



Interest Group on the Law of the Sea

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

I. Governance

LAWSEA IG is one of the 23 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. Until July 2025, its Coordinating Committee included: [Gabriela Oanta](#) (University of A Coruña), [Iriní Papanicolopulu](#) (SOAS University of London/University of Milano-Bicocca), and [Efthymios Papastavridis](#) (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens), and [Andrea Longo](#) (NOVA University of Lisbon). Following the IG elections, two new members were elected to replace Gabriela Oanta, who terminated her 8-year long mandate: [Dimitris Panousos](#) (European University Institute) and [Eduardo Jiménez Pineda](#) (University of Cordoba). We take this opportunity to thank Gabriela for her great commitment to the IG over the past years!

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

Our IG also has a strong web presence to inform and reach as many LoS scholars as possible. Our online presence developed further. Last year we tested the opening of a LinkedIn account, which is now fully active and functioning and is followed by over 1000 people. We plan to remain active here for the time being. In addition, 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. We still maintained our X (Twitter) account opened (with over 2000 followers), and also have a website, and are assessing the opportunity to adopt a comms strategy to increase our visibility further.

II. Events

This year we unanimously decided to hold the pre-Annual Conference workshop in person only, as opposed to the pre-Research Forum one which took place online. Below is a description of the two events.

1. Pre-Research Forum workshop (online)

LAWSEA IG organised a pre-RF online [webinar](#) on 8 April 2026 titled: ‘*To be or not to be: The sustainability of international law of the sea and the international law of sustainable seas*’. The theme was chosen in accordance with the RF core theme, ‘*The sustainability of international and the international law of sustainability*’. A call for abstracts was circulated, resulting in the selection of 8 speakers. In addition to the quality of the proposal and originality of the idea, we placed particular emphasis on geographical and gender representation. The 8 participants were divided into two panels.

The first panel addressed the sub-theme “The Law of the Sea and Sustainability”, and was chaired by Dr Andrea Longo. This session featured contributions by: Nicolò Andreotti, University of Padua (Italy): *Human Rights at Sea: Systemic Integration and the Sustainability of Energy and Mining Activities under UNCLOS*; Daniela Martins, Guest Lecturer, Universidade Autonoma de Lisboa and PhD candidate, University of Lisbon (Portugal): *Towards the Participation of Coastal Communities and Indigenous Peoples in Maritime Delimitation Processes in the Era of Climate Change*; Lucia Diaz Cameselle, PhD student, University of Vigo (Spain): *Beyond “No Undermining”: Operationalising Institutional Coherence between the BBNJ Agreement and the International Seabed Authority in ABNJ*; Maria Theocharous, PhD candidate, University of Cyprus (Cyprus): *Sustainable Seas or Fragmented Oceans? Port State Power and the Evolution of the Law of the Sea*.

The second panel focused on “Sustainability of the Law of the Sea” and was chaired by Prof. Gabriela Oanta. It featured the following contributions: Samson Ristom Asfaha, Guest Lecturer, College of Business and Social Sciences (Eritrea), jointly with Senai W. Andemariam, Head of the Department of Law, College of Business and Social Sciences (Eritrea): *To Be or Not to Be a Party? The Sustainability of UNCLOS and Eritrea’s Accession as a Red Sea Littoral State*; Vonintsoa Rafaly, Postdoctoral Researcher, WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute, World Maritime University (Sweden): *The stewardship of the ocean: Are we not ready yet?* Mustafa Tuncer, Assistant Professor, Turkish National Defence University (Türkiye): *The Sustainability of UNCLOS under Pressure from Belligerent Rights: Examining the Applicability of Freedom of Navigation in Armed Conflicts at Sea*; Eduardo Cavalcanti de Mello Filho, MPhil/PhD student, University College London (UK): *The Law of the Sea Beyond the Sea: Theorizing the Role of Home States of Ocean Users*.

Each Chair shared some comments and reflections for the speakers, and the discussions that followed were lively and drew attention to key issues not only for the LoS, but also for

international law more broadly. We would like to thank all speakers, chairs, virtual and in person attendees for their participation.

2. Pre-Annual Conference roundtable discussion (in person only)

LAWSEA IG organised a pre-conference [roundtable](#) discussion on 3 September 2026 on recent ITLOS cases. This event was part of the 2026 ESIL Annual Conference taking place immediately after at the University of Malaga. No call for paper was formally issued. Instead, the convenors decided to ‘react’ to numerous ground-breaking jurisprudential developments that occurred in the early months of the summer. We circulated a message to IG members to seek for expression of interests and availability in participating in the roundtable. Based on the replies received and ESIL inclusive and diversity policy, we eventually decided to split the event into two distinct moments: a panel discussion on the M/T Heroic Idun No 2 case, delivered by ITLOS at the end of May 2026; and an open round-table discussion on the two Requests for Preliminary Measures from the ITLOS Seabed Dispute Chamber, which were filed by non-State actors in early June 2026. The panel featured our two convenors Irini Papanicolopulu, Efthymios Papastavridis, and Miłosz Gapsa (University of Łódź) and was chaired by Maria Gavouneli (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens). The round-table discussion was participated by a few people, included some IG members, and chaired by Maria Gavouneli too. The event was also an opportunity to introduce Dimitri and Eduardo to the audience as the two newly appointed IG convenors.

III. Plans for the future

We plan to organise other activities during 2026/2027 academic year, which we will inform you about in due course. We will soon have an online meeting to touch base on possible initiatives. At the same time, we strongly encourage all IG members to contact us with any ideas on possible LoS activities and any opportunities for co-operation.

24 September 2026

For ESIL LAWSEA IG
Andrea Longo,
Irini Papanicolopulu,
Efthymios Papastavridis,
Eduardo Jiménez Pineda
and Dimitris Panousos