

T H E E U A S A G L O B A L A C T O R

EUGLOBAL

CALL FOR PAPERS

ESIL Annual Conference, Athens, September 2019
Sovereignty: A concept in a state of flux?

Pre-Conference Event Interest Group *The European Union As A Global Actor*

SHARING SOVEREIGNTY: THE EU, ITS MEMBER STATES AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

The European Society of International Law's Interest Group *The EU as a Global Actor* organises a pre-conference event on Thursday 12 September 2019 in the framework of the 15th ESIL Annual Conference to be held 12-14 September 2019 in Athens, Greece.

As part of their EU membership, states have transferred an unprecedented amount of powers to an international organisation. Some of these powers touch upon core aspects of sovereignty, such as access of third country nationals to EU territory, budgetary decision-making, as well as external representation. The pre-conference event focusses on the consequences this transfer of competences has on our understanding of sovereignty and on the relationship of the EU and its Member States with third parties.

Whilst sovereignty is undisputedly a state-centred notion, it is deeply affected by multilateralism. How exactly sovereignty is affected, and whether multilateralism is ultimately detrimental or beneficial to it, remains subject to debate in legal but also political fora. This is especially so in the context of the EU, an international organisation coming closer to an exercise of quasi-sovereignty than any other. This raises a number of contentious questions. Does EU integration threaten national sovereignty? Or does Member State sovereignty benefit from a strong Europe? Is there a 'European sovereignty', understood as the sovereignty of the EU as

such or, alternatively, the shared sovereignty of the EU Member States? And if so, what are the practical consequences of a ‘European sovereignty’?

The ‘shared sovereignty’ as it has taken shape at the European level has given rise to multiple challenges at the practical level. To a large extent this is due to the complexity surrounding the division of competences between the EU and its Member States. When dealing with the EU, third parties, such as third states, other international organisations, and non-EU individuals or companies, often find themselves confronted with the challenge of having to accommodate particularities that stem from the shared exercise of powers between the EU and its Member States. Who can they assume to be their partner in international law-making? How is their position affected by the conclusion of so-called mixed agreements, signed by the EU as well as its Member States? In the event of a breach of international law by the EU and/or its Member States, do third parties have to bear the burden of identifying the responsible actor? To what extent can declarations of competence help all involved parties to navigate the difficulties arising from the complex relationship between the EU and its Member States? How does the multitude of relevant actors in the EU’s external representation affect the relations between third parties on the one hand and the EU and its Member States on the other?

The overall aim of the panel is to explore the potential of developing a concept of European or shared sovereignty and to identify particular challenges associated with the complex division of competences among the EU and its Member States for international law. In this light, the Coordinating Committee of the Interest Group *The EU as a Global Actor* invites submissions of abstracts on any of the above-mentioned questions of no more than **500 words**. Applications should be submitted to ramses.wessel@utwente.nl by **1 June 2019**, with a short curriculum vitae containing the author’s name, institutional affiliation, and contact details. Selected speakers will be notified by **1 July 2019**.

Note that the Interest Group is unable to provide funding for travel and accommodation. Please see the ESIL website for information about [travel grants](#) and [carers’ grants](#) offered to ESIL members, and other relevant information about the conference.

Selected speakers are strongly encouraged to become members of the Society and to register for the Annual Conference. However, please note that the Society is unable to offer reduced conference registration fees to speakers at pre-conference events (please do not register as agora speakers).

Selected speakers can indicate their interest in being considered for the ESIL Young Scholar Prize, if they meet the eligibility conditions as stated on the [ESIL website](#). The [ESIL Secretariat](#) must be informed of all speakers who wish to be considered for the Prize by 15 May at the very latest.