Call for Application as Engaged Listeners

Defund Meat Conference

Wed. 15 – Fri. 17 January 2025

Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg, Germany

This conference, convened by Dr Saskia Stucki and Prof Anne Peters, revisits the ‘meat question’ in the contemporary social, political, and legal context. Meat is an embodied symbol of the interrelated crises that have become characteristic of the Anthropocene: climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, pandemics, food insecurity, unhealthy and unsustainable diets, and institutionalised animal suffering. As the social, ecological, and ethical costs of industrialised meat production are becoming more visible, (not) eating meat is increasingly turning into a public and political issue. Overwhelming scientific evidence indicates the need for a dietary transition away from animal-based foods. Nevertheless, meat remains the elephant in the room – or the sacred cow – especially when it comes to climate change and global public health strategies. Moreover, meat-reduction policies have not yet been instituted as integral part of the sustainable food transformation. While buzzwords such as the ‘decarbonisation’ of the economy and ‘fossil fuel divestment’ have become mainstream, comparable calls for a ‘deanimalisation’ of agriculture or for ‘defunding meat’ remain marginal. Considering livestock’s ‘long shadow’, it is time to drop the taboo: we need to talk about meat.

The multi-disciplinary conference seeks to bring the meat question into the academic and societal debates on One Health, sustainability, climate change, food security, and public health. We seek to understand better the impacts of meat production and consumption on humans, animals, and the environment, to scrutinise traditional regulatory approaches, and to envision the future shape and instruments of a transformative meat governance.

The MPIL invites doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to apply as ‘engaged listeners’. Engaged listeners will be admitted to the conference including meals free of charge and will be listed in the programme. Engaged listeners do not give a talk but are expected to participate actively in the discussions.

Please apply via our online application system with CV and letter of motivation (max. 500 words) by 15 July 2024. Selection is based on demonstrated interest and expertise in the conference theme. Notifications about acceptance as an engaged listener will be sent out by 31 July 2024.

More information can be found on our conference website. Contact: apeters-office@mpil.de

This conference is generously supported by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation.