



Change and Resilience in International Law

Conference, Geneva, 6-8 October 2022

Call for Papers

International law is built upon a narrative of constancy, predictability, and permanence—features that give it a coherent but also a static appearance. Yet beneath this outer layer (and its strong representation in international legal doctrine), it is characterized by significant dynamism and adaptability. Its rules are in constant flux, being made and remade through practice. Between the poles of stability and adaptability: how resilient is international law in fact? To what extent does it resist changes in its environment, and to what extent does it adapt to them in order to remain relevant? This question is especially pertinent, we believe, in times of radical challenges from politics (e.g., the rise of anti-internationalism and multipolarity), from problem-solving pressures (e.g., sustainability and climate change), and from technological change (most visibly in the turn to data). In this conference, we take a closer look at the ways in which resilience in International Law may manifest, and we assess the degree to which International Law is resilient. Our inquiries will be guided by questions such as:

- How resistant is international law to change, and does the degree of resistance vary from one field to another? Which actors or factors are more likely to trigger resistance in international law?
- Through what mechanisms does international law adapt to changing circumstances and technological advancements and respond to new crises? When can we expect institutions to resort to resistance, adaptability, and elasticity (i.e., an institution's return to its original state/model)?
- What is the relation between contestation, backlash, and resilience?

- How flexible should international law be in responding to challenges and changing circumstances? What procedures would be adequate?

The conference will bring together scholars working in international law, international relations, and related disciplines. We are seeking empirically- as well as theoretically-oriented paper proposals that address one or more of the above questions. We welcome different disciplinary approaches, as long as a clear focus on international law and legalities is present.

Please submit your abstract of no more than 300 words, accompanied by a short CV (maximum 2 pages), by **24 April 2022** to paths@graduateinstitute.ch. We aim at communicating the results of the selection process in early May. Those selected are expected to submit think pieces of around 3,000 to 4,000 words by **20 September 2022**. We will cover accommodation for all speakers, and we will be able to cover part of the travel expenses for speakers without their own institutional funding upon request.

The conference is organized by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, as part of the research project on the "[Paths of International Law](#)". Convened by Ezgi Yildiz and Nico Krisch, it will take place at the [Chateau de Bossey](#) near Geneva. The project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 740634).