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***SustainEUorPlanet – Jean Monnet Chair Project***

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**SustainEUorPlanet Seminar**

Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> 2026, from 9.00 to 11.00 (CET)

Aula L Belmeloro, Edificio in Bo - via Beniamino Andreatta, 8, Bologna

***The European Union's New  
Architecture of Power  
How sovereignty, security, resilience and  
influence interact in an age of systemic  
instability***

**Dr. Sara Carrer**

Public Affairs and Strategic Communications Consultant;  
Member of the Board of Fincantieri

*Introductory remarks and Discussant*

**Prof. Elisa Baroncini**

University of Bologna, SustainEUorPlanet Coordinator

**Abstract:** The central argument of this lecture is simple but consequential: the world that made European integration possible has disappeared, and with it the traditional meaning of sovereignty. Shocks are no longer exceptional events but recurring features of the system, unfolding in a context of great-power rivalry, eroding multilateralism, and increasing pressure on political decision-making. In this environment, sovereignty cannot mean autonomy. It means the capacity to decide under constraint. Security makes decision possible. Resilience ensures decisions endure shocks. Influence reduces the number and intensity of shocks in the first place. Together, these elements define a new European architecture of power, one that transforms openness into strength rather than retreat.

This architecture becomes visible through concrete policy choices. Through trade agreements such as with India and Mercosur, it exports rules rather than force. Through Global Gateway, it governs connectivity instead of merely financing it. Through initiatives like the Mattei Plan, initially launched by Italy and now a vanguard of the Global Gateway, it links development, security, and neighbourhood stability into a single strategic logic. Taken together, these examples show how the European Union is redefining power in practice: not through isolation or coercion, but through the strategic governance of interdependence in an age of systemic instability.

**Dr. Sara Carrer:** Sara Carrer is an independent consultant specializing in strategic communication, institutional relations, and strategic diplomacy. She advises public and private organizations and delivers executive training on public speaking and high-level stakeholder engagement. She is a member of the Board of Directors of Fincantieri, where she serves as Chair of the Sustainability Committee and as a member of the Remuneration Committee. She is also a Senior Advisor at ThinkYoung and remains actively engaged in thought leadership, governance, and capacity-building at the intersection of policy, business, and international affairs.

Previously, she served as Chief Political Officer at the United Nations World Food Programme, where she led the global public affairs strategy and managed relations with donor and host governments, parliaments, and the G7, overseeing major strategic initiatives including the Mattei Plan, the Rome Process, and the “Food for Gaza” initiative. Earlier in her career, she worked at the European Commission and the European Foundation for Management Development before joining Burson-Marsteller, where she became Executive Vice President for Europe and Africa at BCW (now Burson).

She holds a degree in International and Diplomatic Sciences from the University of Trieste and a master’s degree from the College of Europe in Bruges, where she also served as Visiting Professor of Political Communication until 2022.

An Italian native speaker, she is fluent in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

**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.

**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](#).

