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*SustainEUorPlanet – Jean Monnet Chair Project*

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**SustainEUorPlanet Seminar Series**  
**Seminar in International Energy Law and  
the Green Transition**

with

**Dr Meng Zhang**

*EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow on Climate,  
Environmental & Energy Law*

**“International and EU Legal  
Framework for the Promotion of  
Renewable Energy”**

Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> 2026, from 17.00 to 19.00, AULA 3 BALDISSERRI, Palazzo Malvezzi, via Zamboni,  
22, Bologna

**“EU Hydrogen Policy & Legal  
Framework”**

Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> 2026, from 17.00 to 19.00, AULA 6 "TRIBUNALE", Palazzo Malvezzi, via Zamboni,  
22, Bologna

Introductory remarks and Discussant

**Prof. Elisa Baroncini**

*University of Bologna, SustainEUorPlanet Coordinator*

**Abstract lecture 1 :** This lecture introduces the international and EU legal frameworks that shape the promotion of renewable energy, and shows how these frameworks translate into national legislation and policy choices. We begin by tracing how energy (often implicitly) entered global sustainability governance through landmark milestones in sustainable development (e.g., Stockholm, Brundtland, Rio) and the UN Sustainable Development Agenda (SDG 7), then move to the core international and EU rules on climate neutrality that influence renewable energy deployment worldwide.

**Abstract lecture 2:** This lecture examines how the EU is trying to build a hydrogen economy through law and policy in a sector where, historically, no “natural” internal hydrogen market exists. We will focus on the EU’s strategy of market-making by regulation: setting targets, defining what counts as “renewable” or “low-carbon” hydrogen, and using standard-based instruments to shape both EU internal markets and global supply chains.

**Dr Meng Zhang:** Dr. Meng Zhang is currently working as an EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow on environmental, climate and energy law (International, EU, and Comparative) at the Centre for Climate Change Law and Governance (CLIMA), University of Copenhagen (UCPH) in Denmark. Meanwhile, Dr. Zhang is also affiliated with Lund University (Sweden) as a researcher on sustainability and trade law at the Department of Business Law, School of Economics and Management (LUSEM), taking charge of the course “Trade, Investment and Sustainability (HARN53)” and supervising master students in the Master Programme of European and International Trade Law. Further, he is also engaged as a guest lecturer in the EU Jean Monnet Module “the EU and the Indo-Pacific region: challenges and opportunities (EUIndoPac)” at UCLouvain (Belgium). With multi-cultural insights and interdisciplinary perspective, Dr. Zhang’s research interests touch the interface of environmental, climate, energy, trade and human rights law.

Dr. Zhang’s EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral project, entitled “(EDUARDO) A ‘Game Changer’ in Greening Trade between the EU and China in a Polarized World: A Bilateral Soft-Law Paradigm” (Project ID 101211506), addresses one of the most urgent and complex challenges facing global green trade today — the need to reconcile economic growth with environmental stewardship in the EU and beyond, especially in an era of geopolitical polarization and the accelerating climate crisis. Meanwhile, Dr. Zhang is also currently engaged in other EU and Denmark funded projects: RIGHydro (Funded by the Innovation Fund Denmark, MissionGreenFuels) and H2ignite (funded by the EU Interreg North Sea Programme) at CLIMA. Those two renewable energy related projects focus on regulatory innovation to incentivize green hydrogen, tackling how to enable, from a legal and institutional perspective, the deployment of green hydrogen in Denmark, the North Sea Region, the EU and beyond.

Prior to his current position at the University of Copenhagen, Dr. Zhang conducted his doctoral research on environmental & climate law and obtained his PhD Degree (Doctor of Law) under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Luc Lavrysen (President of Belgian Constitutional Court; President of the EU Forum of Judges for the Environment) at the Faculty of Law and Criminology, Ghent University (Belgium) in September 2021. His PhD thesis is entitled ‘Governance of Climate Technologies: The Role of International Environmental Law in Regulating and Facilitating Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)’.

**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, coordinated by Prof. 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](#).