



**Université Saint-Louis Bruxelles**  
CEDRE, Centre d'étude du droit de l'environnement

### **Open Phd Position - 4 years full-time - From 2022 to 2026**

Starting date: no later than July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

We are hiring a PhD candidate on

**WHO guidelines and environmental law in a moving context: from mere reference to conclusive influence ?**

*Lignes directrices de l'OMS et droit de l'environnement dans un contexte changeant: de la simple référence à l'influence décisive ?*

The dissertation shall be carried on under the direction of Prof. Delphine Misonne, at [Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles](#), within [CEDRE](#) (*Centre d'étude du droit de l'environnement*).

The aim of the doctoral dissertation is:

- to assess the impact of World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines on the content of environmental law, more specifically through the lens of case-law;
- to analyze, through legal research, the main features of the influence of such guidelines on the making and interpretation of legal instruments related to environmental protection, with a specific focus on air quality
- to unfold and better understand the *fabrique*/production of WHO guidelines, as far as they deal with health-related environmental issues and are meant to act as a guide for decision-makers.

In environmental matters, guidelines produced by the WHO are often referred to, in the global policy discourse but also where discussion arise on legal instruments and in relation to the choice of a given level of protection, either at legislative level or at administrative level. While these WHO guidelines – and the specific numerical thresholds they suggest - are not meant to be compulsory (neither through formal requirements, nor through their very substance), disparities between currently applicable legal standards and those guidelines are more and more frequently bemoaned as a kind of anomaly – either by health experts questioning the state of current legislation, by associations requiring more ambition from governments, by lawmakers in the process of discussing the adoption of new standards or even by the judges in their judgements. From a lawyer's point of view, one can observe that a formal and officially proclaimed non-bindingness does not necessarily mean a standard does not produce any effects in law. One of the topical questions today is whether WHO guidelines correspond, by default, to a global and widely acknowledged scientific common ground. If they truly “speak for science”, this is not without consequences from the point of view of law. The recurring references to WHO standards are also related to requests for a higher ambition in environmental law from public authorities and to new ways to contest established legal standards

The position is funded by the FNRS (Belgian Fund for Scientific Research) and will be carried on within a PDR program (<https://www.frs-fnrs.be/en/reglements-guides>).

It is part of a broader collective research project dedicated to topical issues of air quality law, health protection *via* environmental law and the global fight against pollution.

## Profile

- a Master degree (120), in Law
- and a specialized master (LL.M) in Environmental Law /or related to Environmental governance & policy /or related to health and environmental issues.
  - FNRS condition: the degree must have been obtained within the last three years, as extended by one additional year per childbirth and/or adoption since obtaining the degree
- grades must have been obtained during the studies
- the candidate must comply with the conditions of admissibility to doctoral studies in Belgium ([https://www2.usaintlouis.be/public/recherche/4\\_le\\_cadre\\_legal.pdf](https://www2.usaintlouis.be/public/recherche/4_le_cadre_legal.pdf))
- At the time of his/her appointment, the candidate cannot have worked for the Institution (Université Saint-Louis Bruxelles) for a total of more than one year (365 days), regardless of the percentage of the contract
- a capacity to work and write in English (and in French, with flexibility)
- writing and research skills (as demonstrated by scientific publications or recent essays)
- a capacity and will to work within a team; the readiness to invest in teamwork
- a passion for academic research and environmental issues
- an eagerness to invest in the organization of scientific events, as related to the PDR/PhD project
- interested in interdisciplinarity
- serious and creative
- proactive and curious
- available full-time

Of special relevance/added value:

- scientific publications
- the related topics and content of essay(s), as written during recent studies
- other languages skills
- any specialized expertise in science or health-related aspects
- practice as a lawyer (law firm, NGO, etc.)
- possibility to start *asap*

## What we offer

- ✓ A unique, collegial, dynamic and internationally connected research environment
- ✓ At Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles (French-speaking), within CEDRE, the Environmental Law Center
- ✓ A status of *boursier*, with competitive FNRS-rates (tax exemption, social security)
- ✓ Brussels-based, at the heart of Europe (with flexibility under Covid conditions)
- ✓ Four years full time
- ✓ Own working place, with access to research facilities
- ✓ Starting date flexible, no later than 1 July 2022

## Application

Please send your application **by 10 February 2022** midnight to:

[delphine.misonne@usaintlouis.be](mailto:delphine.misonne@usaintlouis.be),

Cc [cedre@usaintlouis.be](mailto:cedre@usaintlouis.be) (mention “PDR WHO-ENVI-LAW”)

With, in English or French:

- a full CV
- a motivation letter
- a copy of your publications (if any) or latest student dissertation ( for instance: *mémoire* )
- a letter of reference

The selection includes a formal interview process for short-listed candidates.

Any further information can be obtained by writing to [delphine.misonne@usaintlouis.be](mailto:delphine.misonne@usaintlouis.be)