

**After the Backlash: The Future of Arbitration in the Settlement of
Investment, Trade and Human Rights Disputes**

September 19th-20th, 2025
Quebec City, QC, Canada

Call for Proposals

We are currently witnessing a paradox regarding the use of arbitration to settle international disputes. On the one hand, investor-state dispute settlement has been heavily criticized by state and non-state parties that have identified serious legitimacy concerns. On the other hand, states and experts have proposed other arbitration-related mechanisms to settle disputes in three subject areas: an investment court system; an interim appeal arbitration arrangement in international trade; and rules on business and human rights arbitration. Despite a serious backlash in the context of investor-state dispute settlement, international arbitration has emerged in various forms when other avenues to settle disputes are unavailable or blocked.

The L. Yves Fortier Chair in International Arbitration and International Commercial Law at McGill University, as well as the École supérieure d'études internationales at Université Laval, are convening a workshop to tackle these issues. More specifically, we are interested in analyses of dispute settlement mechanisms that rely on arbitration, broadly understood, in the areas of investment, trade and human rights. These mechanisms include, but are not limited to, the European Commission's Multilateral Investment Court, World Trade Organization's Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement and The Hague Rules on Business and Human Rights Arbitration. We encourage the use of various theoretical and methodological approaches, in international law and other disciplines.

We invite proposals for papers that will be presented in Quebec City, Canada, on September 19th and 20th, 2025. The workshop will be an opportunity to obtain detailed feedback on an unpublished, full draft of each paper. Our objective is to secure a contract with an academic press to publish the final papers as an edited volume.

Please submit an abstract of no more than 400 words and a short biography to jean-michel.marcoux.esei@ulaval.ca by May 15th, 2025. Applicants will be informed of the results of the selection process by May 31st, 2025. Selected applicants will be asked to submit a full draft paper of around 8,000 words by September 1st, 2025.

Please note that all participants are expected to attend the workshop in person and fund their own travel.

Deadlines

Submission of proposals: May 15th

Selection of proposals: May 31st

Submission of full draft papers: September 1st

In-person workshop: September 19th-20th

Submission of final papers: December 15th

Organizing Committee

Andrea K. Bjorklund, McGill University, Faculty of Law

Jean-Michel Marcoux, Université Laval, École supérieure d'études internationales

Elizabeth Whitsitt, University of Calgary, Faculty of Law

Lukas Vanhonnaeker, Université de Montréal, Faculty of Law