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INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2026

A conference presented by the IBA Energy, Environment, Natural Resources
and Infrastructure Law Section (SEERIL)

Biennial Conference of the Section on Energy, Environment, Natural Resources and Infrastructure Law (SEERIL)

18–20 May 2026, Sofitel Brussels Europe, Brussels, Belgium

Working programme and list of participants

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All speaker materials and biographies can be found at www.ibanet.org/conference-details/conf2751

SEERIL Chair

Matthias Lang *Bird & Bird, Düsseldorf; Chair, IBA Energy, Environment, Natural Resources and Infrastructure Law Section (SEERIL)*

Conference Co-Chairs

Andrea Forabosco *Shell, The Hague; Chair, IBA Oil and Gas Law Committee*

Carlos Vilhena *Carlos Vilhena Advocacia, Brasília; Secretary, IBA Energy, Environment, Natural Resources and Infrastructure Law Section (SEERIL)*

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Sarah Fitts *ArentFox Schiff, New York; Council Member, IBA Energy, Environment, Natural Resources and Infrastructure Law Section (SEERIL)*

Jean-Pierre Van Eijck *SPANT, Eindhoven; Publications Officer, IBA Energy, Environment, Natural Resources and Infrastructure Law Section (SEERIL)*

Monday 18 May

**All working sessions will be held in the Paul Henri Spaak I + II + III
Refreshment breaks, lunch and registration will be held in the Atrium**

- 0845 – 0900 **Opening remarks and introduction**
Matthias Lang *Bird & Bird, Düsseldorf; Chair, Energy, Environment, Natural Resources and Infrastructure Law Section (SEERIL)*
Claudio Visco *Lipani Legal & Tax, Milan; IBA President*
- 0900 – 0930 **Opening address**
Introduction
Carlos Vilhena *Carlos Vilhena Advocacia, Brasília; Secretary, IBA Energy, Environment, Natural Resources and Infrastructure Law Section (SEERIL)*
Speaker
João Gomes Cravinho *Special Envoy to the Sahel Region, European Union, Brussels, Belgium*
- 0930 – 1030 **Keynote address one**
Introduction
Mark Ellis *Executive Director, International Bar Association, London*
Keynote speaker
Andriy Kostin *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Kyiv; former Prosecutor General of Ukraine*
- 1030 – 1050 **Coffee/tea break**

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Monday continued

1050 – 1220 **Governance of critical mineral supply chains: export controls, sanctions and international trade law**

As global demand for critical minerals intensifies, access to these inputs is no longer determined solely by geology or investment conditions; it increasingly depends on a complex web of export controls, sanctions regimes, trade restrictions and market-driven allocation mechanisms. The governance of cross-border mineral supply chains is therefore shaped by geopolitical competition, conflicting industrial policies and the proliferation of regulatory tools used by states to direct or constrain the movement of mineral commodities.

This session will discuss export control frameworks, buyer due diligence obligations, the impact of mineral-related sanctions and embargoes, international trade agreements and the influence of market dynamics on commercial decision-making.

Moderator

Miyanou Dufour *Hernandez & Cia, Lima; Programme Officer, Mining Law Committee*

Speakers

Riyaz Dattu *ArentFox Schiff, New York*

Simon Morris *Head of Analytics, Argus Media, London*

David Weiyang Tang *JunHe, Shanghai*

Veronica Valdez Mantero *Legal Manager, Anglo American, Lima, Peru*

1220 – 1320 **Lunch**

1320 – 1450 **From principle to payer: the EU's 'polluter pays 2.0' revolution in water and infrastructure**

The 'polluter pays principle' is no longer just a theoretical concept; it has become a strict financial liability. With the recent adoption of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD), the EU has introduced a mandatory Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme. This groundbreaking regulation shifts the cost of water treatment from taxpayers to specific industries, requiring pharmaceutical and cosmetic producers to cover at least 80 per cent of the costs for micro-pollutant removal. This panel explores how this regulatory shockwave redefines infrastructure funding, corporate liability and investment models in a resource-constrained world.

Moderator

Manuel Protasio *Vieira de Almeida & Associados, Lisbon; Treasurer, IBA Water Law Committee*

Speakers

Denis Bonvillain *Corporate Affairs Director, Veolia, Brussels*

Vera Eiró *President of the Board, Portuguese Water and Waste Services Regulation Authority (ERSAR), and President, Association of European Water Regulators (WAREG), Lisbon*

Ruth Keating *39 Essex Chambers, London*

1450 – 1510 **Coffee/tea break**

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Conference refreshment break sponsor

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Monday continued

1510 – 1640 **Oil and gas in a polarised world: navigating regulations, sanctions and energy security in fragmented global frameworks**

In a world marked by geopolitical fragmentation and regulatory polarisation, the oil and gas sector faces a dual challenge: managing conflicting legal frameworks while meeting the surging global energy demand. Diverging standards, sanctions regimes and trade defence measures create overlapping obligations for companies operating across multiple jurisdictions. At the same time, energy security concerns are intensifying competition for hydrocarbons and low-carbon fuels. This panel examines how to navigate a polarised environment, with special attention to cross-border projects and activities in the Mediterranean corridor.

Moderator

Andrea Forabosco *Acquisitions, Divestments and New Business Development Legal Team, Shell, The Hague; Chair, IBA Oil and Gas Law Committee*

Speaker

Rocío Chacón Carmona *International Senior Legal Counsel, Cox Energy, Madrid*

Dolf Gielen *Senior Energy Economist & Hydrogen Lead, World Bank, Washington DC*

Laury Haytayan *Director, MENA, Natural Resource Governance Institute, Vorst*

Massimo Nicolazz *Professor of Economics and Management of Energy Sources, University of Turin, Turin*

1640 – 1740 **Keynote session**
Energy security at a crossroads – EU perspectives on Middle Eastern energy supply and investment

Speakers

Fulvio Capurso *Head of Unit, Strategic Investments, DG MENA, European Commission, Brussels*

Matteo Fumerio *Team Leader (Energy Security), DG ENER, European Commission, Brussels*

Silvia Lopez Rocha *Consultant, Energy and Extractives, World Bank Group, Washington, DC; Energy Transition Projects Officer, IBA Oil and Gas Law Committee*

1800 – 1930 **Conference reception**

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Mont des Arts, 28, Brussels, 1000

All fully registered delegates and speakers are welcome to attend.

Tuesday 19 May

All working sessions will be held in the Paul Henri Spaak I + II + III
Refreshment breaks, lunch and registration will be held in the Atrium

0900 – 1800 **Registration**

0900 – 0930 **Welcome coffee/tea**

0930 – 1030 **AI in the hot seat: a sustainability debate**

The following session has been organised by the International Committee of the Foundation for Natural Resources and Energy Law.

Proponents argue that the potential economic and societal gains and the transformative impact of AI outweigh its resulting rise in energy demands and the growing need for greater critical mineral mining and production. These demands challenge our ability to meet sustainability and climate change goals. This session will feature panellists on each side of the debate. Please join us for a healthy discussion involving experts who will address practical pathways which can be taken to meet sustainability demands while they simultaneously navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by AI.

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Tuesday continued

Moderator

W Ian Palm *Fasken, Toronto, Ontario*

Speakers

Nghia Tran Cao *Nishimura & Asahi, Ho Chi Minh City,*

Christiano Rehder *Lefosse Advogados, São Paulo*

Francesco Sindico *Professor in International Law, University of Strathclyde Law School, Glasgow*

Katrien Vorlat *Strelia, Brussels*

1030 – 1050 **Coffee/tea break**

1050 – 1220 **Resilience of power in a challenging climate**

Demand for power is increasing in a world which is becoming more and more dependent on electricity for communication, transport, the transformation of old industries and the development and use of new technologies. At the same time geopolitical tensions and competition between companies for the control of power resources, as well as the dependency on large tech and other companies to manage power resources expose the vulnerability of power production, storage, transmission facilities and systems to physical, cyber and other technical threats which may be disruptive to the business and society at large. The session will explore these risks and challenges and how they can be mitigated and handled from a legal and regulatory perspective.

Moderator

Martin Sandgren *Setterwalls, Stockholm; Co-Chair, IBA Power Law Committee*

Speakers

Ana E de Souza *Machado Meyer, São Paulo; Publications Officer, IBA Power Law Committee*

Ievgeniia Kopytsia *Associate Professor, Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University, Kharkiv*

Julien Pochet *VP Legal Europe and General Counsel & Ethics Officer, Engie, Brussels*

Michael Rodi *Scientific Director, Institute for Climate Policy, Energy and Mobility (IKEM), Berlin*

1220 – 1320 **Lunch**

1320 – 1450 **Darker waters to come, shining a light on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)**

PFAS, often dubbed 'forever chemicals,' are at the centre of an escalating global legal and regulatory storm. Litigation and enforcement actions are intensifying across jurisdictions, with landmark cases shaping the future of corporate liability, environmental remediation and consumer protection. This session brings together leading practitioners and experts at the forefront of PFAS matters to explore the trajectory of PFAS-related disputes, emerging trends in mass litigation and the implications for businesses and governments worldwide. Join the panel for a deep dive into where the next wave of PFAS actions might take us and what strategies are evolving to navigate these darker waters.

Moderator

Chiara Colamonico *DLA Piper, Rome; Senior Vice-Chair, IBA Environment, Health and Safety Law Committee*

Warren Percival *Director, RSK Global Experts, Manchester; European Regional Forum Liaison Officer, IBA Environment, Health and Safety Law Committee*

Speakers

Darren Abrahams *Steptoe, London*

Hendrik Schoukens *Faculty of Law and Criminology, Ghent University, Ghent*

Yonghee Yoon *Yulchon, Seoul*

Gauthier van Thuyne *A&O Sherman, Brussels*

1450 – 1510 **Coffee/tea break**

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1510 – 1640

Eluding consensus: recent national policies in the transitions to renewable energy

The panel will discuss an array of policies related to renewable energy and construction projects. These will include: solar energy development in Malaysia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region; nuclear energy development in Europe; Chinese energy policies related to wind, solar and water power; transitions in Canadian energy development; and changing energy policies under the Trump administration.

Moderator

Douglas Oles *Smith Currie Oles, Seattle, Washington; Co-Chair, IBA International Construction Projects Committee*

Speakers

Thayananthan Baskaran *Baskaran, Kuala Lumpur*

Jane Davies Evans KC *3 Verulam Buildings Barristers, London; Treasurer, IBA International Construction Projects Committee*

Fang He *JunHe, Beijing*

Sharon Vogel *Singleton Urquhart Reynolds Vogel, Toronto, Ontario*

1640 – 1700

Coffee/tea break

1700 – 1800

Presentation of the Academic Advisory Group book 'Sustainable distributed energy resources: law and policy'

This session presents the latest book publication of the Academic Advisory Group of the SEERIL. The book explores tools and techniques for addressing legal, sustainability and contractual risks in design, financing, generation, transmission, distribution and consumption of distributed energy resources (DERs).

DERs including solar panels, community microgrids and residential battery storage are reshaping the energy landscape. DER technologies challenge the traditional centralised power model, offering greater potential for decarbonisation, decentralisation, digitisation and democratisation of electricity systems in line with the ongoing global energy transition.

With presentations from the expert contributors to the book, this session reflects on innovative legal drafting, contract negotiation and policymaking approaches needed to address the wide range of sustainability questions posed by DER design and implementation.

Moderator

Damilola Olawuyi *Associate Professor of Law, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Doha; Academic Advisory Group Chair, IBA Energy, Environment, Natural Resources and Infrastructure Law Section (SEERIL)*

Speakers

Barry Barton *Professor of Faculty Law, The University of Waikato, Hamilton*

Louis de Fontenelle *Associate Professor of Public Law, University of Pau, Tarnos*

Íñigo del Guayo *Professor of Administrative Law, University of Almeria, Almeria*

Kaisa Huhta *Professor of European Law, University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio*

Milton Fernando Montoya Pardo *Director of the Department of Mining and Energy Law Universidad Externado de Colombia, Bogota*

Hanri Mostert *Professor of Private Law, University of Cape Town, Cape Town*

Hao Zhang *Associate Professor of Faculty Law, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

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0830 – 1230 **Registration**

0830 – 0900 **Welcome coffee/tea**

0900 – 1000 **SEERIL annual meeting – committee updates, elections and future planning**
Click [here](#) to view the agenda.

1000 – 1100 **Presentation by University Libre de Bruxelles and Vrije University Brussels**

Despite growing scientific consensus on climate and environmental challenges and extensive regulatory developments in recent years, the implementation and enforcement of ESG accountability frameworks face significant headwinds globally. Companies operating cross-border projects confront conflicting ESG standards, extraterritorial regulations, and asymmetric enforcement regimes, whilst states grapple with the limits of traditional policy tools in driving meaningful corporate accountability. Simultaneously, ESG-related litigation is emerging as a powerful enforcement mechanism, with courts increasingly called upon to adjudicate climate obligations, supply chain due diligence failures and greenwashing claims.

Against this background, this session explores ESG accountability from four complementary perspectives: international normative frameworks, state-level mechanisms, corporate obligations and judicial enforcement.

Moderator

Kevin Munungu *Assistant Professor in Public Economic Law, University Libre de Bruxelles; Bird & Bird, Brussels*

Speakers

Nicolas Angelet *Guest Professor of International Law, University Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels*

Tsvetelina Kuzmanova *Senior Project Manager, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) Europe, Brussels*

Edoardo Rulli *Cabinet of the Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union, European Commission, Brussels*

Sonia Stoyanova *PhD Student, Vrije University Brussels, Brussels*

1100 – 1200 **Keynote address two**

Matjaž Malgaj *Head of Unit, European Commission, Brussels*

1200 – 1230 **Closing remarks and farewell**

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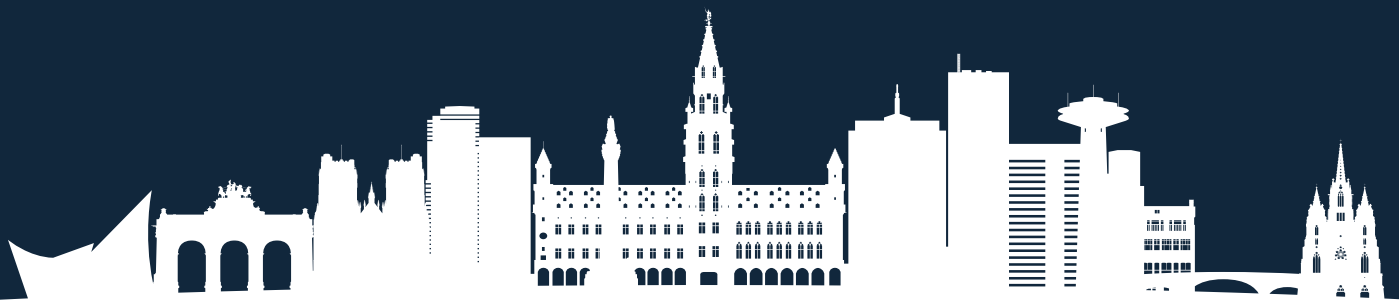
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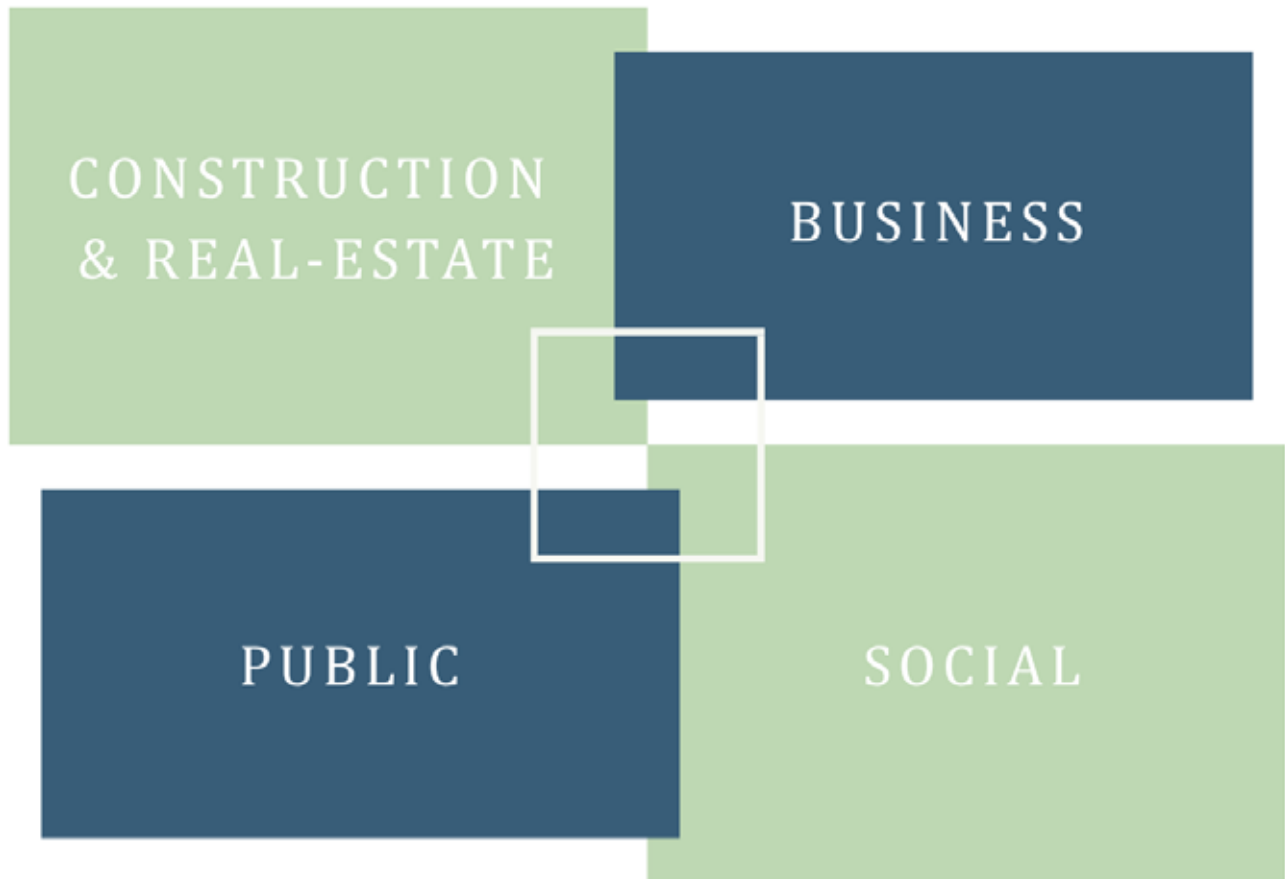
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