



'The Rule of Law for Oceans'

Oslo, 4-5 November 2019

Call for abstracts

The Research Group on International Law and Governance (University of Oslo, Law Faculty) and the Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA) organize this conference to advance discussions on the gaps and challenges in law related to the protection of oceans, and to bring forward novel legal approaches and solutions.

The oceans are under increasing pressure from climate change, (micro)plastic pollution, loss of biodiversity, habitat destruction, unsustainable use, to name but a few, which all adversely affect the resilience of our oceans. UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 specifically requires us to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources. Key to sustainable ocean governance is the understanding of ecosystem functioning and the appreciation of interactions and interconnections among marine ecosystems, land and sea, oceans and climate, and interactions between marine and other types of ecosystems. Changes in the ecosystem functioning and resilience often have consequences far beyond in time and geographical scope and require robust but flexible and comprehensive regulatory solutions and approaches.

Is law fit for purpose to protect oceans against increasing pressures and demands?

International law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Convention on Biological Diversity, provides for a framework governing States' rights and obligations with respect to the use of oceans and their resources, protection of the environment and biodiversity as well as responsibility for the damage caused to the oceans arising from unlawful activities of different actors. Regional agreements such as OSPAR and HELCOM have similar purposes for regional seas. National legal systems also play a crucial role in the implementation of international and regional obligations. The legal system is fragmented and comprehensive, but is the law ripe for protecting oceans in the face of increasing environmental challenges and human demands? Are legal frameworks effective, strong, and flexible enough to address new challenges and pressures in light of advanced scientific knowledge and understanding of oceans? This conference aims to discuss and reflect on how we could strengthen the rule of law for oceans.

The **two-day conference** will be a most welcome occasion for analyzing new trends in the law of the sea, international environmental law, and related fields of law, and discussions related to the effectiveness of certain tools and mechanisms. Where can existing laws evolve, adapt and improve? And where do we have to think afresh? Which innovative approaches and

mechanisms are being adopted or under discussion and what could be their advantages? **We invite researchers from all career levels to submit their proposals for papers (abstracts). Issues to be addressed may include:**

- International legal frameworks and governance: what are gaps and challenges, especially for novel activities, such as deep seabed mining, kelp management, outer space-related activities, shipping in ice-covered areas etc;
- Tools and mechanisms for ecosystem approaches to ocean governance, including marine spatial planning, marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments, monitoring and surveillance;
- Legal design for environmental protection, such as legal coherence, adaptive law, and solutions appropriate for addressing interactions among marine ecosystems, land-sea interactions, ocean-climate change interactions and the corresponding interactions of the legal regulations and regimes;
- Legal frameworks for specific environmental challenges, such as marine (micro)plastic pollution or invasive species;
- International law approaches and challenges to environmental dispute settlement, litigation and the prosecution of environmental crimes

The conference is organized by the Research Group on International Law and Governance, Faculty of Law, University of Oslo in cooperation with the Norwegian Institute for Water Research. The venue is the Law Faculty of the University of Oslo, located in the centre of Oslo, at a convenient distance from the airport transport.

The papers will be accepted based on their scientific quality and relevance for the topic of the conference and with regard to the overall coherence of the conference program. Participants whose paper is approved for presentation at the conference will not be charged a participation fee but are expected to cover their own expenses for travel and accommodation.

Please send your abstract (**max 300 words**) and a short resume to the Professor Alla Pozdnakova at alla.pozdnakova@jus.uio.no not later than **15th August 2019**. You will be notified of the acceptance or rejection by 1st September 2019. Please mark your email with "Abstract for the Ocean Conference Oslo". Abstracts submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

The organizing committee,

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