

Short report: Conference on Sustainable Global Value Chains and Private International Law

On 17 October 2025, the EBS Law School in Oestrich-Winkel, Germany, hosted a conference **Sustainable Global Value Chains and Private International Law**. The conference was organised by Professors *Veronica Ruiz Abou-Nigm* (Edinburgh Law School) and *Michael Nietsch* (EBS Law School) as part of the Law Schools Global League Sustainable Global Value Chains Project (see also [here](#)).

The conference brought together a number of scholars specialised in private international law, company law, and contract law to discuss the role of private law and private international law in social, economic, and environmental sustainability within global value chains.

Keynote

Ralf Michaels (Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law, Hamburg, Germany) delivered the keynote lecture entitled “European Law for Global Value Chains – Human Rights Advancement or European Imperialism?” Professor Michaels addressed this question from a historical perspective. He related the historical roots of existing sourcing practices to contemporary supply chains, drawing on a wealth of theoretical insights. He further reflected on the conceptualisations that remain necessary for the legal discipline to contribute to addressing economic inequalities in contemporary global sourcing practices facilitated by interconnected chains of contracts.

After the keynote, several scholars provided insights into their current research, which resonated with various aspects of the keynote lecture.

Other contributions

Ren Yatsunami (Kyushu University, Japan) addressed the ‘Governance Gaps on Global Value Chains from the Perspective of Private International Law’. Professor Yatsunami sketched, inter alia, a situation in which an act taking place in Japan

triggered the application of French law on the duty of vigilance. He discussed this situation from the perspective of Japanese courts and Japanese private international law, including the question of overriding mandatory rules, to illustrate the intricacies of applying the sets of rules involved.

Carlos Vázquez (Georgetown University, Washington D.C., United States) elaborated on the 'Choice of Law in Transnational Business and Human Rights Litigation'. Professor Vázquez discussed the conflict-of-law approaches in both the United States and the European Union, distinguishing between two ways of framing litigation — as a breach of international law and as a breach of national law, primarily tort law — and examined the peculiarities of each. Relying on historical and theoretical insights into both ways of framing litigation, the contribution offered a reflection on possible ways forward.

The discussion then turned to contract law, namely the 1980 United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG). *Felix M. Wilke (EBS Law School, Oestrich-Winkel, Germany)* titled his contribution "Tainted by Harm but Fit for Sale? Human Rights and the Concept of Non-Conformity under the CISG". Professor Wilke focused on the connection between supply chain regulation and the CISG's provisions on the quality and conformity of goods and remedies.

Thereafter, *Sara Sánchez (IE University, Madrid, Spain)* connected the contract law framework with procedural law and EU law. In her contribution 'Access To Justice in CS3D-Related Claims', Professor Sánchez discussed the absence of jurisdictional rules in the regulation of due diligence in supply chains (see also posts by Michaels & Sommerfeld here and by Silva de Freitas & Kramer here). Professor Sánchez proposed an EU law-based solution to address this gap.

Irene-Marie Esser (University of Glasgow, Scotland UK) and *Christopher Riley (University of Durham)* then turned to 'The Interplay between Reporting Requirements and Group Liability for Supply Chain Misconduct - Transnational Business Corporations'. They addressed the existing case law, normative considerations, and avenues for the further development of company law aspects of liability related to acts and omissions involving groups of companies in supply chains.

Simone Lamont-Black (University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK) and *Catherine*

Pédamon (University of Westminster, UK) took a broad look at the agricultural business and food supplies. Departing from the premise that contractual clauses are not sufficient to provide food security and sustainability in global food supply chains, these scholars elaborated on other possible solutions.

The last panel drew conclusions and discussed emerging themes for further research. The discussants were *Nevena Jevremovic (University of Aberdeen, UK)*, *Matthias Goldmann (EBS Law School)*, *Klaas Hendrik Eller (University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands)*, and *Ekaterina Pannebakker (Leiden University, the Netherlands)*.