



ESIL – SGH – ILS PAS Joint Conference

Warsaw, 22-23 November 2019

Call for papers

The crisis of multilateral international order: causes, dynamics and consequences

The multilateral international order appears to be in crisis. Multilateralism, in its idealized form, denotes a process of organizing relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct, without regard to the particularistic interests of the participants or specific strategic exigencies that may exist. On one hand, multilateralism is opposed to the uni- and bilateralism that dominated international relations in the pre-WW2 period. At the same time, it is conventionally connected with a constitutional vision of the world that calls for open markets, international institutions, cooperative security, progressive change, collective problem-solving, shared sovereignty, and respect for the rule of law.

Multilateralism has served as a basis for international cooperation over the past several decades. Promoted after WW2 by the United States and Western Europe, it extended into the broader global system of governance after the end of the Cold War. Lately however, an increasing number of countries seem to be disappointed with the existing multilateral arrangements, both at the level of norms and institutions. The great powers – both established and emerging – apparently see uni- and bilateral strategies, which maximize their political leverage rather than diluting it in multilateral fora, as more effective ways of controlling the course of international affairs. Paradoxically, less powerful nations also seem to be frustrated with the functioning of various international organizations and the operation of international multilateral arrangements, arguably believing that they fail to deliver on their declared goals and suffer from political biases or institutional deficiencies that affect their legitimacy. Notable examples of the on-going disintegration of the multilateral system include the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union; withdrawals from international agreements and institutions (e.g. the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court); failures to ratify a number of important international agreements; and the growing resistance of states toward international monitoring of compliance. However, out of all the different developments probably the most significant one is the radical change in the approach of the US after the election of Donald Trump as the new American president. The US has decided to withdraw from several international agreements (e.g. the Iran Nuclear Deal and the Paris Agreement) and to leave some international organizations or bodies (e.g. UNESCO and the Human Rights Council). The US has also questioned the role that is performed by the World Trade Organization in the field of international trade relations, frequently threatening other countries

with a US withdrawal as well as taking various unilateral actions and undermining the dispute settlement mechanism of the organization.

Consequently, it is hard to disagree with the diagnosis of the Secretary-General of the United Nations who recently said in his address to the General Assembly that the “[w]orld order is increasingly chaotic. Power relations are less clear. Universal values are being eroded. Democratic principles are under siege. The rule of law is being undermined. Impunity is on the rise, as leaders and states push the boundaries at home and in the international arena. We face a set of paradoxes. The world is more connected, yet societies are becoming more fragmented. Challenges are growing outward, while many people are turning inward. Multilateralism is under fire precisely when we need it most.”

Main questions of the conference

The conference is jointly organized by the European Society of International Law (ESIL), the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH), and the Institute of Law Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (ILS PAS). Its main objective is to discuss various aspects of the current crisis of multilateralism from the perspective of public international law, both at the general level and in the form of case studies relating to specific areas of international law. The organizers are particularly interested in presentations that address one or more of the following questions (although any paper proposal relevant to the subject of the conference will be considered):

- To what extent do specific areas of public international law experience the crisis of multilateralism? How is it manifested in these areas?
- If no crisis is visible in a particular area, how can this fact be explained? Is it connected with some unique features of a specific regime that make it crisis-resistant? Or maybe some other factors play a role in that field?
- What are the specific reasons behind the crisis in particular areas of international law? Are they of a general nature (e.g. geopolitical reconfigurations or social changes) or do they relate to internal contradictions and failures of a specific regime? What role is played in this context by technological developments (and with what related consequences)?
- What are the dynamics of the crisis in specific subject areas? How serious is such a crisis? Are any actions being undertaken to address it? If so, what is their character and who are the actors involved?
- What are the consequences of the crisis for a specific area of public international law? To what extent does it create opportunities for reforming a particular legal regime?

Submission procedure

Paper proposals, no longer than **250 words**, should be sent to Lukasz Gruszczynski (lukasz.gruszczynski@gmail.com), Marcin Menkes (marcin.menkes@sgh.waw.pl) and Paolo D. Farah (paolo.farah@glawcal.org.uk), not later than **12.00 CET on 5 July 2019**. All submissions need to be accompanied by a **short CV** (no longer than 2 pages). Selected speakers are expected to submit extended outlines (8-10 pages) of their papers before the conference.

Venue and travel arrangements

The conference will be held on **22-23 November 2019** on the campus of the Warsaw School of Economics.

Speakers will be expected to bear the costs of their own travel and accommodation. Some ESIL travel grants will be available to offer partial financial support to ESIL members who are selected as speakers and who have exhausted all other potential sources of funding. Further information on financial support will be distributed to speakers in due course.

Both ESIL members and non-members are invited to submit abstracts. ESIL membership might be required if the abstract is selected.

Publication

The organizers are planning the publication of selected articles in a special section of the Polish Yearbook of International Law (June/July 2020). The deadline for submitting the final version of the papers is 28 February 2020. Technical requirements regarding the submission of the papers will be provided later.