

ESIL IG on History of International Law (IGHIL) 2020 Annual Report (in accordance with Point 18 of the ESIL Interest Groups Policy Guidance)

I. 2020 in Review

The work of the ESIL IG on History of International Law (IGHIL) has not been left unaffected by the Covid-19 pandemic. While many interest groups chose to move their formats online, the original inclination of the IGHIL steering committee was to remain optimistic and postpone the events to the next possible date, as in the case of the workshop on “Solidarity: The Quest for Founding Utopias of International Law”, planned for the 2020 ESIL Research Forum at the University of Catania, Italy. After all, the events organised in the past had revolved around the opportunity for personal interaction, particularly for young scholars, a group of members that the IGHIL steering committee has chosen to focus on particularly in its activities. The steering committee felt that this could not properly be substituted by moving the format to webinars.

II. New Online Formats

However, as the pandemic continues, it remains unclear when it will be possible to reconvene in person. Thus, the IGHIL steering committee has decided to launch two separate online formats to engage its members.

The first one intends to involve young scholars by using the recent publication of a special issue of the *Journal of the History of International Law* on “Politics and the Histories of International Law” for an online seminar in which a number of junior scholars each present and discuss a chosen article from the issue. The idea is to discuss the relevance of the contributions for future research and methodological approaches in our field. The event is scheduled for 18 December 2020.

The second format revolves around one or more senior scholars providing an insight into their workshops by presenting an ongoing research project. The idea is to not only showcase the new research but also discuss methodological and practical challenges raised by the projects and how they might be resolved. The steering committee will begin in January 2021 with the intention of making this a regular feature to discuss (yet unpublished) topics.

III. ESIL IGHIL Blog

The ESIL IGHIL Blog continues to be a reference for interested researchers in legal history, international law, diplomatic history, legal theory and philosophy of law. 783 announcements of books, calls for papers, journal issues, online and physical conferences have been posted since the creation of the Blog. In the 2020 (up to 16 December), the blog counts 30 900 views, with sparks of 400 as calls and line-ups for ESIL or IG Events (Research Seminar Catania; online Symposium on the *JHIL* Special Issue “Politics and the Histories of International Law”) are announced.

The daily additions to the Blog are posted to Twitter, where most of its traffic originates. The most common keyword for visitors is “ESIL history”. Most visits originate in the United States (for about 33%, as far as the Google statistics are complete), followed by Belgium (1 360), Germany (1 360), Russia (1 300), the UK (1 170), Hong Kong (1 060), France (1 060), Canada (1 000), Ukraine, South Korea, Turkmenistan, the Netherlands, Argentina, Japan, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Portugal. The prevalence of visits from Turkmenistan might be linked to the use of the IP addresses of these states for VPN-systems.