the failure of MC14 for the WTO and its Members. Particular attention will be devoted to novel, interesting questions under international treaty law and WTO law posed by the interim arrangements on the E-Commerce Agreement.

Prof. Carlo Cantore: Carlo M. Cantore is an attorney-at-law, specializing in international and EU trade law. Between 2018 and 2025, Carlo was a legal officer at the WTO Secretariat. In that capacity, he assisted panels in disputes between trading nations, and gave advice to Members on negotiations and institutional matters. Earlier in his career, Carlo worked for almost three years as an associate in the Brussels office of a major trade law firm (2015-2018). In parallel with his work at the WTO / private practice, Carlo has taught international trade law, international investment law, and EU external relations law at the universities of Antwerp, Turin, and Neuchâtel. Carlo is the author of a book on trade in financial services (Cambridge University Press in 2018) and several articles on trade law and EU law topics. Carlo holds a PhD and an LLM in international trade law from the European University Institute of Florence, and a law degree (cum laude) from the University of Pisa - Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna.

Prof. Elisa Baroncini: Full Professor of International Law, Elisa Baroncini is 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 crisis of the WTO Appellate Body and 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; the bilateral dispute settlement mechanisms of the new EU Trade Agreements; UNESCO and International Economic Law; EU trade policy and the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda; International and EU Energy Law.

UNIBO-MAECI Project “The Multilateral Trading System as a Platform for Addressing Global Challenges: Plurilateral WTO Agreements and Initiatives as Governance Instruments of the New World Economic Order” The research, co-financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and coordinated by Prof. Elisa Baroncini, analyses the plurilateral tools developed within the multilateral trading system to provide the governance of the global economy with new rules and coordination methods capable of responding to the challenges of our time, promoting a development model characterised by equity, inclusion and participation. Appropriate attention is also given to the contribution that preferential trade agreements can give to the new governance of the global economy, and the cluster of bilateral deals on critical minerals and reciprocal trade.

SustainEUorPlanet The Project, coordinated by Prof. Elisa Baroncini, 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](#).