



Interest Group on
International Legal Theory & Philosophy
IGILTP

On What Basis Should International Law be Reconstructed?

Pre-Conference Workshop – ESIL Annual Conference 2025, Freie Universität Berlin

Thursday 11 September 2025, 09:00-12:00

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

Convened by the ESIL Interest Group on International Legal Theory and Philosophy, this workshop explores what the reconstruction of international law could or should entail. In recent decades, critique has shaken the foundations of international law, exposing its complicity in power and politics. The self-image of a neutral, problem-solving system has given way to a more reflective and contested view. If reconstruction is still a worthwhile goal after critique, its meaning, goals, and actors must be thoroughly reconsidered and reimagined through dialogue, debate and, if need be, contestation.

Accordingly, the workshop asks participants to take a fresh look at the future of international law by reflecting on the theoretical dimension of how (and to what extent) a more just, inclusive, and normatively grounded international legal order might surge learning from its assumptions and setbacks.

PROGRAMME

Each speaker will have 15-20 minutes for their presentation.

09:00-09:05 **Words of Welcome** (Andrea CARCANO and Noora ARAJÄRVI)

09:05-10:30 **Panel 1: The Quest for the Reconstruction of International law between Noble Dreams and Realistic Anxieties**

Chair: Andrea CARCANO (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)

Xinyi PAN (Tsinghua University) – The Renaissance of International Community and its Influence on International Law

Kostia GOROBETS (University of Groningen) – Legalistic and Anti-Legalistic Projects of Reconstruction: Two Visions for International Law

Frederick COWELL (Birkbeck College) – Critically Rethinking Stability as a Basis for Reconstructing International Law: The Case of (Non) Withdrawal from the United Nations

Q&A and discussion among participants

10:30-11:55 **Panel 2: Reconstructing International Law by Moving Beyond (or Around) State Centrism?: A Conversation on the Possible Yardsticks of Legitimacy, Polycentrism, and Anarchical Principles**

Chair: Noora ARAJÄRVI (European University Institute)

Gürkan ÇAPAR (Maynooth University) – Reconstructing International Law through Legitimacy: The Paradox of Global Constitutionalism and Environmental Constitutionalism

Elena PRIBYTKOVA (National University of Singapore) – What is Wrong with State-Centrism of International Law? Shifting from State-Centric to Person-Centric and Polycentric Global Order

Nina MILEVA (University of Groningen) – International Law as an Anarchical System

Q&A and discussion among participants

11:55-12:00 **Closing Remarks and Farewell**