ENVIRONMENTAL LOSS AND DAMAGE IN A COMPARATIVE LAW PERSPECTIVE
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Edited by
Barbara Pozzo
Valentina JACOMETTI
PREFACE

1. THE CONFERENCE IN COMO

The sixth EELF Annual Conference was held at the University of Insubria in Como in September 2018. Attendance at the conference was high, as there were more the 140 participants and around 90 speakers and chairpersons.

The conference took a slightly different pattern from the previous European Environmental Law Forum conferences, which were devoted to more general topics, focusing on a more specific but at the same time crosscutting issue: environmental loss and damage.

As announced in the original call for papers, the book that we present here is a collection of peer-reviewed contributions of the speakers at the conference. The book reflects the structure of the conference and has the aim of analysing and comparing the regulation of environmental loss and damage in a comparative, interdisciplinary and both public- and private-law perspective. It delves into conceptual and specific legal issues related to liability, compensation and restoration of damage in different sectors and jurisdictions, also taking into account the contributions of economic analysis in this field of regulation. Specific attention has been devoted to the role that liability and insurance may play in terms of mitigation and adaptation to climate change, as well as the prevention of damage from natural hazards. The scope of analysis encompasses national as well as supranational and international regimes, also in view of possible legal transplants and “cross-fertilisation”. The book includes 30 contributions that are subdivided into eight parts: (i) liability for environmental harm in the EU; (ii) private and corporate environmental liability; (iii) the role of criminal liability; (iv) legal transplants in the environmental field: the case of environmental liability; (v) state and international environmental liability; (vi) climate change liability; (vii) liability, climate change and natural hazards: the role of insurance; and (viii) real compensation and offset regimes: the strategy of “no net loss”.

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1 On this point, the bibliography is now boundless. To underline the relevance of the theme, the International Academy of Comparative Law dedicated a whole session to the theme of “Legal Cultures and Legal Transplants”, published in the Isaidat Law Review (2011) Volume 1 – Special Issue 1.
2. THE DIALECTIC BETWEEN GLOBAL LAW AND LOCAL LAW

One of the aspects that the conference aimed at underlining was the different keys to understanding the current dialectic between global and local law in the environmental field.

In recent decades, in fact, we have been witnessing the development of a body of rules that tends towards a progressive approach to the development of common operational choices in addressing environmental problems. This global environmental law has emerged because of several factors. First, the environmental problem, in addition to having affected all legal systems in an almost contemporary way, is suitable to involve by its very nature multiple countries at the same time. Secondly, legal problems in the environmental field are closely intertwined with aspects of the natural sciences, which present themselves as universal, and with economic problems that appear to be common in the globalised world, whereas the link to a particular cultural, social or legal background seems to fade away.

As a consequence, in the field of environmental law, the fact that the problems to be addressed are – in more than one respect – intimately linked to scientific knowledge and cover, for this reason, a certain degree of technicality will lead, in a greater number of cases, to new phenomena of legal transplants. On the other hand, legal transplants of environmental protection models have been strongly characterised and – consequently – influenced by the globalised perception of the environmental phenomenon, and by that of its protection. In particular, with the Rio Conference of 1992, a new era of international environmental law began: international cooperation no longer refers only to the prevention of

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transboundary pollution issues, but concerns global issues that can jeopardise natural balances essential for the maintenance of the conditions of life on earth.\(^7\)

3. LEGAL TRANSPLANTS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD AND THE NEED FOR A COMPARATIVE LAW APPROACH

A special session of the conference was devoted to legal transplants, taking advantage of the various and different backgrounds and origins of the participants and the speakers. The study of this phenomenon seems in fact very promising for all those scholars who are interested in the dynamic of environmental law evolution.

Today the reasons that drive the circulation of models can be very heterogeneous, traditional concepts of “prestige” and “imposition” as drivers of legal transplants need to be re-interpreted in the light of current circumstances, and new methods of analysing the phenomenon have been suggested.\(^8\)

With the drafting of large international conventions, homogeneous rules and standards are developed. It is not therefore difficult to find a rule formulated in a similar way in the European Union, the United States, Russia or China. This cannot come as a surprise: to similar and common problems, not included in the casts of the different legal traditions, the different legal systems have developed similar answers.

In addition, an important role is played today by international cooperation, which in recent decades has affected many aspects of the legislation of emerging economies.\(^9\) As the European experience can teach us, environmental cooperation has become one of the leading instruments in inducing legal transplants, as “environmental integration clauses are included in most EU agreement of a general nature”.\(^10\) A vast literature points out how Europe has become in this sector a normative power, able to impose its own perspective and regulation on

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how environmental protection should be taken into consideration,\textsuperscript{11} becoming a global producer of norms in this as in other important fields.\textsuperscript{12} On the other hand, we can also observe the willingness, by countries that have undergone a rapid process of democratisation, to refer to authoritative models, mostly arising from Western or international models, in the field of the protection of human rights and of the environment. In addition, even the practices of large multinational companies can have an impact on facilitating the circulation of Western models in emerging economies by private contracting.\textsuperscript{13}

With regard to the EU, other factors that might drive legal transplants in the environmental field can also be linked to the formation of regulations at the regional supranational level. In this case, legal transplants might be induced by the imposition of harmonised supranational legislation, which finds its roots in one or more advanced legal systems and aims at creating common conditions in all Member States.\textsuperscript{14}

Given the complexity of the questions at stake, however, even if today environmental law can be considered at least partially a global law where it is possible to identify common trends, one should not overlook the fact that environmental law has uneven application around the world, partly because environmental law is quite new and growing rapidly and partly because its application is local and depends on the differentiated conditions of each legal system.

In fact, the globalisation process that we are witnessing should not lead us into the temptation to believe that global environmental rules will lead everywhere to the same results. Indeed, rules and institutions borrowed in the environmental field will also have to deal with the particular legal process of the target system and with a particular path dependence that will vary from context to context, as well as with factors that will surely affect the efficacy of

\textsuperscript{13} Li‐Wen Lin, Legal Transplants through Private Contracting: Codes of Vendor Conduct in Global Supply Chains as an Example, Am. J. Comp. L. 2009 (57), pp. 711–744.
\textsuperscript{14} The environmental competences enter the Treaty of Rome with the Single European Act of 1987, which inserts a new Title VII, dedicated to the “Environment”, consisting of three articles: 130R, 130S and 130T. The Single European Act states that action by the Community relating to the environment shall be based on the principles that preventive action should be taken that environmental damage should as priority be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay. It further provides that environmental protection requirements shall be component of the Community’s other policies.
the transplanted rule or instrument. In this perspective, not only the letter of the law counts, but also and above all the existence of tools to make it effective, and therefore the legal system as a whole in which it will be imbedded.

It is therefore necessary to promote a comparative law approach in the study of the spreading of environmental rules, which will help us in understanding the profound reasons for legal transplants and the true effectiveness of the available remedies.

As the judges of the Indian Supreme Court have masterfully reminded us: “If the mere enactment of laws relating to the protection of environment was to ensure a clean and pollution-free environment, then India would, perhaps, be the least polluted country in the world. But this is not so. There are stated to be over 200 Central and State statutes which have at least some concern with environment protection, either directly or indirectly. The plethora of such enactments has, unfortunately, not resulted in preventing environmental degradation which, on the contrary, has increased over the years.”

Barbara Pozzo and Valentina Jacometti
Como, August 2020

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15 Supreme Court of India, Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action v. Union of India 1996 (5) SCC 281, 293.
## CONTENTS

*Preface* ................................................................. v
*List of Authors* .................................................. xxv

**PART I. LIABILITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HARM IN THE EU**

The EU and the System of Environmental Loss and Damage: Liability, Restoration and Compensation
Ludwig Krämer ......................................................... 3

1. Specificity of Environmental Loss and Damage .................. 3
2. The EU Environmental Liability Provisions ........................ 4
   2.1. Air Pollution ................................................... 6
   2.2. Dieselgate ...................................................... 7
   2.3. Climate Change ................................................ 8
   2.4. Ocean Pollution ............................................... 8
3. Restoration of the Impaired Environment .......................... 9
4. Environmental Protection through Criminal Law ................ 12
5. Better Implementation ............................................. 16
6. Holding Member States Liable .................................... 19
7. What Can be Done to Improve the Present Situation? .......... 22
   7.1. Improving Transparency .................................... 22
   7.2. Investigation Powers ...................................... 24
   7.3. Environmental Liability .................................... 26
8. Conclusion .......................................................... 28

Towards a Better Environmental Liability Directive?
Anna Vanhellemont .................................................. 29

1. Introduction ....................................................... 29
2. Evaluating the Environmental Liability Directive .............. 30
3. The Multi-Annual Work Programme: Challenges and Opportunities .... 33
4. Unlocking the Directive’s Full Potential ........................ 34
The Permit Defence between the EU Environmental Liability Directive and National Private Law: Some Comparative Law Remarks
Carlo Masieri ..................................................... 39
1. Introduction: Aim and Some Vocabulary ......................... 39
2. Some Drafting History ........................................... 40
3. The Effects of the Permit Defence ............................... 42
4. Some Comparative Law Questions Arising from the EU “Permit Defence” ........................................... 44
   4.1. The German System ......................................... 44
   4.2. The French System ......................................... 47
   4.3. The Italian System ......................................... 49
5. Conclusion ....................................................... 50

The Jurisprudential Configuration of the “Polluter Pays” Principle: A Critical Assessment
Theodoros G. Iliopoulos ........................................... 53
1. Introduction ....................................................... 53
2. The PPP, a Law and Economics Principle Translated into EU Law ...... 54
3. The PPP through Case Law ....................................... 56
4. The PPP and the Extension of Liability to Owners of Contaminated Sites ............................................... 60
5. Deconstructing TTK: Problems Associated with a Derogation from the PPP under the ELD .................................. 64
6. Deconstructing TTK: Problems Associated with the Application of the PPP ........................................... 67
7. Conclusion ....................................................... 70

Mariusz Baran ...................................................... 71
1. Introduction ....................................................... 71
2. “Causal Link” as the Necessary Condition of Liability? .............. 72
3. Consequences of the Absence of a Causal Link for the Liability Mechanism ..................................... 75
4. Causal Link and Presumption of its Existence – Does it Mean Presumption of Liability? ................................. 77
5. Causal Link as the Condition of Liability and More Stringent National Provisions ..................................... 79
6. Conclusions ....................................................... 83
Accumulation of Potentially Toxic Elements in Agricultural Soils
Iain Green, Tilak Ginige, Merve Demir and Patrick Van Calster . . . . . . . 87

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 87
2. Soil Biodiversity and the Threats to it ......................................................................... 89
   2.1. Soil Biodiversity .................................................................................................... 89
   2.2. Potentially Toxic Elements Threatening Soil Biodiversity .............................. 91
   2.3. Soils and Potentially Toxic Elements ................................................................ 92
3. Controls on Potentially Toxic Elements .................................................................... 94
   3.1. Organic By-Products ............................................................................................ 94
   3.2. Legislation and Organic Fertilisers ..................................................................... 98
   3.3. Inorganic Fertilisers ............................................................................................. 99
   3.4. The Potential for Organic Fertilisers to Harm Soils ........................................... 100
4. Ecosystem Services ..................................................................................................... 103
5. Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 107

PART II. PRIVATE AND CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITY

Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Liability for Environmental Damage
Carola Glinski .................................................................................................................... 111

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 111
2. Corporate Social Responsibility Instruments ............................................................ 112
   2.1. Background ............................................................................................................ 112
   2.2. Public International Law ..................................................................................... 113
   2.3. Private CSR Initiatives ....................................................................................... 114
3. Tort Law and the Duty of Care of Parent Companies .................................................. 115
   3.1. Direct Orders of the Parent or Core Company .................................................... 116
   3.2. Assumption of Responsibility .............................................................................. 116
       3.2.1. The General Doctrine .................................................................................... 116
       3.2.2. Vedanta and Okpabi: CSR Self-Commitments and Assumption of
              Responsibility ....................................................................................................... 120
           3.2.2.1. Vedanta ..................................................................................................... 120
           3.2.2.2. Okpabi ................................................................................................. 121
           3.2.2.3. The Position of the UK Supreme Court ................................................... 124
       3.2.3. Corporation-Wide (or Supply-Chain-Wide) Duties of Care
              in Line with CSR Standards? ........................................................................... 125
           3.3.1. UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights ......................... 126
           3.3.2. Tort Law Doctrine ....................................................................................... 127
           3.3.3. German Case Law ....................................................................................... 128
           3.3.4. English Case Law ....................................................................................... 129
           3.3.5. CSR Instruments and the Standard of Care ............................................... 131
   3.3. Corporation-Wide (or Supply-Chain-Wide) Duties of Care in Line with CSR Standards? .................................................................................................................................................................................. 125
   3.3.1. UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights ......................... 126
   3.3.2. Tort Law Doctrine ............................................................................................ 127
   3.3.3. German Case Law ........................................................................................... 128
   3.3.4. English Case Law ............................................................................................ 129
   3.3.5. CSR Instruments and the Standard of Care ................................................... 131
4. Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 132
The Burden of Proof in Proceedings for Corrective and Preventive Actions in Polish and Italian Law
Bartosz Rakoczy ................................................................. 167

1. The Burden of Proof: Definition and Importance in Proceedings ........ 167
2. Conclusions ............................................................... 177

PART III. THE ROLE OF CRIMINAL LIABILITY

The Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law:
Preliminary Remarks
Chiara Perini ................................................................. 181

1. Environment as a “Worthy” and “Needy” Good for Criminal Protection ...................................................... 181
3. Environment as a Changing Concept in a Comparative Perspective .............................................................. 189

The Legal Framework against Planned Obsolescence: What Role (If Any) for Criminal Law?
Emanuele La Rosa ............................................................. 191

1. Introduction ............................................................... 191
2. “Planned Obsolescence”: Concept, Historical Evolution and Harmful Effects ........................................................... 191
3. The Role of European Institutions in Combating the Phenomenon ...... 195
4. The Alternatives to Criminal Law: The Recent Italian Experience .... 197
5. The French Solution: The Crime of Planned Obsolescence .......... 199
   5.1. Planned Obsolescence and the Principle of Offensiveness/Harm Principle ........................................................... 200
   5.2. Planned Obsolescence and the Principle of Legality .......... 204
   5.3. Is the Criminal Repression of Planned Obsolescence Effective? .. 206
6. Conclusions ............................................................... 208

Confiscation of Assets and Proceeds of Crime in Environmental Criminal Law: New Approaches by the German Legislator
Robert Esser ................................................................. 209

1. Introduction ............................................................... 209
2. Type and Character of Sanctions for Environmental Crimes .......... 210
  2.2.1. Introduction to the Current Provisions for Confiscation of Assets ......................................................... 214
  2.2.2. Compliance with Requirements of Directive 2008/99/EC . . . . . . . 215
    2.2.2.1. Criminal Sanctions ................................ 215
    2.2.2.2. Effectiveness ......................................... 217
    2.2.2.3. Proportionality ..................................... 220
    2.2.2.4. Dissuasion ........................................... 220
  2.3. Intermediary Result .................................................. 221

3. Corporate Liability .................................................................. 222
  3.2. Does German Law Fulfil Those Requirements? ....................... 223
    3.2.1. What is the Current Position in German Law on Corporate Liability? ........................................... 223
    3.2.2. Does the Current German Law Comply with Directive 2008/99/EC? ........................................... 225

4. Conclusion .............................................................................. 226

Environmental Criminal Liability of Enterprises and Compliance Programmes in Spain
  Miriam Ruiz Arias ........................................................................ 229
  1. Introduction ......................................................................... 229
  2. Article 31bis SCC and Specifications of Criminal Compliance Programmes .................................................. 231
  5. Regulated Self-Rule in Environmental Law and Environmental Rights ...................................................... 238
  6. Conclusion .............................................................................. 240

PART IV. LEGAL TRANSPLANTS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD: THE CASE OF ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITY

The CERCLA Model: Past, Present and Future
  Marta Cenini ............................................................................. 245
  1. Introduction: CERCLA as a Point of Reference for Directive 2004/35 ... 245
  2. The EPA’s Authority to RemEDIATE and Notion of “Potentially Responsible Parties” ...................................... 248
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.  Strict, Joint and Several, and Retroactive Liability</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  “Landowner Defences”</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.  Natural Resources Damages: The Role of Public Trust Doctrine</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.  Conclusions</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compensation for Environmental Damage in the CIS Countries: A Comparative Legal Analysis**

Alena Kodolova ........................................... 263

1.  Introduction ........................................... 263

2.  Analysis of the Current Legislation on Compensation for Environmental Damage in CIS Countries ........................................... 264
2.1.  Russian Federation ........................................... 264
2.2.  Belarus ........................................... 265
2.3.  Kazakhstan ........................................... 266
2.4.  Moldova ........................................... 267
2.5.  Kyrgyzstan ........................................... 267
2.6.  Armenia ........................................... 268
2.7.  Azerbaijan ........................................... 269
2.8.  Tajikistan ........................................... 270
2.9.  Uzbekistan ........................................... 271

3.  Special Liability Regimes for Environmental Damage in the CIS Countries ........................................... 271

4.  Conclusion ........................................... 274

**Compensation of Lawful Environmental Damage in the Russian Legal System**

Nikolay Kichigin ........................................... 275

1.  Introduction ........................................... 275

2.  “Damage to the Environment” as a Category of Legal Liability for Environmental Offences ........................................... 275

3.  The Concept and Features of Legal Damage to the Environment, the Procedure of its Compensation ........................................... 276

4.  Differences between Lawful and Unlawful Damage to the Environment ........................................... 278

5.  Features of the Compensation of Lawful Damage to Aquatic Biological Resources ........................................... 286


7.  Conclusion ........................................... 288
### Contents

**Ecological Environmental Damage Liability Rules in the Light of the Private Law Regime: Problems and Experience in China**  
Yu Cheng, Congwen Yao and Wenhong Ren ................................. 291

1. Introduction ............................................................................. 291
2. *Locus Standi*: Conflicts of the Right to Sue Among Multiple Claimants ................................................................. 293
   2.1. Legal Rules and Judicial Practice for Ecological Damage Claimants ................................................................. 294
   2.2. Positive Conflicts of the Right to Sue Among Multiple Claimants ................................................................. 297
   2.3. Solutions to Conflicts of Rights to Sue ................................. 300
3. Liable Parties: Expanded Liable Parties to be Confirmed by Law .......................................................... 302
   3.1. Legal Rules Concerning the Scope of Persons Liable for Ecological Environmental Damage ......................................................... 303
   3.2. Challenges Caused by Expanding the Scope of Liable Parties ................................................................. 305
   3.3. Legislative Recommendations ............................................. 308
4. Remedies Including Restoration and Compensation for Losses .......................................................... 309
   4.1. Rules on “Restoration” and “Compensation for Losses” in EDL ................................................................. 310
   4.2. Problems with Remedies in EDL Cases ................................. 315
   4.3. Legislative Suggestions ..................................................... 317
5. Implementation Procedure for EDL Judgments ........................................................................ 319
   5.1. Rules of the Implementation Regime for EDL Judgments .......... 319
       5.1.1. Settlement or Mediation Procedures .................................. 319
       5.1.2. Enforcement of Judgments ............................................ 321
   5.2. Problems with the Claim Procedure for EDL Cases ................. 324
       5.2.1. Weak Public Participation in the Settlement/Consultation Procedure ......................................................... 324
       5.2.2. Problem-Solving-Oriented Judicial Innovation
               Weakening Judicial Rationality ........................................... 325
       5.2.3. Questionable Content of the Judgment Enforcement
               Rules ........................................................................ 326
   5.3. Possible Solutions to these Problems ..................................... 327
6. Conclusion .................................................................................. 328

**Transplanting Civil Law Models in China: Compensation of Personal Damages Caused by Environmental Pollution**  
Nadia Coggiola ................................................................. 331

1. Introduction ............................................................................. 331
2. The Theoretical Context ....................................................... 333
3. The Tort Law Reform in China and Compensation of Environmental Damages .................................................. 337
4. Application of the Rules on the Compensation of Environmental Damage .......................................................... 344
5. Final Remarks ................................................................................................................................................ 351

PART V. STATE AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITY

The Myth of Plurality of Regimes in the Law of State Responsibility
Khazar Masoumi .................................................................................................................................................. 357
1. Introduction ................................................................................................................................................ 357
2. The International Liability of States: A Civil Law Misunderstanding ........................................... 359
   2.1. The Inexistence of the Term: How Do You Say Liability? ................................................................. 359
   2.2. The International Liability of States: From the Domestic Law’s Objective Responsibility to the ILC’s States’ (Non-)Liability ...... 360
       2.2.1. An Equivalent for the Domestic Law’s Objective Responsibility? ........................................ 360
       2.2.2. The Art of (Non-)Liability of the States in International Law .............................................. 362
3. The Common Regime: Roberto Ago’s Self-Sufficient Fortress ................................................... 364
   3.1. The Objectivity of the Common Regime ......................................................................................... 364
   3.2. It is about the Secondary Obligations ......................................................................................... 366
4. Conclusions ................................................................................................................................................ 369

The Right to a Healthy Environment and its Consequences for Other Human Rights: A Challenging Approach
Laura Stănilă and Sergiu Stănilă ...................................................................................................................... 371
1. Introductory Considerations on the Right to a Healthy Environment ............................................... 371
2. Interference of the Right to a Healthy Environment with Other Human Rights in the Light of ECtHR Case Law ................................................................. 373
   2.1. The Right to Life (Article 2 ECHR) ............................................................................................ 375
   2.2. Prohibition of Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (Article 3 ECHR) .......................................... 376
       2.2.1. Florea v. Romania ......................................................................................................... 376
       2.2.2. Elefteriadis v. Romania .................................................................................................. 376
   2.3. The Right to Respect for Private and Family Life and the Home (Article 8 ECHR) .................. 377
3. Brândușe v. Romania and its Subtleties ............................................................................................ 379
4. Concluding Remarks ................................................................................................................................ 381
PART VI. CLIMATE CHANGE LIABILITY

Climate Change Liability: Some General Remarks in a Comparative Law Perspective
Valentina Jacometti ......................................................... 385
1. Introduction: Setting the Scene ........................................... 385
2. The Emergence of Climate Change Litigation ...................... 386
3. Potentials and Difficulties of Climate Change Litigation ........ 388
4. The Evolution of the Judicial Approach to Climate Change Claims .... 390

Climate Change Litigation, State Responsibility and the Role of Courts in the Global Regime: Towards a “Judicial Governance” of Climate Change?
Carlo Vittorio Giabardo ....................................................... 393
1. Introduction: The “Subversive” Nature of Climate Change and the Need for a New Legal Grammar ......................... 393
2. Climate Change Litigation as a Failure and as an Opportunity .... 397
3. The Ambiguity of the Role of Court in Establishing State Responsibility for Climate Change ................................. 400
4. Some Pushback (and Some Reasons for Being Pessimistic): Two Case Studies ....................................................... 403

Liability of States in Climate Change Migration and Compensation for Environmental Migrants
Francesco Martines .......................................................... 407
1. Introduction ................................................................. 407
2. The Right to Migrate (Ius Migrandi) ................................. 409
3. The Different Categories of Migration ................................. 409
   3.1. Economic Migration .................................................. 410
   3.2. Migration Due to Vulnerability ................................... 410
   3.3. Environmental Migration ........................................... 410
4. Climate Change as a Cause of Migration ............................. 411
5. European Protection Law ................................................... 413
6. Conclusions .................................................................. 415
   6.1. Humanitarian Protection for Climate Migrants ................. 416
   6.2. Italian Rules about Climate Migration ........................... 417

Reusing Offshore Hydrocarbon Infrastructure for the Permanent Storage of Carbon Dioxide
Joris Gazendam ............................................................... 421
1. Introduction ................................................................. 421
2. CCS Technology and Associated Liability Risks .................................. 422
   2.1. Technical Basics of CCS Technology ........................................... 422
   2.2. The EU Regulatory Framework for CCS ....................................... 424
   2.3. Liability Risks for CCS ............................................................... 426
3. Reuse Potential of Existing Hydrocarbon Infrastructure ....................... 428
   3.1. Reuse Potential of Hydrocarbon Infrastructure and Reservoirs ........ 428
   3.2. Decommissioning Obligations for Hydrocarbon Infrastructure .......... 430
4. Liability Risks Associated with Reusing Hydrocarbon Infrastructure ........ 432
5. Conclusion ....................................................................................... 434

PART VII. LIABILITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL HAZARDS:
THE ROLE OF INSURANCE

Insurance Instruments for Adapting to Climate Change: A Comparative
Perspective
Stefano Fanetti ................................................................. 437

1. Introduction: Problems and Weaknesses of Ex Post Compensation
   Mechanisms for Natural Disasters ...................................................... 437
2. Role of Disaster Insurance and Obstacles to its Spread ......................... 439
3. Possible Solution to the Low Penetration of Disaster Insurance:
   Compulsory or Semi-Compulsory Schemes ........................................ 440
4. An Example of Compulsory Insurance: The Romanian Catastrophe
   Insurance Scheme ............................................................................ 441
5. A Well-Known Semi-Compulsory Scheme: The French CatNat System ... 443
6. Italy: Low Penetration of Disaster Insurance and Opposition
   to Mandatory Insurance ..................................................................... 449
7. Concluding Remarks ........................................................................ 453

Multi-Country Pooling Schemes for the Financing and Transfer
of Climate-Related Disaster Risk: A Comparative Overview
Alberto Monti ................................................................. 455

1. Introduction ....................................................................................... 455
2. Financial Vulnerability and Financial Resilience to Climate Change ....... 456
3. Policy Options in Disaster Risk Financing ........................................... 458
4. Innovations in Risk Transfer Markets ................................................. 459
5. A Comparative Overview of Multi-Country Pooling Schemes ............... 460
   5.1. African Risk Capacity ................................................................. 460
   5.2. Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility ............................. 462
   5.3. Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company ............................... 464
6. Conclusions ....................................................................................... 465
Environmental Liability, Catastrophic Risk Mitigation and Sustainability:
The Role of Insurers Beyond the Insurance Coverage
Anna Teresa Memola ................................................. 467

1. Risk Assessment: The Main Risk Factors Deriving from Natural Catastrophes in the Global Context ...................................................... 467
2. The Role of Insurers Beyond the Insurance Coverage: Risk Awareness, Risk Prevention .............................................................. 470
3. Approach of Insurers and Reinsurers: Solutions and Impacts on the Lines of Insurance ...................................................... 475
4. Conclusion ...................................................... 479

PART VIII. REAL COMPENSATION AND OFFSET REGIMES:
THE STRATEGY OF “NO NET LOSS”

No Net Loss in Recovery: The Overall End-of-Waste Impact Assessment
Topi Turunen ...................................................... 483

1. Introduction ...................................................... 483
   1.1. Circular Economy and End-of-Waste Status .................. 483
   1.2. Research Question .............................................. 484
2. Environmental Acceptability at the End-of-Waste Stage .............. 485
   2.1. Interpreting the Fourth Criterion .......................... 485
      2.1.1. Basic Aspects .............................................. 485
      2.1.2. Using a Comparator .............................................. 488
   2.2. The Ideology of No Net Loss in Recovery .................. 489
3. No Net Loss in the Impact Assessment .................................. 491
   3.1. No Net Loss and Lifecycle Assessment .................. 491
   3.2. Impacts of Ceasing to be Waste .......................... 493
      3.2.1. Negative Impacts of Ceasing to be Waste ............ 493
      3.2.2. Positive Impacts of Ceasing to be Waste ............ 495
4. Shortcomings in the Assessment of the Fourth Criterion .............. 497

No Net Loss and Forest Offsets in the Flemish Region: A Cautionary Tale of How Not to Reconcile Science-Based Conservation Policies with Economic Interests and Vested Rights?
Hendrik Schoukens and Geert Van Hoorick .................................. 499

1. Introduction ...................................................... 499
2. The Genesis of the Legal Framework on Forest Offsetting and Nature Protection ...................................................... 504
   2.1. The Steep Road Towards a Moratorium on Deforestation .... 505
   2.2. A New, Greener Horizon with the Adoption of the Ruimtelijk Structuurplan Vlaanderen Back in ... 1997 .......................... 508
2.3. Other Protection Regimes Relevant for Forests and Woodlands .................................................. 509
2.4. The Increasing Relevance of Natura 2000 for Forests ................................. 510
3. Analysis of the Continued Net Loss: Why is the Flemish Region Still Losing Forest Cover? .................................................. 512
  3.1. The Poor Articulation between Forest Protection and Urban and Spatial Planning Law ........................................... 514
  3.2. The Mitigation Hierarchy in Theory and in Practice: The Complexity of Saying No ........................................... 516
  3.3. The Limited Material Scope of the Compensation Scheme: Not All Losses are Compensated ........................................... 520
  3.4. Financial Compensation as the Default Option: The “Polluter Pays” Principle? ........................................... 521
  3.5. Additionality, Time Gaps and Interim Losses: How Can Degrading Baselines be Avoided? ........................................... 523
  3.6. Faltering Enforcement: Who is Controlling the Enforcer and Avoids Further Abuses? ........................................... 527
4. Discussion and Outlook .................................................. 530
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