

**Utrecht University
Summer School 2026**

**EU Law in Transition: Business, Sustainability, and
Climate Change**

06 July 2026 – 10 July 2026

Summer school 2026:

EU Law in Transition: Business, Sustainability, and Climate Change

Since the adoption of the European Green Deal in December 2019, a myriad of sustainability-related regulations and directives governing corporate behavior have proliferated across the EU. This has produced a wide array of obligations and standards with major implications for EU businesses and their global business partners, raising several fundamental questions: What do these corporate sustainability legal instruments in EU law regulate? What types of obligations do they impose on companies, and what compliance challenges arise? What is the evolving role of businesses in the sustainability transition and climate action, and what are the consequences if they fail to fulfil this role?

Taught by legal scholars and lawyers, the Summer School will equip students, practitioners, and professionals with a solid understanding of how sustainability challenges are addressed by businesses in the EU. Participants will be placed in a position to debate these challenges and gain knowledge on the obligations and legal risks faced by companies both inside and outside of the EU under the rapidly evolving EU sustainability regime. Within the context of the European Green Deal, topics covered will include: the emergence of EU corporate sustainability law, sustainable procurement, circular business models, EU sustainable finance, investment arbitration, and the role of businesses in climate litigation. A one-day excursion will take place on the third day of the Summer School.

This course will be taught on location in Utrecht, in the city center. The campus building is: Janskerkhof 2-3, Room 0.22.

We look forward to meeting you!

Course Directors: Dr. Gonzalo Larrea and Prof. dr. Willem Janssen
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List of teachers

- Dr. Gonzalo Larrea, Assistant Professor, Utrecht University
- Prof. Dr. Willem Janssen, Endowed Professor, Utrecht University and Groningen University
- Dr. Nikita Divissenko, Assistant Professor, Utrecht University
- Dr. Federica Agostini, Assistant Professor, Utrecht University
- Dr. Julie Fraser, Assistant Professor, Utrecht University
- Dr. Saide Esra Akdogan, Post-Doctoral Researcher, Utrecht University
- Dr. Nikolaos Giannopoulos, Assistant Professor, Utrecht University

Day-to-day programme

Law in Transition: Business, Sustainability, and Climate Change

6 July 2026 – 10 July 2026

Course Directors: Prof. dr. Willem Janssen, Dr. Gonzalo Larrea

E-mail: g.larrea@uu.nl

Monday 6 July		
10:00-12:00	Opening & Lecture	The Emergence of EU Corporate Sustainability Law. An Introduction Gonzalo Larrea
12:00-14:00	Break	
14:00-17:00	Interactive lecture	Investing in Future Generations: EU Public Procurement Law as a Driver of Sustainable Business Models Willem Janssen
Tuesday 7 July		
10:00-12:00	Interactive lecture	Sustainability Indicators for Crypto-Assets: Impact on Business Compliance and Technological Choices Nikita Divissenko
12:00-14:00	Break	
14:00-17:00	Lecture	EU Sustainable Finance as a Lever Toward Sustainability Goals in the EU Federica Agostini
Wednesday 8 July		
10:00-12:00	Interactive lecture	Evolving Responsibilities: Human rights, Sustainability and Businesses Julie Fraser
12:00-14:00	Break	
14:00-17:00	Boat tour through Utrecht and Drink at Hofman	Gonzalo Larrea
Thursday 9 July		
10:00-12:00	Interactive lecture	The Extraterritorial Reach of EU Sustainability Rules: Trade Policy as a Normative Vehicle Saide Esra Akdogan
12:00-14:00	Break	
14:00-17:00	Interactive lecture	Arbitrating Sustainability: Investment Law as a Catalyst or Constraint for the Green Energy Transition Nikolaos Giannopoulos
Friday 10 July		
09:30 – 11:30	Assessment: simulation exercise	Gonzalo Larrea and Willem Janssen
11:30 – 12:00	Award ceremony & closing	Gonzalo Larrea and Willem Janssen

All times indicated are Netherlands Local Time/CET/UTC+1

*the organisers reserve the right to make (minor) changes to this programme

Monday 6 July

Session 1: 10:00 – 12:00

The Emergence of EU Corporate Sustainability Law: An Introduction - Dr. Gonzalo Larrea

Over the past few years, the use of the term 'sustainability' has grown significantly across a wide range of areas and sectors. This trend is particularly evident in EU Law, where the proliferation of regulations and directives governing 'corporate sustainability' has led to a wide array of obligations and standards that raise several fundamental questions. What do these 'corporate sustainability' legal instruments in EU law regulate, and how coordinated are they with one another? What types of obligations do they impose on companies, and which compliance challenges do they face? What is EU corporate sustainability law? Are we witnessing the emergence of a distinct field of law? In this introductory lecture, Dr. Gonzalo Larrea will examine the contours of EU corporate sustainability law as drawn from various legal instruments. By analyzing these instruments, the lecture will help participants identify the defining elements and scope of EU corporate sustainability law, assess the content and coherence of its key instruments, and evaluate the implications and challenges posed by this rapidly evolving and increasingly significant legal framework.

Session 2: 14:00 – 17:00

Investing in Future Generations: EU Public Procurement Law as a Driver of Sustainable Business Models - Prof. Dr. Willem Janssen

It is clear that markets and businesses need to adapt to ensure a secure and sustainable future in the European Union. In this session, prof. Willem Janssen delves into the important role that government investments in the form of public procurement, encompassing 17-19% of the EU GDP, can play as a driver of secure and sustainable business models that worked with future generations top of mind. It delves in an interactive manner into the wicked nexus between market integration, strategic autonomy and sustainability, the role of EU law and the potential pitfalls and benefits of the current and future regulatory path under the EU Industrial Deal and the EU Green Deal.

Tuesday 7 July

Session 1: 10:00 – 12:00

Sustainability Indicators for Crypto-Assets: Impact on Business Compliance and Technological Choices - Dr. Nikita Divissenko

In this session, Dr Nikita Divissenko will focus on the environmental impact of consensus mechanisms used to validate crypto-asset transactions and their regulatory treatment under the Regulation on Markets in Crypto-Assets (MiCA). We will delve into the compliance requirements stemming from the regulatory technical standards (RTS) developed by the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) covering sustainability indicators in relation to climate and other environment-related adverse impacts of crypto-assets. In particular, we will explore their practical implications on businesses, incl. stablecoin issuers and crypto-asset service providers, and implementation challenges.

Session 2: 14:00 – 17:00

Sustainable Finance as a Lever toward Sustainability Goals in the EU - Dr. Federica Agostini

In this session, we will focus on the role of the financial sector in accelerating the transition and achieving climate and other sustainability policy goals. After reviewing international policy commitments to mobilise sustainable finance (enshrined in the Paris Agreement, among others), we will map different policy options for steering financial actors, such as

banks and investors, toward sustainability goals. We will then zoom in on salient international initiatives, such as the sustainability disclosure standards developed by the ISSB, and examine key EU initiatives aimed at embedding sustainability considerations in investment and financing activities. In particular, we will focus on major instruments such as the EU Taxonomy, the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation, the Green Bond Standard, and the Capital Requirements Directive VI. We will also reflect on the implications of the simplification policy agenda on sustainable finance, and the ensuing challenges for data availability, consumer protection and effective supervision.

Wednesday 8 July

Session 1: 10:00 – 12:00

Evolving Responsibilities: Human rights, Sustainability and Businesses - Dr. Julie Fraser

This interactive lecture introduces participants to human rights law and its relationship to sustainability and business activity. Participants will learn about human rights norms, their history and development, as well as the structure and function of the European Court of Human Rights. The lecture will present some of the Court's leading cases on topics such as non-discrimination, environmental protection, and due diligence obligations. The lecture will also draw from international law to illustrate global shifts in the relationship between human rights and businesses. While traditionally considered as distinct, international law is increasingly elaborating the human rights responsibilities upon businesses for the protection of individuals, communities and our environment.

Session 2: 14:00 – 17:00

Boat Tour through Utrecht and Drinks at Hofman

During the non-academic session of the summer program, we will discover Utrecht from the water. As participants are traveling from different places, this activity is designed to foster networking and informal exchange among participants and professors, while also offering a chance to experience the beauty of the city of Utrecht from a unique perspective. The activity will consist of a canal cruise along the historic Oudegracht and outer canals to learn about our city's rich history. After the cruise, we will continue the informal gathering with drinks at Hofman, located next to the Law School.

Thursday 9 July

Session 1: 10:00 – 12:00

The Extraterritorial Reach of EU Sustainability Rules: Trade Policy as a Normative Vehicle - Dr. Saide Esra Akdogan

In this session, Dr. Saide Esra Akdogan examines how the European Union (EU) leverages its economic and regulatory power to strengthen sustainability beyond its borders. We will explore the EU's use of market access as leverage and its multidimensional toolbox of unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral initiatives aimed at advancing environmental protection, and labor standards globally. After providing this broad overview, the session will zoom in on bilateral efforts, with a focus on how Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) are used to promote sustainable practices abroad, align global supply chains to level the playing field, and project the EU's normative influence in international trade. The lecture will also address the current state of affairs, analyzing the EU's latest FTAs, and evaluate their effectiveness and enforceability. By the end of the session, participants will gain a critical understanding of how trade policy can shape global sustainability practices and the real-world impact of the EU's extraterritorial regulatory approach

Session 2: 14:00 – 17:00

Arbitrating Sustainability: Investment Law as a Catalyst or Constraint for the Green Energy Transition - Dr. Nikolaos Giannopoulos

As states around the world accelerate efforts to tackle climate change and advance sustainable development, international investment arbitration is increasingly at the center of this transformation. In this session, participants will explore how investment law, traditionally designed to protect foreign investors, interacts with environmental and climate policies, and whether it enables or constrains the transition to more sustainable economies. Through engaging discussion, the session unpacks the tensions between investor protection and the state's right to regulate, examines key disputes arising from energy transition measures, and considers how ongoing reforms of investment treaties and dispute settlement mechanisms may reshape this balance. It offers a critical perspective on whether investment arbitration is evolving into a tool that supports sustainability or remains a structural obstacle to long-term environmental goals.

Friday 10 July

Presentations and Award Ceremony