



Call for Papers, 2026 ESIL Research Forum, Interest Group on the Law of the Sea

To be or not to be: The sustainability of international law of the sea and the international law of sustainable seas

Kraków (online), 8 April 2026, 10:00-13:00 CET

On the occasion of the 2026 ESIL Research Forum, to be held in Kraków (Poland) on 9 and 10 April 2026, the ESIL Interest Group on the Law of the Sea will convene a workshop on **“To be or not to be: The sustainability of international law of the sea and the international law of sustainable seas”**.

Theme

In line with the general theme of the 2026 ESIL Research Forum, the workshop will explore the issue of the sustainability and international law of the sea from a double perspective: the sustainability of international law of the sea, and the international law of sustainable seas.

Recent events of a very different nature on the international stage have highlighted the importance of the seas for the international community. Whether as communication routes or as the blue lungs of our planet, the seas represent the perfect setting where the rules-based international order – which emerged and consolidated after the Second World War – now seems to be more questioned than ever, and where this international order is seeking to find the tools it needs to emerge stronger from the complex global landscape we are currently experiencing.

The United Nations and other international organizations and fora are expected to have a key role also in the coming years and make significant contributions to the codification and progressive development of the international law of the sea. Sustainability is a key element of this branch of international law and nowadays extends beyond marine environmental protection. An excellent example is represented by the treaties, the draft treaties, the binding acts and soft law instruments, which have already been promoted in international legal fora or that are expected to be adopted soon. Additionally, in recent times, we have witnessed the questioning of the legal regime governing different maritime areas and the States’ limits on rights and obligations within them.

Against this background, the ESIL Law of the Sea Interest Group organises a pre-Conference workshop on the theme of the Krakow Research Forum as applied to the oceans, and invites abstracts unpacking the above theme from different angles, including:

- **The sustainability of international law of the sea:** certainty, and adaptability of present-day international law of the sea; global v. regional solutions for the evolution of international law

of the sea; national maritime defence strategies v. interests of the international community as a whole; *others*.

- **The international law of sustainable seas:** use of marine resources; protection of marine environment; climate change; sovereign rights of States over their marine resources; activity of international organizations with blue competences; blue common interests for the international community; conflicts of legal regimes at sea; *others*.

Paper submission procedure

Paper abstracts may be submitted in English or French in accordance with the timeline as set out below. Co-authored paper proposals are accepted. Submissions must not exceed 500 words, and have to be submitted to the following email addresses: gabriela.oanta@udc.es, jp14@soas.ac.uk, papastavridis@academyofathens.gr, and andrea.longo@novalaw.unl.pt. In addition to the abstract, each submission should contain a separate file with the following information: the author's name and affiliation; a short CV; a list of publications; author's contact details, including email address and phone number; and whether the author is an ESIL member. The final papers should be unpublished, in an advanced stage of completion, and could be included in the ESIL SSRN Conference Paper Series or in the ESIL Conference Proceedings according to the ESIL rules.

Timeline

The deadline for the submission of abstracts is **15 February 2026**. Successful applicants will be informed by **26 February 2026**. The deadline for the submission of the papers of accepted abstracts will be communicated at a later stage.