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Call for Papers

Workshop in collaboration with

Centre Universitaire de Norvège à Paris – CUNP  
FONDATION MAISON DES SCIENCES DE L’HOMME  
54, Boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris, France

Organized by

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16 & 17 June 2025

### **When For Profit goes Pro Bono– Motivations, Practices, and Impact**

Many for-profit actors increasingly offer their services as advocates for societal causes at no or low cost—*pro bono*—within and across national borders. Initially emerging from U.S. law firms, *pro bono* has spread across the globe, adapting to different countries and expanding beyond law firms to other organizations (banks, consultancies etc.). This expansion is closely associated with transformations in capitalism, as companies increasingly integrate non-capitalist approaches, including social policies and human rights initiatives. These developments lead to a reconfiguration of the public-private divide and reshape the scope of state intervention.

This workshop will bring together scholars of pro bono actors and activities in global politics and law for a two-day workshop in Paris, France. The workshop is open to PhD students, post-docs, junior and senior faculty who are researching and developing concepts of pro bono.

This workshop aims to foster a collaborative discussion that bridges the gap between social science research and legal practice in the realm of pro bono services. We invite contributions from scholars who work on pro bono in a range of areas (including migration, human rights, environment etc.), and a multiplicity of actors from private law firms to philanthropic organizations to companies.

#### **Key questions**

- What actors engage pro bono on transnational and global issues? What tactics and strategies are they adopting? To what extent do existing theories (not) explain their uptake and success?
- Pro bono work entails a complex balancing of interests, including those of the firm, altruistic considerations, and the objectives of the professionals providing these services. What motivates individuals and organizations to volunteer their services? Can altruism



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explain all acts of pro bono work? What understanding of justice do we find in pro bono work?

- What are the similarities and differences in how pro bono services are offered in democratic and authoritarian contexts? What domestic factors are shaping the impact of pro bono services?
- What conflicts of interest arise in the realm of pro bono work? How do for-profit actors navigate such conflicts – both at the organizational and the individual level?
- What is the relationship between traditional civil society and private actors' pro bono advocacy? How does a shrinking space for civil society actors benefit advocacy by business actors and with what effect for global politics?
- How does *pro bono* contribute to a redefinition of the public / private divide and to the notion of public interest?

**Please submit your abstract of no more than 300 words by 22 November 2024** to [lola.avril@uef.fi](mailto:lola.avril@uef.fi) and [nina.reiners@nchr.uio.no](mailto:nina.reiners@nchr.uio.no) with “**Paris Pro Bono Workshop**” in the subject line.

We will inform participants of results of the selection process in November 2024. Those selected are expected to submit their papers of around 6,000 to 8,000 words by **1 June 2025**.

We will cover transport costs, meals and accommodation for two nights in Paris for all speakers, funded partially by an ERC-2024-Starting Grant (Grant Agreement 101164875 - PROBONO).



Co-funded by the  
European Union