

# ETHICS AND MALPRACTICE STATEMENT

## FOR *INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT LAW JOURNAL*

The *International Investment Law Journal* is committed to upholding the highest standards of publishing ethics and takes into account the [Guidelines on Good Publication Practice](#) published by the *Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)* and [Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing](#) published by the *Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)*, the *Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)*, the *Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA)* and the *World Association of Medical Editors (WAME)*.

The cornerstone of ethical scientific research is the researcher's responsibility, not only for their work but, more importantly, for its outcomes. Researchers must ensure the legitimacy of their inquiry, substantiate the relevance and reliability of their findings, and strive to generate a positive impact on society through their research.

All stakeholders in the publication process—including Authors, Reviewers, Editors, and Publishers—are expected to adhere to fundamental ethical principles that uphold integrity, transparency, and accountability in scholarly publishing.

### I. Principles underlying the Ethics and Malpractice Statement

The *Ethics and Malpractice Statement* for the *International Investment Law Journal* is developed in accordance with the latest *COPE* standards and is based on the following fundamental principles:

**a) Transparency.** Transparency is ensured throughout all stages of the editorial process, from submission and review to editing and publication. This principle requires all parties involved to provide clear, relevant, and reliable information. Authors will be informed about the review process, and any requested modifications or decisions to reject a manuscript will be duly justified.

**b) Integrity.** Integrity in scientific research is founded on values such as honesty, responsibility, verifiability, and the validity of knowledge. Honesty entails conducting research impartially, avoiding conflicts of interest, and transparently disclosing sources of funding, bibliographic references, and any potential risks of plagiarism. Responsibility implies that all those involved in the research process take full accountability for their actions and their consequences. Verifiability is ensured through the publication of methods for data collection, analysis, and interpretation, allowing other researchers to understand and replicate the research process. The validity of findings is essential to ensure that they align with the initial research objectives and hypotheses and contribute meaningfully to society.

**c) Freedom of Scientific Research.** Academic freedom is the cornerstone of scientific progress and innovation. Authors have the right to formulate research questions, select and develop theories, collect and analyse empirical data using rigorous academic methods, and propose new ideas, regardless of prevailing paradigms. This freedom includes the right to express their views without fear of reprisal from academic institutions, governments, or other entities that may seek to limit research autonomy. The *International Investment Law Journal* applies the principles of the [Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research](#) adopted at the *Ministerial Conference on the European Research Area* on 20 October 2020 in Bonn.


## II. Ethical Responsibilities of Authors

**Originality, Citation of Sources, and Plagiarism Responsibility.** By submitting an article to the *International Investment Law Journal* for publication, the author(s) confirm that the manuscript is their own original work and that it has neither been previously published nor is under consideration for publication elsewhere. They also guarantee that any ideas and/or wording in the manuscript that are not their own have been properly credited through appropriate bibliographical references and quotation marks. In the event of copyright infringement or plagiarism, full responsibility lies with the author(s) of the article. The *International Investment Law Journal* editorial board assumes no liability for any violations of copyright legislation or instances of plagiarism committed by authors. If a breach of copyright law or plagiarism is detected, the manuscript will be rejected, or, if already published, the article will be retracted. Furthermore, the editorial board of the *International Investment Law Journal* bears no responsibility for the opinions expressed by authors in published articles.

**Manuscript Preparation and Formatting.** The manuscript must be prepared in accordance with the editorial requirements and comply with [the Author Guidelines for \*International Investment Law Journal\*](#).

**No Redundant Publications.** The *International Investment Law Journal* does not accept submissions in the same language that have already been partially or fully published or described in another article submitted to or accepted by other electronic or print publications. In cases of redundant publication, the manuscript will be rejected, or, if already published, the article will be retracted.

**Accurate Representation of Primary Data.** All underlying data—such as statistical indicators, legal regulations, jurisprudential analyses, doctrinal opinions, and survey results—must be accurately represented in the manuscript. Knowingly presenting false or manipulated data constitutes grounds for rejection or retraction of a manuscript or published article. Fabrication of results or fraudulent and intentionally inaccurate statements may also lead to manuscript rejection or article withdrawal.


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**Disclosure of Financial Support.** Any financial support received for the research presented in the manuscript—such as grants, scholarships, or institutional funding—must be disclosed in a footnote attached to the article’s title.

**Exclusive Submission Policy.** Manuscripts submitted for publication in the *International Investment Law Journal* must not be simultaneously submitted to other publications. Authors may submit their

manuscript elsewhere only after receiving a formal rejection from the *International Investment Law Journal* or if six months have passed since submission without receiving a decision.

**Copyright protections of the articles published in *International Investment Law Journal*.** The author(s) of a manuscript agree that if the manuscript is accepted for publication in *International Investment Law Journal*, the published article will be copyrighted using *the Creative Commons Attribution – NonCommercial – NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License* . This means that all content of *International Investment Law Journal* in the online version on the site <https://investmentlaw.adjuris.ro/> is freely available without charge to the user or his/her institution.

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**Exclusive Electronic Submission.** Manuscripts must be submitted exclusively via the electronic submission form available on the journal's official website.

**Assumption of Liability Declaration.** Authors whose manuscripts are accepted for publication must complete an *Assumption of Liability Declaration*, confirming that the manuscript is their original work, that all sources have been correctly cited, that no unauthorised materials have been used, and that the manuscript has not been previously published elsewhere.

**Correction of Significant Errors or Inaccuracies.** If an author identifies a significant error or inaccuracy in their published article, they are obligated to promptly inform the editors and collaborate in issuing a correction or retracting the article, as appropriate.

**Sanctions for Ethical Violations.** Failure to comply with these obligations may result in the author being prohibited from publishing in the *International Investment Law Journal* for a period of up to three years.

### III. Ethical Responsibilities of Reviewers

**Evaluation System.** Manuscripts submitted to the *International Investment Law Journal* undergo a **double-blind peer review** process in accordance with international standards for scientific journals. Each submission is evaluated by three experts with recognised national and international reputations in legal sciences. Reviewers remain anonymous to the authors, and vice versa. If necessary, authors may receive recommendations for improving their manuscript. Reviewers may also recommend rejecting a submission if it does not meet the required standards.

**Role and Responsibilities of Reviewers.** The journal's reviewers serve on a voluntary, part-time basis. At the start of their collaboration, reviewers must complete a form specifying their areas of expertise. The *Editor-in-Chief* assigns each manuscript to at least two reviewers with expertise relevant to the subject matter, along with an evaluation form.

Reviewers who accept an invitation to evaluate a manuscript must submit their completed assessment within **three weeks** of receiving it. Reviewers are free to decline invitations if their current workload or commitments prevent them from completing a thorough review in a timely manner.

Reviewers must **decline invitations** to review a manuscript if:

- The manuscript falls outside their area of expertise.

- A conflict of interest exists (e.g., due to competitive, collaborative, or institutional affiliations with the author(s) or their institution).

**Confidentiality of Information and Ideas.** Privileged information or ideas obtained during the peer review process must remain **strictly confidential** and must not be used for personal advantage. Manuscripts under review are confidential documents and may **not** be shared or discussed with others unless authorised by the *Editor-in-Chief*.

**Objectivity and Constructive Feedback.** Reviewers must evaluate manuscripts **objectively**, avoiding personal criticism of the author(s). Reviews should be **clear, well-reasoned, and justified**, offering detailed and constructive feedback to help authors improve their work.

**Evaluation Criteria.** Reviewers must complete the *Evaluation Form* provided by the *Editor-in-Chief*. Their assessment should cover:

- Alignment of the manuscript with the journal’s thematic scope.
- Relevance and scientific novelty of the topic.
- Knowledge and use of relevant literature.
- Consistency and quality of writing style.
- Research methods used by the author(s).
- Logical coherence of scientific arguments.
- Proper citation and use of bibliographic sources.

Reviewers must inform the *Editor-in-Chief* if they identify **substantial similarities** between the manuscript under review and previously published works or if they have **ethical concerns** regarding the research reported in the manuscript. In conducting the evaluation, reviewers will take into account the provisions of [COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers](#) published by *Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)*. After evaluating a manuscript, reviewers may recommend one of the following:

- **Publication of the article** as is, meaning the manuscript meets the journal’s standards and no changes are necessary.
- **Publication of the article only if amendments are made**, based on the feedback provided in the *Evaluation Form*. In this case, the author(s) must address the reviewer’s comments before publication can proceed.
- **Rejection of the article** and non-publication, if the manuscript does not meet the necessary academic standards or if it contains significant flaws that cannot be resolved through revisions.

**Sanctions for Non-compliance.** Failure to comply with the above-mentioned obligations, including timely submission of evaluations, maintaining confidentiality, or providing objective and constructive feedback, may result in reviewers being **suspended** from evaluating articles for the *International Investment Law Journal* for up to **three years**. The *Editor-in-Chief* reserves the right to take additional measures if deemed necessary to uphold the quality and integrity of the peer review process.

#### IV. Ethical Responsibilities of the Editors

**The Final Decision of Publishing.** The *Editor-in-Chief* has ultimate responsibility for deciding whether a manuscript submitted to the *International Investment Law Journal* should be published. In making this decision, the *Editor-in-Chief* will be guided by the evaluations provided by scientific reviewers, the provisions of this *Ethics and Malpractice Statement*, and copyright law. The *Editor-in-Chief* may consult with other members of the Editorial Board, as well as with reviewers, to ensure the thoroughness of the evaluation process and the fairness of the publication decision.

**Objectivity of the Evaluation.** The editors are committed to evaluating manuscripts solely on the basis of their intellectual content, ensuring that no discrimination occurs on the grounds of race, gender, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy of the author(s). The editorial team will always strive for impartiality and fairness when assessing the scientific value of submitted manuscripts.

**Confidentiality of the Information and Ideas Contained in the Manuscript.** The editors will not disclose any information about a manuscript under consideration to anyone other than the author(s) and reviewers. Manuscripts will be treated as confidential documents throughout the entire evaluation and publication process.

**Ensuring the Integrity of the Evaluation Process.** The editors will take all necessary measures to ensure the integrity of the *double-blind* peer review process. This involves maintaining anonymity between the authors and reviewers, with the identity of the author(s) not being revealed to the reviewers, and vice versa. The editors will ensure that the evaluation is conducted fairly and without bias.

**Evaluation of Harmful Effects in Scientific Research Ethics.** When evaluating a manuscript for publication, the editors will look for evidence that ethical harms have been minimized in the conduct of the reported research. They will question whether the potential benefits of the research outweigh any harms or risks involved, particularly in terms of the ethical implications of the study.

**Request for Information on Compliance with Scientific Research Ethics.** *International Investment Law Journal* welcomes the submission of manuscripts from authors worldwide. Recognizing that laws and regulations regarding research ethics and ethical approval may vary by country, the editors may request clarification from the author(s) on compliance with ethical standards. Additionally, the editorial team may contact the institutions responsible for research ethics in the author's country, or relevant international organizations, to ensure that the research has been conducted in accordance with the highest ethical standards.

**Guidelines Used by Editors.** In evaluating a manuscript, editors will assess its compliance with the publication requirements outlined in the *Author Guidelines for International Investment Law Journal* and the recommendations set forth in the [Guidance for Editors: Research, Audit and Service Evaluations](#) published by the **Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)**. Editors will also be guided by the [COPE Retraction Guidelines](#) when considering the retraction of a published article in the journal. Furthermore, the relationships of cooperation between editors and research organizations/institutions that support the journal will be governed by the [Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity cases: guidance from the Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#).

## V. Ethical responsibilities regarding the conflict of interests

**The notion of conflict of interests in the publishing activity.** The Guidelines on Good Publication Practice (COPE) define conflicts of interest as situations where authors, reviewers, or editors have interests that are not fully transparent, potentially influencing their decisions on what is published. These conflicts may be perceived as misleading or deceptive to readers if revealed later.

**Conflict of interest regarding the authors.** Research must remain objective, unbiased, and free from external influences. Authors are required to declare that the research and conclusions presented in their articles are not affected by:

- The author's employer;
- The financier of the scientific research;

- Clients of the author (as a practitioner of legal professions) or any cases in which the author was directly involved;
- Contractual relationships with entities that may influence research objectivity;
- Affiliation with any economic, political, or ideological groups that may have an interest in the article's publication;
- Any personal, professional, or financial interests that could be perceived as influencing the research, even if not directly related to the article;
- Any non-financial relationships, such as academic collaborations or research partnerships, that might affect the objectivity of the research.

Failure to disclose conflicts of interest may lead to the refusal of publication, withdrawal of the article, and a two-year publishing ban in the journal.

**Conflict of interests regarding editors and reviewers.** Editors and reviewers must disclose any circumstances that may affect their independence in editorial or review duties (such as financial ties to companies or institutions with interests in the journal's content, or ideological affiliations that could compromise impartial analysis). They are required to provide a list of collaborating entities and their interests at the beginning of their involvement.

Failure to disclose conflicts of interest in editors or reviewers can result in the mandatory public disclosure of these interests and/or a two-year ban from participating in the journal's editorial or reviewing activities.

Authors, editors, and reviewers will all adhere to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, demonstrating their commitment to fostering a fair research and publishing environment for all participants.

**Guidelines used for conflict of interest.** These responsibilities are further clarified by the [Guidelines on the conflict of interests](#) established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

**Editor in chief**  
Associate professor **Cristina Elena POPA TACHE**