

Reconstructing

International Law

**20th Annual Conference of the European Society of
International Law**

11-13 September 2025 at Freie Universität Berlin

Conference Programme

As of 1 September 2025

Organisers: Prof. Dr. Helmut Aust and Prof. Dr. Heike Krieger

ESIL2025@rewiss.fu-berlin.de

Start of the 20th Annual Conference

Wednesday, 10 September 2025

15:00 to 18:00 Interest Group Pre-Conference Workshops

Thursday, 11 September 2025

09:00 to 12:00 Interest Group Pre-Conference Workshops

Thursday 11, September 2025

13:30

Opening of the Conference

Speakers:

- **Professor Gleider Hernández**, President of the European Society of International Law
- **Professor Heike Krieger**, Freie Universität Berlin
- **Jörg Polakiewicz**, Legal Advisor, Council of Europe

14:00 - 14:30

Keynote lecture: Reconstructing International Law (Plenary Event)

- **Professor Adam Bodnar**, Former Minister of Justice of the Republic of Poland

14:30 - 16:00

Opening Session

Reconstruction, Reform, Revolution – Futures of International Law

Reconstruction can be understood quite differently in the light of competing normative preferences. What is more, the normative position on reconstruction will differ among international lawyers. To some, to speak of the reconstruction of international law will appear too negative as it implies that there has been a process of destruction or deconstruction at play. Accordingly, this perspective might rather focus on the reform of international law. To others, however, reconstruction may raise an opposite reaction: Is there something valuable to be reconstructed in the first place? Or does international law need more radical change, even in the form of revolution? And if so, where to find radically new concepts? The opening panel will discuss these and other questions which will contribute to laying if not a common ground but at least common reference points for the debates of the following sessions.

Chair: **Professor Sigrid Boysen**, Helmut Schmidt-Universität Hamburg

Speakers:

- **Associate Professor Kyle M. Lascurettes**, Lewis & Clark University, Portland
- **Judge Dire Tladi**, International Court of Justice, formerly Professor at the University of Pretoria
- **Professor Astrid Kjeldgaard-Pedersen**, University of Copenhagen

16:00 - 16:30

Coffee & Tea

kindly supported by the European External Action Service

16:30 - 18:00

Parallel Sessions (Fora 1 & 2)

FORUM 1 Histories of Reconstruction

Reconstruction is not a new topic. Different historical layers of international law have seen attempts of reconstructing the international legal system. In some cases, these processes of reconstruction overlapped with concrete historical processes of reconstruction in post-war settings, e.g., in the form of peace treaties which simultaneously dealt with concrete questions of reconstruction after war, but also set forth new blueprints for the international legal order. This panel will attempt at historicizing these phenomena. Presentations can engage in conceptual inquiries, critical histories of attempts of reconstruction and case-studies of specific reconstruction events.

Chair: **Professor Aleksandra Gliszczyńska-Grabias**, Polish Academy of Sciences

Speakers:

- **Professor Arnulf Becker Lorca**, European University Institute, Florence
- **Professor Bardo Fassbender**, Universität St. Gallen
- **Research Professor Inge Van Hulle**, Max-Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory, Frankfurt/Main

FORUM 2 Is there still a Legitimate Role for Europe and the Global North in the Reconstruction of International Law?

Forum 2 addresses hands-on the ever-increasing criticism that Europe and the Global North more broadly have instrumentalized international law for hegemonic interests based on double standards to an extent that the legitimacy of its legal practices is completely breaking down in the UN and in international legal scholarship. The panel will critically engage with the legacy of Europe and the Global North, but will also take a critical look at the double standards discourse itself.

Chair: **Professor René Urueña**, Universidad de los Andes, Bogota

Speakers:

- **Professor Veronika Bílková**, Charles University, Prague, vice-president and the Czech member of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe
- **Professor Frank Hoffmeister**, Director of the Legal Department, European External Action Service, European Union, Brussels
- **Professor of International Law Mutaz Qafisheh**, Hebron University

18:15 - 19:15

How to make international law public: writing for wider audiences

Special Event in Co-Operation with Early Career Researcher Network

International law academics do not just write for their peers in academia and practice. Books for a wider audience, newspaper op-eds and blog posts are also written at times in order to reach the general public. In this focus event, Professor Philippe Sands and Associate Professor Justine Uriburu will reflect on the preconditions for successful interventions into the public debate and for reaching wider audiences. The conversation will take the most recent book by Philippe Sands (38 Londres Street, W&N 2025) as a starting point.

Speakers:

- **Professor Philippe Sands**, KC, University College London
- **Assistant Professor Justina Uriburu**, University of Manchester

19:15 - 21:30

Welcome Reception

kindly presented by the Department of Law, Freie Universität Berlin

Friday, 12 September 2025

09:00 - 10:30

Parallel Sessions (Agorae 1-4)

AGORA 1 Reconstruction and the Role of Scholarship

(Re-)construction of international law exists very much in the minds of international law scholars. How scholars perceive international law will impact on the way they envisage a potential role for themselves in processes of reconstruction. This forum will turn to different theoretical and methodological approaches to the topic of reconstruction: What are methodological means for lawyers to conceive of reconstruction in view of the persisting impact of path-dependencies in legal thinking? Is a positivist form of doctrinal reasoning akin to a firm of reconstruction? How do empirical legal studies contribute to processes of reconstruction? And can there be a critical form of reconstruction?

Chair: **Assistant Professor Ezgi Yildiz**, California State University Long Beach

Speakers:

- **Professor Monica Hakimi**, Columbia University, New York, “Thinking Constructively about International Law”
- **Bruna A. Gonçalves**, European University Institute, Florence, and **Maximilian K. Reymann**, European University Institute, Florence, “The Fall of Olympus: Letting law die in place to find critique, or for a revolutionary turn in legal academia”
- **Soheil Ghasemi**, Geneva Graduate Institute, “(Re-)Imagining Decolonization: Third-Worldism and (International Legal) Futurism in the Long Seventies”

AGORA 2 Reconstruct Justice: Systemic Past Wrongs and the Future of International Law

A pathway to a credible reconstruction of international law may be a coming to terms with its troubled past, in particular when mass violence and systemic wrongs are at stake. Yet, international law knows many doctrines which effectively limit its capacity to address past wrongs. They reach from the principle of intertemporality to the limitations that flow from the principles of state immunity and the lack of generally competent international mechanisms of adjudication. It needs to be asked how these mechanisms can be reconceptualized, challenged, overcome or better developed so as to allow for a reconstruction of international law which makes room for addressing and remedying past injustices.

Chair: **Professor Sarah Nouwen**, European University Institute, Florence

Speakers:

- **Dr. Ayla do Vale Alves**, University of South Australia, Adelaide, “Instrumentalising Private International Law in Favour of Indigenous Heritage and Sovereignty”
- **Sara Katharina Wissmann**, Paris Lodron University Salzburg, “Before Reconstruction: Deconstructing the Prayer of Intertemporality”
- **Shima Esmailian**, University of Geneva, and **Yossra Hamouda**, American University in Cairo, “The Fifth World Approaches to International Law: Reconstructing International Law in Favor of the Oppressed of the Oppressed”

AGORA 3 Reforming the Diversity and Inclusivity of International Law's Institutions

Adopting a wide definition of international law's institutions to include publishing houses, editorial and advisory boards, academe, and professional bodies in addition to traditional bodies such as courts and tribunals and international organisations, this panel invites contributions examining the diversity and inclusivity of the international legal landscape. How can equality, diversity and inclusivity be realised in these spaces? How can this be achieved when appointments in many international institutions are politicised and traded? Has there been an 'overrepresentation' of any particular identities? How can intersectional concerns be addressed? What would be the real world impact of equal, diverse, and inclusive international law institutions? Can we think of the likes of gender parity as recognising more than two binary genders? Do identities such as socio-economic status get sidelined in discussions about and mechanisms addressing the likes of geographical diversity, and what does 'geographical diversity' even mean? And can we interrogate and think beyond liberal methods of formal equality?

Chair: **Sareta Ashraph**, Senior Legal Adviser, US Holocaust Memorial Museum and Center for Justice and Accountability, Washington, D.C.

Speakers:

- **Professor Louise Chappell**, University of New South Wales, **Suzanne Varrall**, University of New South Wales, **Associate Professor Kcasey McLoughlin**, The University of Newcastle, and **Dr. Rosemary Grey**, University of Sydney, "Rewriting Justice: Feminist Judgments and the International Criminal Court"
- **Bruno Biazatti**, University of Luxembourg, "Marginalization in the Making of International Law: Patterns of Exclusion and Inequality in the State Engagement with the International Law Commission"
- **Assistant Professor Huaxia Lai**, Peking University, and **Mika-Erik Möser**, Hertie School of Governance, Berlin, "The Diversity Prism: Gender, Geography, and the Politics of Expertise in Selecting UN Special Procedures"

AGORA 4 Reconstruction: Values or Process?

Any attempt to reconstruct international law will have to face the question as to whether there is still room for legally meaningful concepts of common interests and values of an “international community”. Can states and other actors (re-)group around such legal values? Or does the way ahead lie in a proceduralization of international law given the hugely diverging nature of societies and their cultural values that seem to make developing and sustaining common understandings increasingly unlikely?

Chair: **Professor Max du Plessis**, University of Cape Town/Nelson Mandela University

Speakers:

- **Tesfaye Ayalew Mekonen**, University of Queensland, Brisbane, “The Status and Trajectories of International Law: Global (In)Justice, Fragmented Rule of Law or Anarchism”
- **Benjamin Peters**, Geneva Graduate Institute, “Locating the common interest: towards a political epistemology of international law”
- **Dr. Veronica Botticelli**, University of Milan, “Public Interest Litigation Before the ICJ as a Tool for (Re)Constructing International Common Values: Substantivization of Procedure or Proceduralization of Substance?”
- **Dr. Onur Uraz**, Hacettepe University, Ankara, “Procedural Natural Law as a Middle Ground in the Reconstruction of International Law”

10:30 - 11:00

Coffee & Tea

kindly presented by Seven Summits Arbitration

11:00 - 12:30

Parallel Sessions (Fora 3 & 4)

FORUM 3 Institutional Reconstructions: Which Role for the United Nations?

Reconstructing international institutions seems more acute than ever. The UN system of collective security is ailing; other parts of the UN family may receive less attention but are faced with similar issues. This panel will assess which prospects for reconstructing international institutions exist which go beyond incremental reform.

Chair: **Professor Christine Chinkin**, London School of Economics

Speakers:

- **Professor Ingrid Brunk**, Vanderbilt Law School, Nashville
- **Professor Jan Klabbers**, University of Cambridge
- **Associate Professor Guy Fiti Sinclair**, University of Auckland

FORUM 4 Normative Reconstructions: Pathways into a Post-SDG-World

A “genuine international community” will need to find a new balance between the different components of sustainable development (environmental, social, economic). The SDGs have entered the second half of their originally envisaged timeline. Yet, their implementation remains patchy and in many cases lacking. Can the international community find consensus for a meaningful, ambitious, yet realizable follow-up document?

Chair: **Professor Dr. Ellen Hey**, University of Rotterdam

Speakers:

- **Assistant Professor Hannah Birkenkötter**, ITAM, Mexico City
- **Professor Anél du Plessis**, Stellenbosch University
- **Associate Professor Ryan Martínez Mitchell**, University of Hong Kong

12:30 - 14:00

Lunch break

further lunchtime side events will be announced in due course

13:00 - 14:00

Lunchtime Side Event of the ESIL Diversity Advisory Body

International Law Publishing and ‘EDI’: Limits, Blindspots, and Alternatives

Join us for an insightful discussion with editors-in-chief of leading international law journals and blog editors as we explore the challenges, limits and responsibilities of fostering diversity, equality, and inclusivity in international law publishing. The challenge of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) manifested recently in the challenge to include Palestinian voices in international law scholarship. EDI raises questions such as: Are marginalized communities able to shape their own narratives on international legal issues, or are their perspectives filtered through existing power structures? Who is included and on what issues are they considered authoritative? Is there a diversity and inclusivity of approaches in what is published? Who does all the work behind publishing and is the burden equally shared? We will also reflect on the limits of liberal EDI frameworks. What questions and issues do such framings leave out and detract attention from? Come along for an insightful and vital discussion!

The conversation is co-facilitated by **Yusra Suedi**, University of Manchester

Speakers:

- **Professor Sarah Nouwen**, European Journal of International Law
- **Adaena Sinclair-Blakemore**, International & Comparative Law Quarterly
- **Anna Sophia Tiedeke**, Völkerrechtsblog

AGORA 5 Actors of Reconstruction

Who are the actors of reconstruction? In today's differentiated international legal system this group cannot be limited to states and international organizations. Instead, all conceivable actors and individuals who enjoy or claim to have a form of legal personality can play a part in processes of reconstruction. Accordingly, this panel invites presentations which deal, among others, with the role that indigenous peoples, NGOs and other form of civil society actors, sub-national actors like cities and constituent states of federations but also individuals in their various respective roles as citizen, migrant, scholar, activist can play for processes of reconstruction of the international legal order.

Chair: **Professor Nina Reiners**, University of Oslo

Speakers:

- **Associate Professor Klara Polackova van der Ploeg**, Stetson University College of Law, Gulfport, "Reconceptualizing Legal Personality for Normative Inclusion: Conduct-based International Law"
- **Dr. Elsa Tsioumani**, University of Liege, **Dr. Bartek Goldmann**, University of Trento, and **Professor Louisa Parks**, University of Trento, "On the Reconstruction of International Environmental Law: Indigenous Peoples in the Convention on Biological Diversity"
- **Taylor Kate Woodcock**, TMC Asser Institute, The Hague, "Arguing AI: Big Tech and Legal Reasoning in the Military Domain"

AGORA 6 Reconstructing the Sources of International Law

It is a perennial question of international law scholarship how the sources of the international legal system are identified and to what extent the established boundaries of Article 38 ICJ Statute can be reconceptualized. This is not just an academic debate as recent and current debates by bodies such as the International Law Commission, the International Law Association and other learned societies attest. This panel invites contributions which seek to reassess the sources of international law in the light of reconstruction. Reconstruction could have a potentially conservative touch here, in the sense of going back to an earlier phase of international law in which the identification of the sources was supposedly clearer. But in which sense and to which moment in time to return to? Accordingly, papers could just as well address potentially dynamic and forward-looking avenues of reconstructing the sources of international law.

Chair: **Professor Phoebe Okowa**, Queen Mary University, London; Member of the UN International Law Commission

Speakers:

- **Başak Etkin**, University of Groningen, “Diagnosis and Remedy? Reconstructing Consent”
- **Assistant Professor Rita Guerreiro Teixeira**, Utrecht University, “On Decisions by Conferences of the Parties as a Source of International Law: Status, Authority, and Process”
- **Andrea Pelliconi**, University of Southampton, **Dr. Aldo Zammit Borda**, City University of London, and **Dr. Stefan Mandelbaum**, University of Leicester, “The ILC Study on Teachings as Subsidiary Means: Arguments for a Pluralist Reading”

AGORA 7 Is there a future for liberal human rights?

Liberalism has come under pressure – domestically and internationally. While some attempt to offer new conceptualization of what it means to be liberal others want to give up the concept for good. What do these discourses imply for international human rights law? Is human rights law inextricably linked to liberalism? Are there alternative background concepts for thinking about human rights? Is it normatively desirable to keep a liberal understanding of human rights? And how do geopolitical shifts affect such debates?

Chair: **Professor Matthias Goldmann**, EBS Wiesbaden

Speakers:

- **Qin (Sky) Ma**, European University Institute, Florence, “Confucian Paternalism Meets Liberal Human Rights: Cultural Hybridization and the Limits of Universalism in International Law”
- **Professor Renata Uitz**, Central European University, Vienna, and **Professor Thiago de Souza Amparo**, FGV São Paulo Law School, “Responding to the Illiberal Politics of Rights in Europe and the Americas: Awakening the Principle of Non-Retrogression”
- **Assistant Professor Corina Heri**, Tilburg University, “What are human rights, if not liberal? Rethinking the “human” of human rights law in the Anthropocene”

AGORA 8 Interdisciplinarity and the (Re)construction of International Law

Agora proposed by the IG on Social Sciences and International Law

Whenever discussions about disciplinary reconstruction and renewal emerge, questions about interdisciplinary engagement never seem to be far away. Now, as international law is going through another period of turbulence and transformation, the nature and stakes of interdisciplinarity are once again in sharp relief. Opinions on the matter tend to be divided. Some have perceived interdisciplinary engagements with international law as deeply threatening. Others have pointed out that such engagements can contribute to a better understanding of how our relatively autonomous field connects and/or should connect to the worlds and constructions within which it is embedded.

With this panel, we seek to give the inevitable urge to look beyond one's own discipline in times of disruption and discord a proper place for expression and scrutiny in this year's conference. The discussions will revolve around the question what role interdisciplinarity can or should have in the reconstruction of international law. Such discussions are not limited to scholarship, but aim to engage the discipline more broadly conceived. The panel addresses the value of interdisciplinarity for the international legal discipline in a variety of facets.

Chair: **Assistant Professor Tommaso Soave**, Central European University

Speakers:

- **Seán Fobbe**, LMU Munich, "The Chains of Pride: Reconstructing International Law as a Discipline of Fact and Principle"
- **Professor Anne van Aaken**, University of Hamburg, and **Professor Tomer Broude**, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, "Reconstructing International Treaty Law-Making with Behavioral Research"
- **Professor Evelyne Schmid**, Université de Lausanne, "Insights from Interdisciplinary Research on Human Rights Treaties at the Subnational Level"

14:00 - 15:30

Closed business meeting of publishers

15:30 - 16:00

Coffee & Tea

kindly presented by the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public and International Law

16:00 - 17:30

Parallel Sessions (Agorae 9-12)

AGORA 9 Reforming International Economic Law

In the run-up to its 30th birthday, the WTO is stuck in a reform backlog. Instead member states turn to plurilateral negotiations within other frameworks. As of late 2024 the dispute settlement system is still in crisis. A growing disregard for trade rules suggests that a more substantial reform of the system is urgently required. But what are the ways ahead? Or do we need a more foundational re-conceptualization of the international economic order?

Chair: **Associate Professor Nicolas Lamp**, Queens University, Ottawa

Speakers:

- **Xiaofeng Li**, Durham University, “China’s Green Industrial Policy and WTO Law”
- **Dr. Anna Panarella**, Università della Svizzera italiana, “Legal Pathways for Integrating Trade and Sustainability: The ACCTS Approach to Fossil Fuel Subsidies and Implications for Their Reform under the WTO”
- **Edwin Vanderbruggen**, Foreign Trade University, Hanoi, “An International Tax System for Community Interests: Can the UN Framework Tax Convention Effect Real Change?”

AGORA 10 Planetary Thinking - Revolutionizing International Environmental Law ?

Thinking about the international protection of the environment has made the step from the global to the planetary. In particular, the concept of planetary boundaries and the debates surrounding the Anthropocene raise the question of whether the regulatory approaches of international environmental law (IEL) need to be fundamentally rethought. From such a perspective the concept of sustainable development has come as much under criticism as the normative conceptions underlying current IEL. Do we need a “new planetary ethic”, “Earth system law”, or “planetary governance”? What would such conceptual shifts mean for existing legal instruments? How can we conceive of new regulatory approaches and make sure that states are willing to enact these?

Chair: **Professor Makane Moise Mbengue**, University of Geneva

Speakers:

- **Professor Michael Byers**, University of British Columbia, “International Law and the Earth-Space System”
- **Gaspard Lemaire**, University of Angers, “Climate atrocity as a crime under international law”
- **Melanie Schneider**, University of Oxford, “From state prerogative to planetary concern: international environmental law's governance of the energy sector”

AGORA 11 Rethinking the Laws of War

In contrast to other areas of international law, a fundamental reorientation of the laws of war is rarely debated. Discussions rather focus on interpretative shifts in specific rules or highlight shortcomings of international humanitarian law's (IHL) enforcement mechanisms. Simultaneously, substantial criticism about the adverse effects of a "humanization" of war has become widespread without offering ways out of this conundrum. In international practice, cautious reform efforts have been blocked in the past. Still, wide-spread violations of the laws of war in contemporary armed conflicts raise the question as to whether IHL does not only face a compliance crisis but requires a more foundational reconceptualization. Are there ways to evolve the laws of war or do we better leave this body of the law untouched?

Chair: **Professor Eliav Liebllich**, University of Tel Aviv

Speakers:

- **Dr. Wim Zimmermann**, University of Salzburg, "From Cold Language Games to the Heat of Battle: Rethinking the Role of Legal Advisors"
- **Dr. Marcin Marcinko**, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, and **Dr. Milena Ingelevic-Citak**, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, "Manipulating Minds, Challenging Laws: The Rise of Cognitive Warfare"
- **Professor Christiane Wilke**, Carleton University, Ottawa, "'Unexpected': International Law and US Military Assessments of Civilian Casualty Allegations"

AGORA 12 (De-/Re-)Constructions of the History of International Law

Agora proposed by the IG on the History of International Law

In this Panel, the Interest Group on the History of International Law brings together three scholars—Dr. David Scott, Dr. Valentina Vadi, and Dr. Chen Xiaohang—who each offer new conceptualizations of International Law's history. The Panelists are joined by Professor Dr. Anne Peters, who will moderate the discussion. By advocating for a multidimensional temporal approach, deconstructing dominant historical narratives, and exploring the role of crisis of modern time concerning international legal thought as temporality, the discussion aims to deepen our understanding of not only how international law has been de-/re-constructed across time, but also how the history of international law could be de-/reconstructed in future.

Chair: **Professor Anne Peters**, Max-Planck Institute of Comparative Public and International Law, Heidelberg

Speakers:

- **Dr. David M. Scott**, Queen Mary University of London, "International Legal History and the Crisis of Modern Time"
- **Dr. Valentina Vadi**, University of Florence/European University Institute, "Navigating the Seas of History in International Law"
- **Dr. Xiaohang Chen**, Peking University School of Law, "Reconstructing Through Historiographical Myth-Building: The Rise of International Adjudication and Fin de Siècle Pacifist Internationalism"

17:30 - 19:00

ESIL General Assembly

20:00

Conference Dinner

Saturday, 13 September 2025

09:00 - 10:30

Parallel Sessions (Fora 5 & 6)

FORUM 5 Reconstruction of International Law: A View from Practice

Reconstruction is not just an academic endeavour. Instead it can relate to various processes in the practice of international law through which states, international organizations but also other actors contribute to a reconstruction of the international legal order. This panel promises to deliver input from some of the actors involved in such processes or closely watching how international law unfolds in the world of practice. Questions to explore can include the room of manoeuvre that actors have for reconstruction, how such questions play a role in the day-to-day practice of legal advisory, judges and policy makers, but also which personal and ethical responsibility comes with applying, interpreting and developing the law with a view to its reconstruction.

Chair: **Professor Janne Nijman**, University of Amsterdam/Graduate Institute Geneva

Speakers:

- **Professor Mykola Gnatovskyy**, Judge at the European Court of Human Rights
- **Dr. Dirk Pulkowski**, Deputy Legal Advisor, NATO, Brussels
- **Rashmin Sagoo**, International Law and Policy Consultant; former Director International Law Programme, Chatham House, London

FORUM 6 Current Affairs Panel – Genocide Litigation in International Law

Genocide is a supreme evil. Allegations of genocide galvanize experts, states, and publics. Recently they are increasingly leveled in international courts and tribunals, particularly the International Court of Justice, which is hearing genocide litigation across several high-profile cases, including South Africa v. Israel, The Gambia v. Myanmar, and Ukraine v. Russia. This panel will discuss how jurisdictional, evidentiary, and procedural considerations in genocide litigation constrain the application and shape the substantive evolution of the concept of genocide. Panelists will engage with the extra-legal usages of the term genocide. They will reflect on the promise and peril of genocide litigation for contentious politics, polarized public discourse and, critically, for the protection of vulnerable groups by means of law.

Chair: **Professor Janina Dill**, University of Oxford

Speakers:

- **Associate Professor Iryna Marchuk**, University of Copenhagen
- **Professor Mehrdad Payandeh**, Bucerius Law School, Hamburg
- **Dr. Nahed Samour**, Radboud University Nijmegen

10:30 - 11:00

Coffee & Tea

kindly presented by the Walther Schücking Institute for International Law

11:00 - 12:00

A Conversation with the ESIL Book Prize Winners

This event will feature conversations with the winners of the two ESIL book prizes (one for monographs and one for collective/edited volumes).

11:00 - 12:00

Special Panel on Academic Freedom and the Discourse on International Law

Academic freedom is under pressure in a wide range of different jurisdictions. Arrests of pro-Palestinian students and scholars in the United States, a shrinking space for civil society in countries like Hungary and cancellations of events with UN mandate holders on Palestine in Germany make it especially acute for a learned society like ESIL to reflect on the framework conditions under which it operates. This special panel will reflect on the relationship between academic freedom and the conditions for a robust discourse on international law, the at times unclear and uneasy boundary between scholarly work and activism and the various blind spots that debates about academic freedom portray.

Chair: **Associate Professor Kriszta Kovács**, ELTE University Budapest

Speakers:

- **Professor David Kaye**, UC Irvine School of Law, former UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of expression, U.S. member of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe
- **Dr. Jannis Grimm**, Freie Universität Berlin
- **Dr. Stefania Di Stefano**, Conservatoire national des arts et métiers, Paris

12:00 - 13:00

Concluding Roundtable

Reconstructing International Law – Empty Promise or Promising Avenue? (Plenary Event)

The concluding roundtable will unpack the major questions behind the conference's theme and draw on the rich panoply of insights generated across the entire conference.

Chair: **Judge Vasilka Sancin**, European Court of Human Rights, formerly Professor at the University of Ljubljana and Member of the UN Human Rights Committee

Speakers:

- **Assistant Professor Johanna Aleria P. Lorenzo**, University of Amsterdam
- **Professor Antonios Tzanakopoulos**, University of Oxford
- **Professor Christian Walter**, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

13:00 - 13:30

Closing of the Conference and Farewell

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