

International and European Environmental Law (B001699)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 6.0

Study time 180 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 1)

English

Gent

independent work
lecture

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Cliquet, An

RE22

lecturer-in-charge

Schoukens, Hendrik

RE22

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

crdts

offering

Master of Science in Teaching in Social Sciences(main subject Laws)

6

A

Master of Laws in Laws

6

A

Master of Laws in International and European Law(main subject European Union Law)

6

A

Master of Laws in International and European Law(main subject International Business Law)

6

A

Master of Laws in International and European Law(main subject International and Human Rights Law)

6

A

Master of Laws in International and European Law(main subject International and National Legal Orders)

6

A

Exchange Programme in Law

6

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

International environmental law, European environmental law, international environmental policy, pollution, climate change, sustainable development

Position of the course

International and European environmental law is a particularly extensive branch of law. This course aims to introduce students to the extensive character and complexity of the various subfields of international and European environmental law. It examines the evolution of international and European environmental law, the sources and general principles of international and European environmental law, the actors involved, the relationship between environmental law and human rights, the protection of the environment during armed conflicts and the specific international and European rules applicable to air pollution, the protection of freshwater and seas and oceans, hazardous substances and waste and climate change. Due to the many legal rules, a broad view, rather than an in-depth analysis of certain themes is opted for. However, a limited number of aspects are covered in more detail (such as access to justice in environmental law). Biodiversity law is not covered in this course (but is thoroughly covered in the International and European Biodiversity Law course).

Contents

The course consists of three parts. The first part provides a general introduction to international and European environmental law. An overview is given of the development and evolution of international and European environmental law; the institutional context; the different sources of international and European environmental law (treaties, decisions and resolutions of international governmental organisations, European Union environmental law, soft law, case

law); the principles of international and European environmental law (o. a. the preventive principle, the precautionary principle, the principle of sustainable development...); the different types of measures in international and European environmental law; the relationship with other areas of law (environmental law and human rights; environmental law and armed conflict).

A second part discusses international environmental law and provides an overview of some key international environmental treaties and the underlying environmental issues and solutions (e.g. Basel Convention on Transboundary Movements of Waste, UN Water Convention, Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, Ozone Convention and climate treaties and climate litigation).

A third section discusses European environmental law. This covers some key sectoral directives and regulations (e.g. Waste Directive, Air Quality Directive, Water Framework Directive, EU Climate Law). In addition, horizontal legislation is discussed (legislation on environmental liability, environmental impact assessment, eco-crime, access to justice).

Students write a paper on a specific current topic of their choice on international or European environmental law.

Initial competences

- To have basic knowledge of public international law, EU law and institutions of the EU.
- To be able to analyse legal texts and sources.
- To have the attitude to be willing to develop a critical and scientific attitude.

Final competences

- 1 To have insight into international and European environmental law and its developments.
- 2 To be able to analyse and value legal texts and sources in the field of international and European environmental law.
- 3 To be able to apply the involved rules and regulations to specific problems.
- 4 To give a critical reflection and a scientific attitude.
- 5 To be able to analyse environmental and sustainability problems and to develop an independent vision towards topics of international and European environmental law.
- 6 To analyse an international or European environmental topic or case law.
- 7 To be aware of the role of international and European environmental law in achieving sustainability goals.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures, combined with a number of guest lectures on specific topics.
Student have to write a paper about a specific topic.

Study material

Type: Syllabus

Name: An Cliquet & Matilde Meertens, International and European environmental law, Ghent University, 2024.

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : No

Type: Handouts

Name: An Cliquet, International and European environmental law. Handouts of the presentations, 2025.

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

References

- Koivurova T, Introduction to international environmental law, Routledge, 2013.
- Boyle A & Redgwell C, Birnie, Boyle, and Redgwell's International Law and the Environment, Fourth Edition, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Peeters M and Elia Antonio M (eds.), EU Environmental Law Research Handbook, Edward Elgar, 2020.

Course content-related study coaching

- Answering questions of the students through e-mail or otherwise

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Written exam. One or more questions on international environmental law and one or more questions on European environmental law. The questions are open and include questions on knowledge, insight and opinions.

There is an evaluation of the written paper.

Calculation of the examination mark

Exam: 70%. Paper: 30%.

Retake assignment: reworking the paper (or submit a paper if this had not been done)

Students who do not participate in all evaluations will be declared as unsuccessful for this course. In concrete terms, this means that if the final score is nevertheless a figure of ten or more out of twenty, the final score will be reduced to a figure of 7/20.

Facilities for Working Students

Working students are not obliged to participate in classes.