



Interest Group on the Law of the Sea

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

I. Governance

LAWSEA is one of the 21 [Interest Groups of the European Society of International Law](#), that aims to provide a forum for those involved in, or interested in, international law of the sea matters. At present, the Coordinating Committee of this Interest Group is made up by: [Gabriela Oanta](#) (University of A Coruña), [Irimi Papanicolopulu](#) (SOAS University of London), [Efthymios Papastavridis](#) (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens) and [Jessica Schechinger](#) (University of Glasgow).

LAWSEA IG maintains a presence in the academic community, especially by participating in and organising events in the context of the ESIL Annual Conferences. We are collaborating intensively, via email and (virtual) meetings, to organise activities allowing our IG members to meet (in person or remotely), to exchange ideas and discuss topical LoS issues.

Our IG also has a strong online presence to inform and reach as many LoS scholars as possible. Our online presence developed further; we have a [website](#), and we have now more than 2.020 followers of our [Twitter account](#). We plan to remain active, and we keep on encouraging our IG members to contact us for disseminating upcoming law of the sea events, seminars, publications, news items, etc. We believe and hope that our online presence is allowing for thoughtful discussion amongst the members of the IG and the wider LoS community.

II. Events

1. International Congress ‘Sustainability in the Sea: A Gaze from the Mediterranean Barcelona’ (Barcelona)

The University of Barcelona and ‘Salvador de Madariaga’ University Institute for European Studies at the University of A Coruña, with the support of the ESIL Interest Groups on the Law of the Sea and on International Organisations, have organised the International Congress ‘[Sustainability in the Sea: A Gaze from the Mediterranean Barcelona](#)’, which took place at the University of Barcelona on 19 December 2022. The collective book resulting from this Congress will be published by Marcial Pons Publishing House (Spain).

2. Webinar on ‘The new BBNJ treaty – A preliminary assessment’

The ESIL Interest Group on the Law of the Sea organised a webinar on 19 April 2023 titled ‘The new BBNJ treaty – A preliminary assessment’. This webinar was organised in collaboration with members of the ESIL Board. For more information on this event see [here](#), and the recording of the event is available [here](#).

3. Pre-conference Hybrid Workshop at the 2023 ESIL Annual Conference (Aix-en-Provence) on **'Is the Governance of the Oceans Fair? The New BBNJ Treaty and Other Related International Instruments'**

The LAWSEA IG organised a pre-conference (hybrid) [workshop on 30 August 2023 titled 'Is the Governance of the Oceans Fair? The New BBNJ Treaty and Other Related International Instruments'](#). This workshop was organised within the framework of the 2023 ESIL Annual Conference that was held in Aix-en-Provence, France. The programme is available [here](#).

The workshop was structured around two panels. The First Panel was chaired by Maria Gavouneli (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens and ELIAMEP). Four highly topical issues were tackled, namely: 'ABMTs and EIAs in the BBNJ Agreement: The Next Step in Ocean Equity?', by Jacqueline Espenilla (University of the Philippines and Utrecht University); 'The demise of IPRs through the rise of BBNJ', by Tanya Wagenaar (Nelson Mandela University); 'Non-State Actors in the BBNJ Treaty's Provisions on Area-Based Management Tools: A Step Towards More Inclusive and Transparent Ocean Governance?', by Charlotte Verdon, Anika Havaladar, and Lee Rovinescu (Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP); and 'Are advisory opinions fair? ITLOS advisory opinions and the furtherance of the community interest in the protection of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction', by Millicent McCreath (UNSW).

Valentin Schatz (Leuphana University of Lüneburg) chaired the Second Panel. Three speakers addressed highly interesting issues, being: 'Fair share? The interests of developing states within the context of deep sea mining in the Area', by Klaas Willaert (Department of European, Public and International Law, Maritime Institute, Gent); 'Justice in the governance of non-living marine resources', by Maria Pena Ermida (Universidade Católica Portuguesa); and 'Reflections on the Fairness of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies', by Pallavi Arora and Shailja Singh (Indian Institute of Foreign Trade).

The discussions that followed after both panels were lively and we thank all speakers, chairs, virtual and in person attendees for their participation.

III. Plans for the future

We have had a virtual meeting and discussions with our colleagues that convene the Australian and New Zealand Society of International Law (ANZSIL) Oceans and International Environmental Law Interest Group (OIELIG). We discussed opportunities for cooperation and a joint event, that we plan to organise together during this academic year.

As always, we strongly encourage all IG members to contact us with any ideas on possible LoS activities and any opportunities for co-operation.

9 October 2023

For ESIL LAWSEA IG
Gabriela Oanta,
Irimi Papanicolopulu,
Efthymios Papastavridis,
and Jessica Schechinger