



UiT The Arctic
University of Norway

NCLOS
NORWEGIAN CENTRE
FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA

From Seas to Cities

Exploring Spaces of Non-State Enforcement and
Implementation of International Environmental Law

CALL FOR PAPERS

6-7 October, Tromsø, Norway



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the European Union**

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The proliferation of international environmental law has been accompanied by a widening gap between its normative objectives and underlying realities. Although empirical research on 'living law' remains limited, both academic and compliance communities largely agree that the state supply of remedial measures in response to environmental degradation is far from satisfactory. The implementation and enforcement deficit is further exacerbated by the broader strains in inter-state cooperation affecting the post-WWII international order. Regardless of how these transformations reshape state-centric systems, deepened cooperation on enforcement and implementation is likely to remain a central concern, even under the most realistic scenarios.

At the same time, the trajectory of enforcement and implementation in international environmental law has never been linear. It has been shaped by a plurality of actors and normative orders, concurrent processes of fragmentation and harmonization, as well as the interplay of reason and emotion. For one thing, non-state enforcement and implementation have been integral to the field's emergence and development, yet relevant debates have largely focused on how such 'ad-hoc' actions interact with, or at best substitute for, state-based orders.

Meanwhile, many complex and parallel interactions, extending beyond the vantage points of state-centrism, remain unexplored. The latter is illustrated, in part, by reinvigorated but also polarized debates surrounding the recent wave of direct-action campaigns across the world, mostly in the context of climate change.

Against this background, this conference invites contributions offering a renewed interdisciplinary perspective on the pluralist remits of enforcement and implementation of international environmental law. The objective is to explore the 'juridical field' that extends beyond concerns over states' coming short in their enforcement and implementation efforts. Participants are invited to reflect on the relevant questions from a range of perspectives, including legal, social-scientific, and normative-philosophical.



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This call intentionally maintains a broad thematic scope. However, authors may wish to draw on the themes outlined below.

Non-state actors as co-creators and addressees of rules

Whose international environmental law is enforced, and by whom? Blurring the line of demarcation between the rule-creation and enforcement: how do acts of non-state enforcement translate into rules?

Coexisting plural orders

Are there coexisting normative orders of enforcement and implementation? Have the separate enforcement actions of non-state actors aggregated into distinct normative orders? How and why do the transnational social orders maintain multiple systems of enforcement? What is the degree of interdependence of coexisting orders? When and how do the non-state and state enforcement cross paths beyond resistance and collaboration?

Emotions behind the non-state enforcement and implementation

How does emotional appeal of non-state actors to audiences throughout the implementation and enforcement campaigns sustain the field's longevity (narratives, texts and images)? How does an appeal to emotions mobilize capacities for action (law, finance, human resources, public support)? What is the coercive and legitimizing role of emotions in non-state enforcement?

From Seas to Cities enforcement and implementation as it is

What are the spaces of enforcement and implementation (e.g., the high seas, cities, small islands, car shows, or football pitches), and how do they (re)define them? What insights does empirical data offer about the non-state enforcement and implementation vis-à-vis concepts and theories? What does it mean to be an enforcer or implementer of international environmental law? What is the path or is there a path from an act of disobedience or protest to systematic enforcement?



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Venue and dates

UiT, the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø, Norway
October 6-7, 2026

Organizers

UiT - the Arctic University of Norway, Faculty of Law, the Norwegian Centre for the Law of the Sea. The conference is organized under the EU funded HORIZON TMA MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship Project “In a Space of ‘Illegal Lawfulness’#: The Normative Order of Radical Environmental Movements and the Enforcement of International Environmental Law” (REMFORCE) — 101149684. The conference is also linked to ECO-CRIM-NET – a scholarly network working on questions of investigation and prosecution of crimes against ecosystems.

Abstract submission and funding

Abstracts should be submitted by 20 July 2026. Abstracts should be no more than 500 words and should also include the following information: author(s) first and last name, institutional affiliation(s), and the title of the paper. The authors will be notified by 30 July 2026 if their abstract has been accepted. The selection will be based on merit, while taking into consideration the gender balance and representation of minority voices. Please, email your abstract to Gor Samvel at gor.movsisyan@uit.no.

Limited funds are available to support travel and accommodation costs of selected participants. The authors will be informed about the availability of funding alongside the acceptance notification.

Publication

Depending on the novelty of the emerging themes and the quality of contributions, an edited anthology/volume or special issues, or alternative forms of dissemination will be considered. Each paper submitted to such a publication will undergo the standard peer review process, and any invitation to contribute does not guarantee publication.

Inquiries

Inquiries with respect to abstracts should be directed to Gor Samvel at gor.movsisyan@uit.no

Inquiries with respect to administrative matters should be directed to Christin Skjervold at christin.skjervold@uit.no



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