

## **Open PhD position in Law at the World Trade Institute, University of Bern, funded by the Università della Svizzera italiana (USI), Lugano**

In the context of the research project NRP 84 “Regulating New Plant Breeding Technologies: An International and Interdisciplinary perspective” funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, the World Trade Institute is seeking:

**1 PhD candidate**, hired by the Institute of Law, USI and enrolled in the Graduate School of Economic Globalisation and Integration, WTI

Start date: as early as 1 June 2025, no later than 1 September 2025

Duration: 4 years

Employment: 100%, salary according to SNSF pay scale for PhD students in Lugano (Switzerland)

Workplace: Lugano (primarily), Bern (for PhD commitments)

### **Terms of employment**

This position offers the opportunity to pursue doctoral studies in law at WTI Graduate School of Economic Globalisation and Integration, University of Bern, and to conduct research activities at the Institute of Law of the Università della Svizzera italiana under the supervision of Professor Ilaria Espa (and co-supervision of Professor Isabelle van Damme) within the context of the NFP84 project “Regulating New Plant Breeding Technologies: An International and Interdisciplinary perspective” funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

### **Project description**

The NFP84 project “Regulating New Plant Breeding Technologies: An International and Interdisciplinary perspective” funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation is an interdisciplinary project that looks into the ethical and legal implications of new plant breeding technologies (NTBs). It aims at developing new NTB regulatory frameworks, with a focus on the international trade law constraints applicable to the design of sanitary and phytosanitary measures when they result out of a complex balancing of safety risks and ethical and social considerations. The project is pursued in collaboration with the Institute for Biomedical Ethics at the University of Basel and includes rich implementation activities with various stakeholders, including policy-makers and legal experts, farmers, food industry, NGOs, and scientists from plant biology and public health.

As a doctoral student, you will be expected to develop your own research project on the regulatory challenges posed by the advent of NBTs from an international and comparative perspective, focusing on Switzerland and other few selected jurisdictions. You will also be able to benefit from the training and coaching in trade law, international economics and trade politics offered by the WTI Graduate School of Economic Globalisation and Integration in an inspiring interdisciplinary and multicultural environment.

## Requirements

- Master in Law;
- Interest in international trade law and food and environmental law and policy;
- Fluency in English. Knowledge of Italian and German is an advantage;
- Strong organizational skills and ability to work independently;
- High level of commitment, intrinsic motivation, enthusiasm, and responsibility.

## Job description

The position comprises the following tasks:

- Contribute to the research and outreach agenda of the NRP84 project;
- Write a PhD thesis;
- Participate in the WTI's interdisciplinary doctoral programme;
- Submit research results for publication in academic journals;
- Present papers at international conferences.

## Application

Applications may be submitted upon acceptance of the Applicant Personal Data Processing Notice found at the following [LINK](#).

Applications must be in English and should include:

- a detailed CV
- a letter of motivation
- BA and MA diplomas and transcripts
- grading scale for the transcripts and degrees of all completed college/university courses (NOTE: the minimum grade to be accepted is 5.0)
- a letter from the university from which you obtained your Master's degree, confirming that you fulfil the requirements for admission to its doctoral programme. Further training qualifications (Master of Advanced Studies, Executive Master) and degrees from a university of applied sciences or a university of teacher education are not accepted for admission to doctoral studies
- evidence of English proficiency for non-native speakers (e.g. TOEFL/IELTS scores)
- two letters of recommendation

Applications must be submitted ONLINE by filling out the form accessible through the following link: [APPLY](#). You will also need to upload the documents listed above.

Deadline for applications is **15 April**, but we may start reviewing applications earlier. Candidates are hence encouraged to submit an early application.

For further information, please contact Prof. Ilaria Espa ([ilaria.espa@usi.ch](mailto:ilaria.espa@usi.ch)).