



Interest Group on the Law of the Sea

ESIL@Athens, 12 September 2019

11.00-13.30 – Faculty Club, Main Room

Sovereignty at Sea: Repercussions in flux?

The sea offers the archetypal contradiction between the omnipresence of the State power, which remains the cornerstone of modern international law; and the vast emptiness of the high seas, the freedom of which remains one of the primordial myths of the discipline. As the codification of the old rules, tidily presented in the Law of the Sea Convention, reaches maturity almost 40 years after its original adoption, the international community is again involved in a law-drafting exercise, with all the pitfalls and challenges of a maritime story of old. The negotiations for a binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, currently under way in the UN Headquarters, have reached the critical stage where abstract concepts must be transformed into contractual provisions, in essence regulating the effects of sovereignty in the maritime zones and beyond them.

As we gather in Athens for the ESIL@Athens2019 Conference, we ponder the repercussion of this jurisdictional tug-of-war. Starting with the recent book on *International Law and the Protection of People at Sea* (OUP, 2018) by Irini Papanicolopulu, we comment on the impact of human activity at sea in terms of maritime security; contemplate the latest developments concerning the Outer Continental Shelf beyond 200 miles and the interplay with State control over fisheries and genetic resources in the high seas; and assess the overall impact all such actions may have on climate change and the continued survival of the planet.

We invite you to a cordial, open-ended discussion on these and similar subjects, where a group of scholars coming from all over the world will act as agitators:

Chair: Nilufer Oral International Law Commission, Istanbul Bilgi University

Irini Papanicolopulu Università di Milano-Bicocca

Sofia Galani University of Bristol

Joanna Mossop Victoria University of Victoria; McCormick Fellow, University of Edinburgh

We hope to welcome you all in Athens for a most enjoyable meeting!

Maria Gavouneli, Anthi Koskina, Gabriela A. Oanta & Jessica Schechinger