

Call for Papers: The EU as a Regional International Organisation

On 1st December 2023, the T.M.C. Asser Institute and the Amsterdam Centre for European Studies (ACES) will hold a conference on ‘The EU as a Regional International Organisation’ at the premises of the T.M.C. Asser Institute in The Hague.

Background

In recent years, the number of regional international organisations (RIOs) has increased exponentially. These organisations play an active role in a wide range of global governance fields, from economic governance to security to the shaping of cultural identities. RIOs are not only numerous but also extremely heterogeneous in terms of their powers, degree of institutionalisation, aims, and in how they structure their relations with the outside world. RIOs pose a wide array of questions for international (institutional) law, as entities that defy the traditional territory/function dichotomy – lying at the intermediate level between States and international organisations (IOs) - and may even be perceived as a threat to the universality and coherence of international law. At the same time, the everyday practice of these organisations has the potential to substantially influence the development of international law, as RIOs operate both as ‘catalysts’ of State practice and as international actors in their own right. Despite this, the study of RIOs has received limited attention in international legal literature. The International Law Association (ILA)’s [Study Group](#) on ‘The International Law of RIOs’ was convened exactly for the purpose of filling this gap. Despite the dearth of legal literature on the topic, the fact remains that the increasing number and influence of RIOs makes them, in Chalmers words, ‘crucibles for ascertaining the possibilities and limits of international law’.

Within this constellation, the EU is a RIO of particular significance. According to mainstream thinking, the EU is the world’s leading exemplar for regional economic integration and the term RIO itself has at times been used to describe the ambivalent status of the EU in international law. Yet, the ‘regional’ perspective is often absent in debates about the EU’s identity and external presence, as are reflections about how this perspective relates to that of other RIOs.

In this light, we invite papers on how the ‘RIO’ lens may influence and contextualise our understanding of the EU as a global actor. In particular, we welcome papers reflecting on the following (non-exhaustive) topics:

- How the concept of ‘RIO’ as well as the concepts of ‘region’, ‘regional imaginary’ and ‘regional identity narrative’ may add to the (or create a new) framework for assessing

the legal identity, democratic legitimacy and/or accountability of the EU and/or of other RIOs.

- How the EU compares to other RIOs (such as ASEAN, MERCOSUR and others), notably with respect to the role of the individual within the regional legal order, the EU's claim to 'uniqueness' and similar claims made by other RIOs, and the different normative visions on how to shape the international legal order.
- How the EU (and its courts) interact with other RIOs (and their courts).
- How regional identity narratives shape EU values internally and how these values are projected externally.
- How the EU and other RIOs contribute to the development of international law (including international institutional law and substantive fields of international law) and whether we can speak of distinctive 'regional' approaches to international law.
- Whether, and how, the EU's practice of international law can be seen as threatening the coherence of international law or/and as enriching it.

Prof. Jan Klabbers (University of Helsinki) will deliver the keynote address on 'The Phenomenology of RIOs'.

The deadline for submitting an abstract is **1 May 2023**. Abstracts should not exceed **800 words** and should be sent together with a brief CV to all conference conveners: Eva Kassoti (T.M.C. Asser Institute) E.Kassoti@asser.nl, Narin Idriz (T.M.C. Asser Institute) n.idriz@asser.nl and Teresa Cabrita (KU Leuven, ACES) teresa.cabrita@kuleuven.be. The conveners aim to publish the papers stemming from this conference, subject to peer review. Successful applicants are therefore expected to submit a paper of 3,000-5,000 words by 1 November 2023.

The conference will be conducted in **hybrid format**. Limited accommodation funds (1 night) are available for this event.