



Call for Contributions: *City Reports on International Law*

ILA Study Group - The Role of Cities in International Law

Framing issue

We are aiming at city reports which shed light on city practices in relation to international law and in this context on cities engagement with other cities, international organizations and/or global governance mechanisms. The forms of engagement can hence be local, transnational, international, or global in nature.

This can relate both to invocations of well-established norms in international law, such as, for instance, in the context of sanctuary cities and their appeal to rules of international refugee law or social and economic rights. Likewise, it can relate to (legal or quasi-legal) practices which connect with emerging and/or aspirational norms like the “right to the city” which in and of itself might be seen as one emanation of “international from below” (Rajagopal). With regard to city practices one could think of the activities of self-declared ‘human rights cities’, the role of SDGs in city-to-city cooperation, cities’ participation in UN processes such as the New Urban Agenda, the incorporation of international law in local legislation and institutional arrangements such as a local human rights department or sustainability office.

The city reports will be submitted with a view to inclusion as annexes to the Report of the Study Group to the ILA Kyoto conference in 2020. The Study Group is also anticipating to hold an open session of the ILA where a selection of these reports will be presented to the ILA membership. In a second step, the Chairpersons of the Study Group will be curating a collection of city reports based on the ILA reporting process with a view to publication with a leading university press.

Selection of actors

The reports are primarily interested in the practice of local governments. However, in many cases, this will be hard to disentangle from the engagement of various actors of civil society, like NGOs and corporations, who might be involved in such activities, the cooperation between C40 and business actors being a prominent example for such forms of public-private engagement at the local level.

Structure reports

- When reporting on local government practices, make sure to contextualise them briefly with any information on the applicable domestic legal framework, especially the constitutional side of it (to the extent feasible).

- The reporting is not based on a fixed questionnaire but can take various forms. The Study Group is interested in descriptive documents detailing various forms of engagement with international norms as practices as well as in more playful forms of analysis which could, for instance, take the form of an essay which critically discusses a particular instance of local engagement with questions of international law or global governance. Also in this case, the respective local practice should be explained and contextualised so as to enable readers to grasp the forms of engagement a given city or town has with respect to international law.
- Check whether the given country might be reporting on human rights at the local level or whether there are other forms of international engagement of cities to the UN - in fora like the Human Rights Council, World Urban Forum, United Nations Environment Assembly Cities Summit, United Smart Cities program, Local2030: Localizing the SGDs or the Habitat III New Urban Agenda.

Abstract submission

Abstracts should be 500-700 words and can be submitted to L.roodenburg@asser.nl. The deadline for abstracts is 1 September 2019. Applicants will be notified on the selection by 30 September 2019. The complete reports should be submitted by 28 February 2020. The city reports should be 4500-7000 words.

About the study group

The study group on the changing role of cities in the international legal order has officially begun its work at the 2018 biannual ILA conference in Sydney. At the ILA conference, a panel discussion on the theme of “Cities at the Frontiers of International Law and Global Governance” was organised. The study group is co-chaired by Janne Nijman, T.M.C. Asser Institute, and Helmut Aust, Freie Universität, Berlin. The study group’s rapporteurs are Jolene Lin, National University of Singapore, and Annie-Anouch Beaudouin, Université Nice Sophia Antipolis.