



MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE
FOR COMPARATIVE PUBLIC LAW
AND INTERNATIONAL LAW



MAX PLANCK LAW

International Law and Emotions: Recovering Universality?

Wed. 25 – Fri. 27 February 2026

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

Conference Programme

as of 14 February 2026

Conveners:

Prof. Anne Peters
Dr Elia Alexiou
Bernadette Lumbela
Caroline Schaeffer

Wednesday, 25 February 2026:

Public Launch Event, 8 pm

Venue:

Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut (DAI), Heidelberg

Speaker:

Prof. Terry Maroney (Vanderbilt University)
What Judges Feel: Insights on Judicial Emotion

Discussants:

Prof. Anne Peters (MPIL) and Prof. Jonas Bens
(University of Hamburg, Anthropology)

The conference is generously funded by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation and the German Research Foundation.

For further information please visit the conference [website](#).

Organization: Anette Kreutzfeld

Contact: apeters-office@mpil.de and alexiou@mpil.de

Time	Format	Speaker(s)	Topic	Session Moderator
8:30-9:00	Registration			
09:00-09:15	Welcome	Prof. Anne Peters Dr Elia Alexiou MPIL	International Law and Emotions: Remarks on Research Questions	
09:15-09:30	Report	tba	Engaged Listeners' Workshop	
Session I: Towards Defining, Identifying and Measuring Emotions in the Legal Process: Inputs from Relevant Disciplines				
09:30-09:55	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Arno Villringer MPI for Cognitive and Brain Sciences	Body, Emotions, and their Impact on Cognition and Decision-Making	Dr Joshua Uyheng Ateneo de Manila University
09:55	Discussion (15 min)			
10:10-10:35	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Simon Koschut Zeppelin University	Naming, Shaming, and Feeling: Emotions as Drivers of International Norms	
10:35	Discussion (15 min)			
10:50	Coffee break (20 min)			
11:10-11:35	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Emily Kidd White Osgoode Hall Law School	On the Philosophy of Emotions in the Study of International Law	
11:35	Discussion (15 min)			
11:50-12:15	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Kelebogile Zvobgo William & Mary	Public Reactions to International Courts: Between Mistrust, Ambivalence, and Hope	
12:15	Discussion (15 min)			
12:30	General Discussion (30 min)			
13:00	Lunch break (60 min)			
Session II: Emotions in International Law: Research Methods				
14:00-14:25	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Tilmann Altwicker University of Zurich	The Unemotional Court? Emotion Classification of Judgments by the International Court of Justice	Prof. Alexander Mehler Goethe University Frankfurt
14:25	Discussion (15 min)			
14:40-15:05	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Anna Spain Bradley University of California	Judicial Emotion at the International Court of Justice	
15:05	Discussion (15 min)			
15:20	Coffee break (20 min)			
15:40-16:05	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Christoph Engel MPI for Research on Collective Goods	The Suing Paradox: Inferring Applicants' Motives from the Decisions of the ECtHR on Freedom of Assembly	
16:05	Discussion (15 min)			
16:20-16:45	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Emiliano Buis University of Buenos Aires	Affective Normativity and Arms Regulation in IL: Weapon Control Treaties as Emotional Technologies	
16:45	Discussion (15 min)			
17:00-17:30		Erik Tuchtfeld MPIL	Rapporteur – Conference Day 1 Discussion	
18:00	Reception			
19:00	Conference Dinner (upon invitation) – Presentation 'Collisions: A refugee perspective on well-founded fears and hopes' Ismail Noh and Jason Noh (refugee artists); Dr Elia Alexiou (MPIL)			

Time	Format	Speaker(s)	Talk / Paper	Session Moderator
8:30-9:00	Registration			
Session III: Individual and Collective Emotions in the International Legal Order				
09:00-09:25	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Matthias Mahlmann University of Zurich	Sentiments and Human Rights	Prof. Tatjana Papić Union University Belgrade
09:25	Discussion (15 min)			
09:40-10:05	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Nanying Tao Shanghai University of Finance and Economics	Sense and Sensibility: Nationalist Sentiment in China’s Attitude towards the South China Sea Arbitration	
10:05	Discussion (15 min)			
10:20	Coffee break (20 min)			
10:40-11:05	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Moshe Hirsch Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Collective Traumas and the Emotional Dimension of ECtHR Jurisprudence on Memory Laws	
11:05	Discussion (15 min)			
11:20-11:45	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Seda Gürkan Leiden University	How do “Emotional Communities” React to Contestation of Human Rights? Insights from the European Parliamentary Debates on Hungary and Turkey (2014-2019)	
11:45	Discussion (15 min)			
12:00	General Discussion (30 min)			
12:30	Lunch break (60 min)			
Session IV: International Law and the Universality of Emotions				
13:30-13:55	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Bradley Irish Arizona State University	The Universality of Emotion: Background for International Law	Prof. Valérie Rosoux University of Louvain
13:55	Discussion (15 min)			
14:10-14:35	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Anne van Aaken University of Hamburg	The Situated Universality of Emotions, Cognition, and International Law: A Biocultural Analogy	
14:35	Discussion (15 min)			
14:50	Coffee break (20 min)			
15:10-15:35	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Tomer Brode Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Just a little bit: Respect, International Law, and Universality through the Lens of Intangible Cultural Heritage	
15:35	Discussion (15 min)			
15:50-16:15	Talk (25 min)	Prof. Andrea Bianchi Kiana Daryabeigi Balvardi Geneva Graduate Institute	Navigating through the Universe of Emotions: Challenges and Prospects	
16:15	Discussion (15 min)			
16:30-17:00		Dr Elif Askin University of Zurich	Rapporteur - Conference Day 2 Discussion	
17:00-17:30	Closing Remarks			

Before the conference

Wednesday, 25 February 2026, 14 – 17.10 h Engaged Listeners' Workshop

Venue: Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law (MPIL), Heidelberg, Room 014
open to Engaged Listeners and Speakers at the conference

Time	Format	Speaker(s)	Topic
14:00-14:15	Arrival		
14:15-14:30	Welcome	Bernadette Lumbela Caroline Schaeffer MPIL	
<i>Session I: Emotions in Context: Culture, Law, and Language</i>			
14:30-15:10	Presentation	Ambre Tissot Institut des Sciences Sociales du Politique (École Normale Supérieure, Université Paris-Saclay), France	Cultural Emotions: Challenging the Foundations of International Cultural Heritage Law
	Presentation	Kateryna Zakharova Université de Strasbourg, France	Rendering into Ukrainian: The Multilingual Case Law of the European Court of Human Rights: How Legal Traditions Shape Terminological Choices
	Discussion (20 min)		
15:10	Coffee break (20 min)		
<i>Session II: The Emotional Experience of Harm in Human Rights Law and Jurisprudence</i>			
15:30-16:10	Presentation	Simone Mitchell-DaCosta University of Portsmouth, Jamaica	Mapping Moral Restoration: An Emerging Jurisprudential Practice in the Inter-American Human Rights System
	Presentation	Dr Otgontuya Davaanyam Centre for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg (CHREN), Germany	Feeling Harm: Emotion, Vulnerability, and the Limits of Corporate Human Rights Due Diligence
	Discussion (20 min)		
16:10	Coffee break (20 min)		
<i>Session III: Universality in International Law between Uncertainty and Belonging</i>			
16:30-17:10	Presentation	Alexander Köhler Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa, Italy	We, the Peoples, Belong: Reimagining International Law & Governance as Inclusive Praxis
	Presentation	Dr Alik Semertzi Geneva Graduate Institute, Switzerland	Feeling Uncertain and the Universal Condition of International Law
	Discussion (20 min)		