



# MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE

FOR COMPARATIVE PUBLIC LAW  
AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Call for Application as Engaged Listeners

## CONFERENCE INTERNATIONAL LAW AND EMOTIONS: RECOVERING UNIVERSALITY?

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

**Wednesday 25 - Friday 27 February 2026**

Wednesday 25 February 2026, 8pm: Public launch event, DAI Heidelberg  
Thursday 26 and Friday 27 February 2026, 9am-6pm: Conference, MPIL Heidelberg

The current international order is in a turmoil. Resistance against breaches of international law is weak, not the least because of widespread contempt for this law. At the same time, the use and manipulation of emotions by political leaders is growing, as are their attacks on international law. This subversion concerns especially the aspiration for a law that is not only applied across the globe but also shared by all populations and is in that sense “universal”.

The conference seeks to explore how, whose, and which emotions contribute to the current erosion of effectiveness and credibility of international law. How is the construction of emotions shaped across time, place, and culture? Can we identify emotions that contribute to strengthening and weakening international law’s claim to universality?

The conference seeks to develop “International Law and Emotions” as a new research field: International Law is a law in “emotion”; a legal system and a legal discipline oscillating between the fears of “coexistence”, the hopes of “cooperation”, and the “sense of belonging” in a universal global society.

**The MPIL invites doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to apply as “engaged listeners”.** Engaged listeners will not give a talk but are expected to participate actively in the discussions and will be listed in the conference’s programme. All accepted engaged listeners will be admitted to the conference including meals free of charge. For engaged listeners who have exhausted other potential sources of funding, travel costs and accommodation in Heidelberg could be covered upon request and depending on the availability of funds.

Please apply exclusively via [our online application system](#) with **CV and letter of motivation (max. 500 words) by 31 October 2025**. Selection is based on demonstrated interest and expertise in the conference theme. Engaged listeners from non legal disciplines are particularly encouraged to apply. Notifications about acceptance will be sent out by 10 November 2025.

More information can be found on the [conference website](#)

Contact (for inquiries only, not for applications): [apeters-office@mpil.de](mailto:apeters-office@mpil.de); [alexiou@mpil.de](mailto:alexiou@mpil.de)

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