# CALL FOR ABSTRACTS
# EVENT BEFORE THE ESIL RESEARCH FORUM, Granada (March 2017)

(image source: Wikimedia Commons)

No law is neutral. **Law is always a mirror of the value-system and the power structure** underlying any given society at any point in time and international law has never been an exception to this rule. A different, and yet related matter, is the extent to which the law applies equally (or not) to all members of any given society, the extent to which these members participate as equals (or not) in the formation of international law and the extent to which the law is effectively (or not) applied in an objective and un-biased manner (what is, commonly known, as 'neutrally') by international bodies and adjudicators charged with applying it to international situations or with settling disputes between any given parties. The aspiration towards 'neutrality' (as such conceived) of international law in its quest for an ever-greater legitimacy, has, undoubtedly, evolved throughout different historical periods.

Neutrality in the history of international law can, on the other hand, also be understood as a **legal institution**. Neutrality as a legal institution was born as a synonym for emancipation from a rigorous moral top-down juridical-moral framework inherited from theology. Its theoretical blossoming went in parallel with the consolidation of the principle of sovereign equality of nations and the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs during the transition of the classical law of nations to modern international law. Since the establishment of the first international institutions with universal and permanent character, neutrality as a legal institution has continued to evolve against the background provided by the ever-shifting chessboard of international relations and proliferating international institutions.

Finally, the **relationship of neutrality and the history of international law** can be also examined through the lenses of the neutrality (or lack of) of history writing itself. If all history is, as B. Croce noted, contemporary history (by which it is generally meant that all history writing is, in one degree or other, done from the perspective of the present and also that all history writing constitutes an intervention in the present) could any historical account possibly aspire to be considered a 'neutral' history of international law? And, if so, under what criteria?

The Interest Group of the History of International Law welcomes abstracts that engage **critically with any of these dimensions of neutrality in the history of international law** or a combination thereof in historical perspective by reference to relevant episodes in the history of international law and/or different historiographical schools.

Each submission should include:

– An abstract of no more than **400 words**, the intended language of presentation,

– A short **curriculum vitae** containing the author's name, institutional affiliation, contact information and e-mail address.

Applications should be submitted to both Ignacio de la Rasilla del Moral (ignacio.delarasillaydelmoral@graduateinstitute.ch); and Frederik Dhondt (frederik.dhondt@vub.ac.be) **by 15th December 2016**. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the selection process **by 15th January 2017**.

Selection will be based on scholarly merit and with regard to producing an engaging workshop, without prejudice to gender, seniority, language or geographical location. Please note that the ESIL Interest Group on the History of International Law is unable to provide funds to cover the conference registration fee or related transport and accommodation costs.

More information on the Research Forum (30-31 March 2017) can be found on the website of the European Society of International Law or on the Granada Law School website.