

NCCR Trade Regulation Brown Bag Series

Thomas Cottier, Emeritus Professor of Law, Senior Research Fellow, World Trade Institute

The Emerging Principle of Common Concern: Introduction to the SNF Project

Tuesday, 23 February 2016, 12.30 – 13.30

Anna Nussbaum Auditorium, World Trade Institute, University of Bern
Hallerstrasse 6, 3012 Bern, Switzerland

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Abstract

International law based upon territorial allocation of jurisdiction increasingly fails to properly address global challenges. It lacks appropriate institutions for dealing with global public goods. The research hypothesis presented in this Brown Bag discusses the relationship of territoriality, public goods, multilevel governance and the emerging doctrine of Common Concern of Humankind ('Common Concern') in international law. It suggests that Common Concern, adopted mainly for the purpose of instigating joint action and international cooperation in environmental law, has the potential to develop into a legal principle redefining responsibilities of states vis-à-vis the production and administration of public goods beyond their own borders. The principle of Common Concern – while yet to be defined in terms of its contours, in particular relating to obligations to act – has the potential to partly remedy the shortcomings of territorial allocation of jurisdiction and responsibility. It will trigger appropriate incentives for international cooperation and the creation of global institutions

by allowing for measured unilateral action protecting public goods vital to humankind.

Biography of the Speaker

Thomas Cottier, former Managing Director of the World Trade Institute and the Institute of European and International Economic Law, is Emeritus Professor of European and International Economic Law at the University of Bern. He is a former co-director of the national research programme on trade law and policy (NCCR Trade Regulation: From Fragmentation to Coherence) located at the WTI. Prof. Cottier is an associate editor of several journals. He was a visiting professor at the Graduate Institute, Geneva and currently teaches at the Europa Institut Saarbrücken, Germany and at Wuhan University, China. From 1997 to 2004 he was a member of the Swiss National Research Council and served on the board of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) Rome during the same period. He served the Baker & McKenzie law firm as Of Counsel from 1998 to 2005. More information on his biography can be found [here](#).

**Participation is free of charge, no registration is needed.
We warmly welcome you to join our seminar at the World Trade Institute!**

NCCR Trade Regulation Brown Bag Seminars are 30-minute presentations, given by external or in-house researchers. The presentations are followed by a 30-minute Q&A session. The Brown Bag concept comes from the US; it means that people bring their own lunch and eat it during the presentation.