



Training School ‘Understanding Contemporary Challenges in Protecting the Right to Life at Sea’

organised by [BlueRights](#) in cooperation with [IMLI](#)

held in Msida, Malta, from 26 to 27 May 2026

1. Aim

This in-person training school is focused on young researchers and innovators (PhD candidates and master students) and other interested persons (including students from [Inclusiveness Target Countries \(ITC\)](#)) who wish to learn about protecting the right to life at sea. The aim is to teach and engage with trainees and to improve the understanding of the [right to life at sea](#) (BlueRights WG1, led by Richard Barnes). Some transversal issues related to the right to liberty (BlueRights WG2) and health (BlueRights WG3) are covered as well.

2. Background and format

The two-day training event is organised by [Richard Barnes](#) ((University of Lincoln/Norwegian Centre for the Law of the Sea (NCLOS) at UiT The Arctic University of Norway (UiT))) and [Jessica Schechinger](#) (NCLOS, UiT) and the [International Maritime Organization International Maritime Law Institute \(IMLI\)](#), which is also the host institution in Msida, Malta. The programme is structured into four sessions that are co-delivered by expert trainers from the [COST Action CA23103 - Life, liberty and health: ensuring universal protection of human rights at sea \(BlueRights\)](#) and IMLI, which is a world recognised centre for the training of specialists in international maritime law. These sessions are aligned to the BlueRights WG1 SWGs themes: 1) search and rescue; 2) use of force; 3) life risks at work. Session 4) is a practical activity that tests the application of knowledge and understanding across these areas. Sessions 1-3 comprise lectures, building on state-of-the-art knowledge and recent developments, followed by plenty of time for Q&A and discussions. The practical activity in session 4 will develop clinical skills aligned to real-world type problems. The training school focuses on the core research questions of BlueRights: the content and scope of human rights at sea, and responsibilities for ensuring them. Participants will gain an understanding of key issues at the forefront of human rights protection at sea, including the intersection of search and rescue and human rights/refugee law; state practice and enforcement challenges; limits on the use of force; conduct of non-state actors; as well as cross cutting issues: vulnerability, jurisdiction; impact of new technologies; and case law developments. A particular focus will be on advancing skills of young researchers and innovators. An emphasis is on understanding the wider responsibilities that exist for a range of actors beyond the State, how these interact with state institutions and processes, and how legal mechanisms support or impede protections for vulnerable persons at sea.

The training school is **free for trainees** and is **open to (self-funded) participants who are BlueRights or non-BlueRights members** (subject to space limitations). The training school is also open to students studying at IMLI (the event is additional to any existing element of IMLI programmes of study). **BlueRights COST scholarships** to cover travel and accommodation costs for participants outside of Malta are available.

3. How to join the training school

Please indicate your interest to attend this training school by sending an email to bluerights.cost@gmail.com (with jessica.n.schechinger@uit.no in cc) with the following information: your name, affiliation/place of current study, whether you are from an [ITC country](#), a short bio of max. 200 words, and why you would benefit from attending this training school before 29 April 2026, 18:00h Brussels time. If you would like to qualify for a scholarship, please mention this in your email, and include a budget for your (economy) travel and accommodation costs in Malta. The selected self-funded participants will receive an email by invitation before

3 May 2026. The selected scholarship-funded participants will receive an invitation via the COST system, after which they are asked to book their own flight and accommodation. Reimbursement will take place via the COST online system after the training school has ended.

4. Programme

26 May 2026 (Day 1)

09:00-09:10 *Welcome and Introduction*

[Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez](#) (IMLI Director), [Anna Petrig](#) (University of Basel and Chair of BlueRights) and [Richard Barnes](#) (University of Lincoln/NCLOS, UiT)

09:10-12:00 *Session 1: Search and Rescue*

This session is delivered by [Ainhoa Campas Velasco](#) (University of Southampton) and [Murat Sümer](#) (IMLI). The theme is 'search and rescue' and the session is a mix of short lectures and there is plenty of time for Q&A and discussion.

12:00-13:30 *Lunch* (self-catered, there are many options on campus next to the IMLI building)

13:30-16:30 *Session 2: Use of Force*

This session is delivered by [Kiara Neri](#) (l'Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3), [Anna Petrig](#) (University of Basel and Chair of BlueRights), and [Sanjeet Ruhai](#) (IMLI). The theme is 'use of force' and the session is a mix of short lectures and there is plenty of time for Q&A and discussion.

27 May 2026 (Day 2)

09:00-12:00 *Session 3: Life Risks at Work*

This session is delivered by [Eka Siradze](#) (Tbilisi State University), [Ramat Jalloh](#) (IMLI), and [Daniel Stein](#) (IMLI). The theme is 'life risks at work' and the session is a mix of short lectures and there is plenty of time for Q&A and discussion.

12:00-13:30 *Lunch* (self-catered, there are many options on campus next to the IMLI building)

13:30-16:30 *Session 4: a practical group activity*

Session 4 is a practical interactive session that tests the application of knowledge and understanding across the earlier discussed areas (session 1-3). [Richard Barnes](#) (University of Lincoln/NCLOS, UiT) and [Jessica Schechinger](#) (NCLOS, UiT) lead this session and facilitate the discussions with Ainhoa Campas Velasco; Kiara Neri; Eka Siradze; [Mariana Rosca](#) (Moldova State University) and [Elda Belja](#) (IMLI). The trainees work on a scenario/case study in small groups which includes search and rescue, use of force at sea, and responsibility issues. Each group of trainees briefly present their 'answers' to the scenario at the end of the session.

16:30-18:00 *Optional drinks for trainers and trainees on campus (self-funded)*

This training school is supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) Action BlueRights, CA23103. For more information, see <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA23103/>.

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