

CHREN HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC

CALL FOR APPLICATION

Project “Corporations in the UN Business and Human Rights Treaty Negotiations” for the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre

1. Summary of the project

The project aims to support the non-profit [Business & Human Rights Resource Centre](#) (BHRRC) to draft a strategic briefing and a blog post on the opportunity for businesses to engage proactively with [treaty negotiations](#) at the UN level to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises (the “UN Business and Human Rights Treaty”).

Project background description:

Transnational business activities, like setting up factories or mining in other countries, can sometimes harm people’s basic rights, such as fair wages, safe working conditions, or access to clean water. Governments around the world are increasingly focused on setting rules that make sure businesses respect human rights where they operate. For the past 10 years, governments have been discussing and negotiating a draft treaty to regulate the activities of businesses in relation to human rights.

More specifically, since 2014, the UN [open-ended intergovernmental working group](#), chaired by Ecuador, has been conducting negotiations to elaborate a [legally binding instrument](#) to regulate the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights (‘BHR Treaty’). Negotiations have also been continuously monitored by civil society organizations, who have [long campaigned](#) for a UN instrument to regulate the activities of businesses, and in particular, their impacts on human rights and the environment.

Little attention has been given to date to the role of businesses in these negotiations. Businesses do not have a formal ‘seat’ at the negotiation table (only States and specifically mandated international organizations can negotiate the terms of a treaty under international law). Nevertheless, businesses can engage in advocacy and lobbying strategies, including open letters, position statements through business or industry associations, as well as more discrete lobbying with State governments. Their positions can also be reflected to some extent by non-profit industry organizations, such as the [International Organisation of Employers](#).

This project aims to bolster understanding of the possible advocacy opportunity that may exist in respect of corporations and the BHR Treaty, particularly giving growing acceptance of human rights and environmental due diligence by the private sector as well as the growth in regulation in this respect.

A team of 4 students will conduct a study and deliver:

- a. A strategic briefing, including visual design (no longer than 10 pages)
- b. A blog post for the BHRRRC website on the opportunity for businesses to engage proactively with the treaty text (1000 words max)

During the course of the project, selected students will develop the following skills:

- Report drafting (with a focus on NGO advocacy language)
- Design thinking (including visual design and for those with a legal background, legal design)
- Teamwork
- Presentation skills

Estimated project time commitment from students:

- 5-6 hours per week (research, writing and student team coordination)
- 1-hour weekly meetings with project supervisors in person (see About the Clinic section below)
- 3 meetings with the BHRRRC over the course of the project (online).

The student team will also present their findings to the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. Additionally, the blog post with author credit to the participating students will likely be published on the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre website.

Upon completion of the project, students will receive **a letter of recommendation** from the project supervisors of the CHREN Human Rights Clinic, as well as from the Clinic Director. Participation in the project can also count towards internship hours depending on student's principal course of study at FAU (internship hours have previously been awarded for MA Human Rights students and MA Development Economics and International Studies students, students from the Law School [can be credited](#) with 2 SWS as an optional course in "Schwerpunktbereich 11: Grund- und Menschenrechte" and/or as "Schlüsselqualifikation" (§ 2 I JAPO)).

About the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre ([BHRRC](#))

The Business and Human Rights Resource Centre is a non-profit organization formed by 12 trustees and 70+ colleagues dedicated to advancing human rights in business and eradicating abuse. The organization maintains expert knowledge of local contexts through a team of researchers and other staff members located across all major regions, including Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, North America, Latin America and the Middle East. Their website and weekly [newsletter](#) are some of the main sources of information in the field of Business and Human Rights.

They are supported by offices in London, New York, Berlin, and Bogotá. The BHRRC global team, senior management and board have extensive experience working in the human rights, development, and environmental fields and as academics, philanthropy professionals, and former business people.

The BHRRC has been active on the topic of UN treaty negotiations on business and human rights, hosting an [in-depth library of resources](#) dedicated to the Treaty project. They also are the hosts and editors of the “Debate the Treaty” blog series, which brings together legal experts and practitioners to debate on specific issues raised during the treaty negotiations.

Project timeline:

Timeframe	Activity
November 2024	Selection of student team (call for application, interview rounds) + getting acquainted with the UN Treaty negotiations process
December 2024	Kick-off call with the BHRR Research on past engagement of business with the Treaty negotiations Strategic analysis of corporate engagement in relation to other relevant regulation (ex: European human rights due diligence laws, corporate engagement around other treaty negotiations relating to human rights and environmental protection)
January 2025	Analysis of risks and opportunities for corporate engagement in relation to the UN BHR Treaty negotiations Following UN Treaty negotiation sessions (remotely), pending final date announcements by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
February 2025	Mid-way check in with BHRRC Develop design thinking skills to present main findings
March 2025	Drafting final strategic briefing + blog post

2. Desired student profile

- We welcome students from Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, specifically those enrolled in MA Human Rights, MA Development Economics and International Studies, the Law School, the Economic and Management School, as well as Master's level students from other departments with at least a basic understanding of human rights, such as those in political science, philosophy, or geography programs.
- We seek individuals with a strong dedication to human rights and environmental protection.
- Proficiency in English, both written and spoken, is mandatory.

- Proficiency in Portuguese, Spanish, and/or French is advantageous but not obligatory.
- While knowledge of Excel or graphic design (Canva or other platforms) is not a prerequisite, it is considered a valuable skill for this project.
- We expect one student to take on the role of “student project manager”. This person will be in charge of organizing communication among the student team and ensuring deadlines set by the project supervisors are met.

3. Application process

Interested students are kindly requested to provide the following documents:

- a. Curriculum vitae
- b. A concise letter of interest (maximum 500 words) detailing their relevant academic and/or professional background for the project, their current field of study, and instances of prior teamwork experiences. Those who wish to apply specifically for the role of “student project manager” should indicate so in their letter of interest and explain their motivation for fulfilling this position.
- c. Although not mandatory, including samples of written reports, papers, PowerPoint presentations, and/or experience in Excel would strengthen your application.

It's important to note that the project leaders do not expect applicants to possess prior professional experience in the field. The aim of CHREN Human Rights Clinic is to offer participants an opportunity to gain valuable experience with human rights projects. Therefore, examples of academic work completed during your bachelor's and master's degrees are also acceptable.

Application materials should be sent by **10 November 2024** by email with the subject “Call for Application_BHRRRC Project” to Bruna Singh (bruna.singh@fau.de) **AND** Stephanie Regalia (stephanie.regalia@fau.de).

In person interviews will be held on Wednesday 13 November 2024 at the CHREN offices in Nuremberg (Andreij-Sacharow-Platz 1, 90403 Nürnberg).

All applicants are also invited to participate in the CHREN Human Rights Clinic’s inaugural workshop which will be held on **15 and 16 November 2024** at the CHREN offices.

Final team selection decisions will be communicated on Monday 18 November 2024.

About the CHREN Human Rights Clinic

The *CHREN Human Rights Clinic* is an initiative launched by the Chair for Public Law, Public International Law and Human Rights (Professor Patricia Wiater) and the Center for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg (CHREN) in the winter semester 2024. The *CHREN Human Rights Clinic* continues the work of the former *FAU Human Rights Clinic* that was founded in 2021 and

led by Professor Anuscheh Farahat in cooperation with Professor Katrin Kinzelbach and Professor Patricia Wiater, as well as of the former *Human Rights & Business Clinic* that started working in 2022 and was led by doctoral researchers from the [International Doctoral Program Business & Human Rights](#).

The *CHREN Human Rights Clinic* has two primary objectives:

Firstly, the Clinic is an innovative teaching format that offers talented students the opportunity to develop their skills by working on real-life cases and projects relating to International Human Rights Law. Under the supervision of experts from human rights practice and human rights researchers at FAU, students will conduct interdisciplinary research to help partner organizations tackle cutting-edge human rights questions.

Secondly, the Clinic seeks to provide high-quality advice on complex human rights questions to NGOs, lawyers, international organizations and other partners from the field of human rights. To this end, practitioners can contact the clinic for advice on their advocacy work, research gaps and pro bono work. The Clinic does not act as the legal representative of a victim of human rights violations and does not initiate proceedings before courts or other human rights institutions. For more information, see '[For Clients](#)'.

Project supervision:

The Clinic Director is [Professor Patricia Wiater](#).

The Project with the BHRRC will be supervised by two doctoral candidates from the [International Doctorate Programme Business and Human Rights](#): Bruna Singh and Stephanie Regalia.

Bruna Singh

Bruna Singh has a bachelor's degree in law from the University Centre Curitiba (Brazil, 2015), and a master's degree in human Rights and International Politics from the University of Glasgow (the UK, 2018), where she attended as a Chevening scholar. She has professional and academic experience in migration, the inter-American human rights system, women's rights, and business & human rights. Before joining the International Doctorate Program- Business and Human Rights: Governance Challenges in a Complex World, Bruna worked for a Business & Human Rights and ESG consultancy in Brazil, with projects involving mining and agricultural companies. Currently, she is a doctoral researcher at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg and her research focuses on "leverage" in the business and human rights framework.

Stephanie Regalia

Stephanie Regalia studied English law and French law at King's College London and Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne for her bachelor's degree. She completed a dual master's degree in Energy & Environment at Sciences Po and Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, where she was the project manager of the 2017-2018 Business & Human Rights Clinic. Prior to joining the International Doctorate Programme: Business and Human Rights at FAU, Stephanie worked in the human rights non-profit sector and trained as a lawyer in France. The focus of her doctoral research is effectiveness requirements in mandatory human rights due diligence laws.