

**ENVIRONMENTAL
LAW CENTER
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLOGNE**

Ed. 3

**WS 2021/2022
SS 2022**



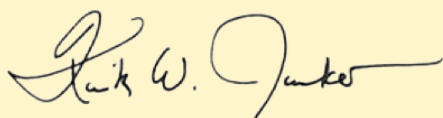
THE GREEN SHEET

ELC Semester Update

OPENING STATEMENT

Welcome to this latest edition of the Green Sheet. I am very happy to report that our Green Sheet is already expanding its horizons. First we have expanded our news items to include contributions by environmental law students of the University of Cologne. Second, you will also learn about research being conducted by one of the students in the International Master of Environmental Sciences (IMES) Program at the University of Cologne (well, to be fair, he is also a law student, but not only that!). And while we are expanding our horizons by reporting on IMES research, we should also bring your attention to the fact that beyond law and sciences, there is also a Multidisciplinary Environmental Studies in the Humanities Program at the University of Cologne. And these new ideas in all fields are not a moment too soon.

The 2022 IPCC Working Group II, "Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability", contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was released in February 2022, but who noticed? No sooner was the report released and war broke out in Eastern Europe. And in August 2021, when IPCC Working Group I, "The Physical Science Basis", published its contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report, addressing the latest advances in climate science, the news and people's minds were filled with COVID concerns. But COVID together with the war (so far) does not equal the death and human misery that will continue to be caused by climate disruption. Yes of course, both the war and COVID are terrible and must be addressed, but they cannot distract people from unavoidable climate commitments. In Europe, there is talk of keeping coal-fired power plants around a little longer, despite what IPCC Working Group I told us about methane release during coal mining. In the USA, fossil fuel industries have been given a gift—they can claim that energy independence requires a continued reliance on fossil fuels. In the IPCC's 2018 Special Report Global Warming of 1.5 °C, after reviewing more than 6.000 scientific articles, the panel concluded that we had twelve years to fix it or face catastrophe. That was four years ago. What progress have we made?



Prof. Dr. Kirk W. Junker, Director, Environmental Law Center
Cologne, April 1, 2022

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UPCOMING EVENTS IN SUMMER SEMESTER 2022

LECTURE ON GERMAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Weekly online lecture in German beginning on April 6 from 4:00 - 5:30 pm

After a successful online lecture series in German and European Environmental Law in the past winter semester, the ELC is offering a regular course in German Environmental Law in the summer semester. The lecture includes an introduction to European and German environmental law as well as special areas of environmental law such as circular economy law and climate protection law. Lectures will be virtual. The first lecture will be held on Wednesday, April 6 from 4:00 - 5:30 pm. The following lectures will be held on Thursdays, starting on April 14 from 4:00 - 5:30 pm.

Successful participation in this lecture series may be credited toward the Environmental Law Certificate and/or the Schwerpunktbereich 8.

Places are limited! **Please register through Klips or by stating your name, semester and matriculation number** via environmental-law-center@uni-koeln.de.

LECTURE ON INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Weekly online lecture in English beginning on April 7 from 12:00 - 1:30 pm

International environmental law has seen exponential growth in the past decade, with the adoption of the Paris Agreement, and increasing awareness about environmental protection in public discourse. International environmental law is a special avenue of legal study wherein we can observe how principles and language agreed to by nation states at international fora are implemented at the domestic and local level. In this course you will learn about fundamental concepts in international law, the history of international environmental law, international legal adjudication and legal implementation along with a specific focus on international environmental treaties governing the air, water, soil, biodiversity, wildlife, emissions and public participation among others. The course is planned as being completely virtual, with weekly Zoom lectures every Thursday starting April 7, 2022. Students are expected to write an essay to successfully complete the course.

Successful participation in this lecture series may be credited toward the Environmental Law Certificate.

Places are limited! **Please register through Klips or by stating your name, semester and matriculation number** via environmental-law-center@uni-koeln.de.

"HOW TO BECOME AN ENVIRONMENTAL LAWYER"

Online event in German on April 26 from 5:00 - 6:30 pm

In this webinar, Berlin-based **environmental lawyer Thorsten Deppner**, will offer the audience an informal insight into his personal journey pursuing a career in environmental law as a student and research assistant in Freiburg, legal trainee ("Rechtsreferendar") in Berlin and San Francisco leading him to become an independent environmental lawyer specializing in representing environmental NGOs in their struggle to protect the environment.

The talk is part of the "How to become an Environmental Lawyer" series organized by the Environmental Law Center and is intended to be an opportunity for students to interact with a diverse set of environmental legal professionals.

The webinar will be **virtual on April 26, 2022 from 5:00 – 6.30 pm**. Places are limited! **Please register by stating your name, semester and matriculation number** via environmental-law-center@uni-koeln.de. **Mr. Deppner is happy to receive questions during but also prior to the webinar** via the e-mail address mentioned above.

"FUNDAMENTALS OF GERMAN AND EUROPEAN WATER LAW"

Online event in German on June 27 from 5:00 - 6:30 pm

The lecture introduces the students to **German and European water law**. The students learn the principles and the essential instruments of water law. The lecture deals with current water law court decisions such as the prohibition on deterioration and the requirement for improvement, as well as current issues of management planning.

Places are limited! **Please register by stating your name, semester and matriculation number** via environmental-law-center@uni-koeln.de. Keep in mind that this lecture goes together with an excursion to a waste water treatment plant (see below). **Make sure to register for both events!**

EXCURSION TO THE WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT IN KÖLN-STAMMHEIM

Live excursion in German on June 29 from 1:00 - 4:00 pm

The Environmental Law Center is inviting the students to take part in an **excursion to the waste water treatment plant in Köln-Stammheim**. There will be a short introduction to the functioning of the plant before the students get the chance to explore the actual plant itself.

Places are limited! **Please register by stating your name, semester and matriculation number** via environmental-law-center@uni-koeln.de. Keep in mind that this excursion goes together with the lecture about "Fundamentals of German and European Water Law" (see above). **Make sure to register for both events!**

PRESENTATION ON "CASSANDRA'S ERROR: THIRTY YEARS IN THE RHETORIC OF CLIMATE SCIENCE"

Online lecture on July 7 from 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Within the lecture series "Perspectives on Climate Change Communication", Prof. Dr. Kirk W. Junker is giving a talk about "Cassandra's Error: Thirty Years in the Rhetoric of Climate Science" on July 7. All lectures take place from 6:00 - 7:30 pm (CET) via Zoom.

Please contact svenja.donner@stud.uni-due.de to get access to the link. If you would like to find out more about the program click here: <https://climate-change-literacy.de/>

PAST EVENTS IN WINTER SEMESTER 2021/2022

LECTURE SERIES IN GERMAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

During the past winter semester, the Environmental Law Center arranged a lecture series on German Environmental Law. After almost four years without a lecture on this topic, law students from the University of Cologne as well as students from other German Universities and different fields of studies were thrilled to have the opportunity to learn about the specifics of Environmental Law within the German legal system. For students interested in this diverse field of law, the lectures were a very helpful tool to understand how environmental issues are dealt with on a legal level within Germany and also to learn about the respective regulations that exist at the EU level.

About forty students and professionals applied to participate in the lecture series which took place via Online Meetings once a week. The educational goal of the lectures was to help students understand the methods by which a German lawyer would address environmental issues on the basis of legal norms within the administrative procedure and the role of European Environmental Law for Germany as one of its member states. The lectures were also meant to provide insight into the practice of German Environmental Law not only from the state's perspective but also from the view of private persons and organizations (including companies) as well as Nongovernmental Organizations.

The semester started out with a short overview of the history of Environmental Law in Germany, the distribution of legislative powers within the state and the influence of European directives and regulations on national law. From there, each lecture focused on a specific topic in the context of German Environmental Law, such as, for example, German Recycling Law or Plant

Protection Law. The lecture series consisted of numerous talks and discussion rounds which were held mostly by lawyers who have been practicing German Environmental Law for several years and were willing to share their personal story and explain how to become an advocate for the environment in Germany. Students also had access to additional readings for a more profound understanding of the various topics.

The lectures ranged from European waste regulations and how they are implemented in German Law over German packaging law, conservation and climate protection law, the Aarhus Convention and its participation and information rights for individuals and associations, to Environmental Criminal Law and many more.

The program also included a field trip to a waste utilization plant (MVA Bonn), where students could see for themselves how significant legal regulations in the area of waste disposal and recycling are put into practice and get first-hand information from the people who work there, including management personnel. It was especially instructive to see how much of a key element the issue of waste disposal is for public health and how dedicated some municipalities work on finding new and creative ideas to reach out to their residents and try to make the topic more accepted within the local society.

During the course of the semester, the participants were also invited on several occasions to take part in extra-curricular meetings organized by the course manager in order to network and exchange their own impressions and thoughts about the different topics. This exchange was especially valuable for all students of law as sometimes practitioners in the field of environmental studies joined to talk about their personal background and career and shared their views on the topic that had been discussed during previous lectures.

All in all, the lecture series on German Environmental Law perfectly complemented the existing lectures on U.S. Environmental Law, Comparative Environmental Law and International Environmental Law, which can be taken through the ELC. The lectures will help you to get a broader view on the regulation of environmental issues through administration law and prepare yourself for legal practice – maybe for a career as an environmental lawyer or a career in government in this field. Even for those of you who are flirting with the idea of becoming a lawyer in International Environmental Law, it is very valuable to first understand the concept of Environmental Law as it exists in your own legal system in order to have a reference point that will help you to compare the different approaches on an international level.

Written by environmental law student Mareike Ronellenfitsch

EXCURSION TO THE WASTE INCINERATION AND UTILIZATION PLANT IN BONN

On Tuesday, November 9, 2021, a group of environmental law students visited the waste incineration and utilization plant in Bonn. They were warmly welcomed by the managing director Manfred Becker and PR manager Saskia Kutsche who spoke to the students about the importance of the facility for the local community and about the challenges of the future, in particular with regard to the “zero waste” goals of the European Union. After that, Ms. Kutsche gave the students a tour of the actual plant. It started at the dumping site, where the trucks arrive and dump their payloads into the garbage store. Then, the students were guided to the top of the building and went past the air cleaning and emissions reducing part of the plant. They finally arrived at the garbage stores where huge crane grabs put the arriving garbage into the incineration chamber and were then allowed to see the control room. The tour ended with a look at the incineration chamber and at the slag it produces. Ms. Kutsche concluded with introducing the future concept of the plant, “bonNova” and the students were able to learn about the plant’s day-to-day processes, as well as the future of the facility; this made the power and the importance of environmental regulation abundantly clear.

Written by environmental law student Carlo Foerst



Photo by environmental law student Marie Wegener

PRESENTATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

On November 9, 2021, Prof. Dr. Junker was invited to give a lecture on the relationship of human rights and environmental law as part of the lecture series "Human Rights as Alpha and Omega of Law? On the Disciplines' Engagement with the Current Case Law on Human Rights". Many interested students joined the lecture and Prof. Dr. Junker explained different facets of environmental law. After a short historical introduction to private and public environmental law, the focus shifted to concrete case studies from the field of climate litigation, in which environmental and human rights play a central role. Prof. Dr. Junker then spoke about the right to a healthy environment, which is already recognized as an explicit constitutional right by 84 states. Finally, he focused on the difference between the right to a healthy environment and nature's own rights. The interesting student questions afterwards led to a pleasant discussion about the relationship of the environment to mankind and the economy.

"HOW TO BECOME AN ENVIRONMENTAL LAWYER"

On 18 November 2021, the event "How to become an environmental lawyer" took place as part of the recurring event series from the Environmental Law Center with different practitioners talking with students about their experiences as environmental lawyers. These events give law students and graduates a great opportunity to discuss possible challenges and possibilities with persons working in the field of environmental law. In this semester's event, Ms. Mrinalini Shinde, the manager of the International Master of Environmental Sciences, presented her professional career and answered the students' questions.

Ms. Shinde gave interesting insights into her personal journey as a lawyer before the National Green Tribunal in India, as a lawyer at the Legal Affairs division of the UNFCCC secretariat in Bonn and as a legal academic at the University of Cologne. Currently, she is affiliated with the INGENIoS (Indo-German Network Interaction of Scientists) projects at the Environmental Law Center of the University of Cologne.

During the event, she provided some practical advice, such as developing a good body of written work. In her opinion, being a good writer who is able to write good legal texts, is one of the most important skills as an environmental lawyer. She recommended the students start writing their own personal texts about legal and political topics they are interested in, then publish these texts online in one of the many online publishing opportunities.

She also encouraged the students to broaden their minds by learning not only about the legal perspective on environmental matters but also about the scientific and political aspects of environmental protection. She therefore encouraged the students to take part in the Environmental Law Certificate, an additional program which includes classes from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. During the event, Ms. Shinde also shared helpful internet pages with job and internship offers. All in all, it was a very interesting practically oriented event that once again gave the students helpful insights into the real world of environmental law.

Written by environmental law student Lukas Granrath

TREE PLANTING EVENT

As part of the “Ein Wald für Köln” project initiated by the city of Cologne and the “Schutzgemeinschaft Deutscher Wald e.V.” the ELC donated 150 € to plant trees in an area of 25 m² to help create a third forest located in Cologne Lindweiler. But the donation was only one step: on November 20, 2021 the ELC's director Professor Junker, the ELC's general manager Saskia Münster and the ELC's student assistant Emma Shensher participated in the tree planting event and planted trees themselves! Together, with others who donated as well, over 8000 trees were planted. Every donor was honored with a plaque. Creating a forest is one of the many important ways to help our planet – and this specific forest will remind us that it is not only possible, but also fun and that it will serve as a habitat for a variety of plants and animals and also as a retreat for all generations, especially for those to come.

The initiators of this project have already planned a forth forest for Cologne – this time in Cologne Raderthal. We encourage you to join us in donating for this forest as well!

Find more information on this project here: https://www.sdw-nrw-koeln.de/wp-content/uploads/67_Vierter-Wald-für-Köln_Raderthal_10-202-0_v4.pdf



Photos by Prof. Dr. Kirk W. Junker and Emma Shensher

PRESENTATION ON "IS THE CARBON BORDER ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM ILLEGAL?"

On November 25, 2021, Prof. Dr. Junker was invited to take part in the "Online International Conference" of the University of Applied Sciences Bremen, which took place under the title "The EU Green Deal and its Implementation". The organizers of the events had invited scientists from different countries and disciplines to contribute their input on the European New Deal on the 25th and 26th. The conference was wide-ranging and covered economic, national, European and international legal aspects as well as different sectors such as energy (especially hydrogen), politics and administration, climate-related migration, tourism and transport. Prof. Dr. Junker gave a presentation on the question whether the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism proposed by the European Commission in July 2021 is illegal.

UPCOMING EXTERNAL ONLINE EVENTS

"POLLUTION"

The lecture series "Pollution" builds on a series of events held in recent years. It is a continuation of the lecture series "Peace and Sustainability" from 2021 and tries to provide a continuity of interdisciplinary sustainability education involving students from all disciplines at the University of Cologne. The lecture series will provide students and scholars with an overview of existing activities at the University of Cologne and serves as a forum for interdisciplinary dialogues on all aspects of sustainability, including potential cooperation and networks to be established among the participants. The presentations and debates are designed to provide insights into practical questions on how interdisciplinary science can(not) work, the challenges and the opportunities of interdisciplinary work, to what extent research activities are currently linked at the university, and how scientists can deal with contradicting results and opinions. This also includes questions about good scientific practice and ethics in research work. The series covers **every Monday evening 5:45 - 7:15 pm** during the summer semester. Each session contains presentation(s) of about 45 minutes and the same time for discussions on the presented topic and its relation to the overarching frame of the series. According to today's planning it will be held in presence in the building of **Theoretical Physics (326), Room 0.03 (max. 60 participants)**. You can **register for the course via KLIPS**. For more information please check out the website here: <https://interdisciplinary.uni-koeln.de/lecture-series-2022/>

"COMMUNICATING CLIMATE CHANGE - INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES"

Given the urgency of the climate crisis, why aren't people acting as they should? Why are facts alone not enough? What kind of stories do we need? What role do justice and generational conflict play? What contribution do different disciplines make to communicating climate change? The lecture series "Communicating Climate Change – Interdisciplinary Perspectives" is dedicated to these and other questions, bringing together contributions from leading academics from disciplines such as sociology, environmental law, literary, cultural and media studies. Lectures and discussions will take place online via Zoom and in German and English. The event is organized in cooperation with MESH - Multidisciplinary Environmental Studies in the Humanities, University of Cologne, and the Department of Anglophone Studies, University of Duisburg-Essen. You can find more information on <https://climate-change-literacy.de/>

"GREEN CITIES: CLIMATE-NEUTRAL MUNICIPALITIES WITH NEW ALLIANCES"

The online lecture series in German on June 30, September 22, November 24 2022 deals with the noticeable consequences of climate change and the growing pressure on society to move faster and more radically towards climate neutrality. The first cities in Germany have redefined their goals towards climate neutrality by 2035, including Wuppertal, Constance, Halle, Munich, Görlitz, but also many smaller cities and communities and use effective levers to both curb climate change and switch to renewable energy supply. For more information go to <https://calendar.boell.de/de/event/green-cities-2035-klimaneutrale-kommunen-und-neue-allianzen>

"WIE WERDE ICH KLIMAJURIST*IN"

The Climate Clinic e.V., the Climate Commission of the German Law Student Association (Klimakommission der Bundesfachschaft Jura), and Recht und Nachhaltigkeit e.V. are jointly planning a digital event series for the upcoming summer semester with the topic "Wie werde ich Klimajurist*in". In a total of three lectures from the fields of legal practice, national and international institutions, and civil society actors, the intention is to show prospective lawyers where legal professional fields open up doors for actively advancing environmental and, above all, climate protection and how to pave the way to such a problem-oriented professional practice. This series of events is not a career event in the classic sense; rather, it intends to inspire participants on how to successfully translate their interest in environmental legal matters into a future professional practice.

The series will start in May. You will be provided with updates on the respective social media accounts: https://www.instagram.com/run_lmu/?hl=de
<https://www.instagram.com/climate.clinic/?hl=de>

ELC ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO GUEST LECTURER PROF. DR. SHAMITA KUMAR

We are really proud to share with you that **Dr. Shamita Kumar**, Professor and Vice Principal at the Institute of Environment Education and Research, Bharati Vidyapeeth University, in Pune, India, who has been teaching and conducting joint field work on conservation issues for students of the International Master of Environmental Sciences (IMES), University of Cologne since 2010 **has been named by the Indian Government as one of the 75 most influential Indian women in science** to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Indian independence. The women were chosen for their achievements in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths and will be featured in a book being released on India's 75th Independence Day in August 2022.

EUNIWELL SEED FUNDING GRANTED

Together with two other EUniWell universities (University of Florence and University of Birmingham), the Environmental Law Center at the University of Cologne received a Seed Funding within the third Seed Funding Call of the EUniWell program on the topic **“Environment, Religion and Beliefs”**. The idea behind it is that religious and environmental issues are bound up with each other. This religion-environment nexus plays out in different ways: it concerns local possibilities for mobilizing action; it concerns religious groups who attempt to embody alternative social patterns (especially in relation to the environment); it concerns the way politicians and activists appeal to members of religious groups and vice versa; and crucially it concerns the way students articulate environmental issues and engage them in relation to their university affiliations. Different religious landscapes require different approaches to this nexus. The proposal therefore is to investigate and compare three contrasting contexts in which religion and environment is researched: England, Germany, and Italy, and more specifically the EUniWell partners Birmingham, Cologne, and Florence. The research will be conducted by investigating three questions:

1. How is the nexus of religion and environment institutionally conceived and researched in the three EUniWell locations?
2. How do students articulate and engage environmental concerns as members of their universities?
3. What concrete steps can be taken to amplify and promote EUniWell partners' research and foster collaboration between students in our universities?

CURRENT PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

CLIMATE CLINIC E.V. – CALL FOR MEMBERS!

Surely you heard of law clinics through which students have the opportunity to use their theoretical knowledge that they obtained in law school and put it to use in real-life legal matters. Guess what: now there is a law clinic for legal matters related to environmental and climate law!

The Climate Clinic e.V. is a young association of currently over 40 German law students, legal trainees, and doctoral candidates that are eager to help with their knowledge in legal issues related to environmental and climate (protection) law. The intention is to support initiatives (e.g. FridaysForFuture), groups and other individuals by providing a clear overview and comprehensive statements on current legislation, jurisprudence, administration and other aspects related to German, European and international environmental and climate (protection) law.

The work in the Climate Clinic e.V. consists of research, generally with the support of lawyers, professors and other professionals, and providing an answer to a specific legal issue/question. You will also have the opportunity to publish and most importantly: connect with like-minded people!

To join and support, one does not need to have solid knowledge in environmental and climate (protection) law already – all students of every semester are welcome to participate! The only condition is that you are interested in the relevant legal area(s), and have the motivation to work yourself through new topics.

The clinic does not only look for motivated people who are interested in working on legal issues but also looks forward to welcoming you in the organizational part of the association – managing a clinic is just as important as providing answers to legal matters!

Currently, there is need for members in the team “relations”. There you will be able to put your social media skills to good use and help the clinic to represent itself in the (digital) world!

Interested and want to know more? Feel free to take a first glance at the homepage (<https://www.climateclinic.de>) or the Instagram account [@climate.clinic!](#)

For questions or to express your interest in joining feel free to contact the head of the recruiting team [Emma Shensher](#) for further information, e.g. regarding how to join, welcome meetings, research groups and any other questions you may have!

The Climate Clinic e.V. is looking forward to hearing from you!

STOP ECOCIDE DEUTSCHLAND

WHO THEY ARE

Stop Ecocide International is a campaign with local branches and supporters in over 20 countries across the world. It was co-founded in 2017 by pioneering barrister Polly Higgins and current Executive Director Jojo Mehta. The goal of this growing global movement is to make ecocide an international crime.

Polly Higgins (1968-2019) spent her life spreading awareness for the word “ecocide” after she gave up a promising legal career. Through her talks and documentaries, she advised several governments, inspired thousands and devoted all her time to one client – the earth.

WHAT THEY DO

Positioned where legal developments, political traction and public narratives meet, Stop Ecocide collaborates with diplomats, corporate leaders, indigenous groups and a wide variety of stakeholders to activate global support for this movement. At the core of it lies the definition of ‘Ecocide’: unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts (Independent Expert Panel for the Legal Definition of Ecocide, June 2021).

The ultimate goal is to change the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to add Ecocide as a fifth crime to its current list of four. The ICC is the only global legal institution that has direct influence on the criminal law systems of its 123 member states. Those who ratify the new crime have to implement it into their national legal systems. Only global regulations can provide the conditions for a sustainable and fair economy. This way, the most valuable ecosystems of the world could be recovered and protected.

Stop Ecocide Deutschland is currently looking for further support, especially from interested and committed students, doctoral students and young academics. In case you are interested in working with them please do not hesitate to contact them.

More information on Stop Ecocide Deutschland: <https://www.stopecocide.de/> and Stop Ecocide International: <https://www.stopecocide.earth/>

OPPORTUNITIES SECTION

AFRI-CLIMETHICS 2022 CALL FOR PAPERS

The Environmental Law Center is accepting abstracts for papers to be presented in 2022 at a series of lectures on the topic of Climate Ethics in Africa.

The series of lectures, titled “Climate Ethics: Structuring a Standard for African Trade and Development,” will build on the success of the 2021 conference “Environmental Justice in Africa: Cultural and Economic Impacts on the Legal Systems.” (Dennis Agelebe, ed., Pretoria University Press, Forthcoming 2022), which was hosted by the ELC, with generous support from the University of Cologne’s Global South Studies Center (GSSC). This lecture series invites scholars and experts in climate-change law, environmental science, international development, trade, and infrastructure planning, focusing on Africa. The best papers from the lectures will

again be published as a book. The presentations will be virtual and, if possible, include physical presence at the ELC in the summer and winter semesters of 2022.

Abstracts of 250 words should be sent to Dr. Dennis Agelebe, Senior Research Fellow at the ELC and an Associate Member of the GSSC, at environmental-law-center@uni-koeln.de before midnight Central European Time, May 15, 2022. First lectures will take place on June 24, with subsequent dates to be announced.

THE NEW ENVIRONMENTAL LAW FORUM: WWW.UMWELTIMRECHT.BLOG

Despite its ever-increasing scientific and societal significance, the field of environmental law has long been underrepresented within the landscape of legal blogs. This gap has now been closed: www.umweltimrecht.blog is the new platform for information and professional exchange concerning all topics related to this field of law. Whether it be academic debates, legislative proposals or court rulings, the overall intention is to provide a forum for reflecting on and discussing environmental law related issues and topics. The online format benefits from a much faster form of publication compared to (printed) journals, thus enabling quick responses to current developments. At the same time, it may lower the inhibition threshold especially for younger scholars. In geographical terms, there is no restriction to the German legal area: contributions may also take the perspective of other countries or have their focus on European Union Law as well as (Public) International Law. Accordingly, submissions in English are also welcome. Besides content articles, the blog also aims at informing about other activities relevant to young researchers in the field of environmental law, such as networking events (conferences, lectures etc.).

www.umweltimrecht.blog was created by a group of 14 doctoral students who are connected through their participation in the joint project "Competence Network Future Challenges of Environmental Law" (KomUR) funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). However, the blog itself is an independent project which is not officially associated with any organization.

Since the blog is still in its early stages, the editorial team is always happy to attract new readers and to receive new articles. Both young and experienced scholars, practitioners and other interested parties are highly encouraged to submit their contributions, ideas and comments on environmental law issues and problems. Also, any helpful feedback, criticism and remarks are very much appreciated.

In short: We are looking forward to seeing and reading you on www.umweltimrecht.blog!

Written by the team of [umweltimrecht.blog](http://www.umweltimrecht.blog)

#EINSTÜCKWILDNIS X SUGI IN KÖLN | URBANE WILDNISFLÄCHE IN 2022

The former graduate of the International Master of Environmental Sciences (IMES) Anne Poggenpohl has started a pilot project called Abenteuer Schwarzwald. Their goal is to bring more 'wilderness' into the urban space and thus make it more tangible for people living in the city. Furthermore they want to get young people excited about wilderness. For their project they are currently looking for a 400 – 500sqm area in a publicly accessible urban space, preferably Cologne, which they can transform into a Myawaki Forest including fruit and sweet shrubs. A collaboration with Sugi <http://sugiproject.com/> already exists, as well as funding of 10,000 €. However, time is of the essence as they need to implement the project this year. The area does not have to belong to them, it is only important that there is an agreement on permanent protection with the owner. In other words, schools or private areas would also be conceivable.

You can find more information on www.sugiproject.com and www.schwarzwald-entdecker.de
If you have further questions please send an e-mail to anne@abenteuerschwarzwald.com

IMES RESEARCH PROJECTS

International Master of Environmental Sciences Students' Master Thesis Research Projects

Urbanization and the Lagoon Ecosystem in Colombia
Moritz Röhrs, LL.B. (Köln/Paris I)

Environmental protection and rapid urbanization are two major challenges in today's world on a global, regional and local level. Valuable ecosystems are constantly being degraded [1] and more than 48 % of the world population is already living in cities [2], sometimes at the expense of neighboring natural parks [3] and other protected areas [4]. In consequence, there is a clear need to reconcile urban development and biodiversity conservation strategies.

Moreover, Güneralp & Seto [5] predict that the largest increase of urban land will take place in biodiversity hotspots in South America until 2030. At the same time, many South American countries lack financial resources and have weak institutions to effectively govern and manage protected areas and the surrounding lands. In particular coastal ecosystems are in danger of major decreases of biodiversity [6].

Reconciling urban growth and protecting ecosystems is a difficult task as illustrated by the case of the mangrove lagoon Ciénaga de la Virgen, in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. This lagoon ecosystem is located close to the city center of the Caribbean metropolis.

The city expands and people settle in the area of the lagoon, and some even build their houses in the body of water itself. An array of policy and legal documents as well as different projects are attempting to organize land use in the lagoon. This raises multiple questions of environmental protection, livelihoods and human-nature conflicts.

This project focuses on land governance and related aspects and the main (preliminary) research questions are: How do land-use change and governance affect the lagoon's ecosystem? How do changes in land and environmental governance affect existing (informal) dwellers in and around the lagoon?

For questions and updates on the development of this research, please feel free to contact Moritz Röhrs: moritz.roehrs@outlook.de

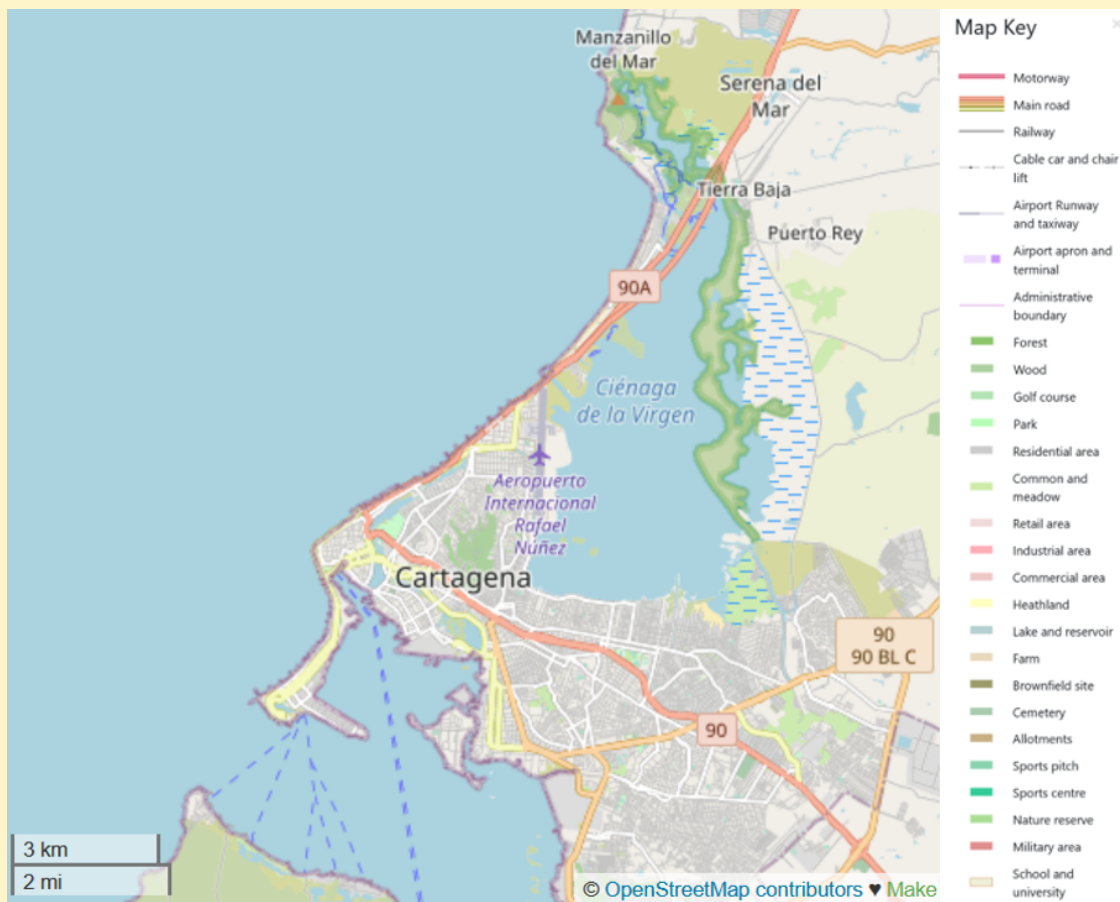


Fig.1: Map showing the location of the Ciénaga de la Virgen at the Caribbean coast (OpenStreetMap, 2022).

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JOURNAL, MOVIE AND PODCAST RECOMMENDATIONS

- New Journal on Climate Law: <https://www.ikem.de/en/projekt/klima-und-recht/>
 - StopEcocide International movies, interviews and more: <https://www.stopecocide.earth/films>
 - StopEcocide International podcasts and interviews: <https://www.stopecocide.earth/podcasts>
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ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ALL OVER THE WORLD

NIGERIA'S CLIMATE CHANGE ACT: GOOD NEWS FROM WEST AFRICA

Over the past 26 years, nations of the world have been converging once a year to discuss ways of combating the global climate change crises specifically. As they progressed in the yearly meetings known as the Conference of Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, they realized that other approaches to addressing the crises should also be explored and structured for implementation by individual member state parties to agreements under the UNFCCC. The options of mitigation and adaptation were introduced on the recommendation of the IPCC as measures to cushion the effect of climate change on the population and the people. However, because it is more critical to address the reduction of activities responsible for increasing global warming, particularly greenhouse gas emissions, there have been discussions on factoring common but different responsibilities into the approach of defining the commitments of each State party to achieving the goal of reducing the earth's temperature well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. From Kyoto to Copenhagen and then to Paris, world leaders and stakeholders struggled to find common grounds to resolve saving the earth.

In 2015, the good news of the agreement reached in Paris was like a soothing balm on a festering wound for everyone living under the devastating effects of climate change. Under the Paris Agreement of the COP21, countries made promises which they submitted to the Secretariat of

the UNFCCC as their Nationally Determined Contributions to achieving the global target. These commitments include policies and laws that will promote the movement from dependence on fossil fuel to renewable energy sources, conserving and replenishing the forests, investing national funds in climate financing instruments and other measures within the capacity of each member state.

Like its counterparts across the globe, Nigeria is fraught with many of the crippling effects of climate change and the realities it presents. It has introduced several policies to mitigate the impact of climate change and reduce GHG emissions. Such policies are outlined in the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) launched in 2017 and the Economic Sustainability Plan introduced in 2020. Both plans included financing energy transition from fossil fuel reliant energy economy to an increased quota in renewable energy generation. Also, the government started implementing the cleaner energy strategy by encouraging the use of compressed and liquified natural gas in place of wood, coal, diesel and other fossil fuels.

But recently, a climate change law known as the Climate Change Act was passed by the National Assembly and assented to by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the 18th of November 2021. The Climate Change Act has been adjudged a breakthrough for the country after about five years of its first reading in the National Assembly.

It sets out a comprehensive regulatory and legal framework for achieving Nigeria's long-term climate goals. This includes a net-zero carbon emission target, adequate climate financing, environmental and economic accountability, and championing/prioritizing climate action. The Act contains the following important highlights:

a) Scope and Purpose: Unlike other environmental regulations that provide some indirect concessions to government agencies, this law is most commendable for its broad application to governmental institutions and agencies as well as private and public entities and for mandating compliance with all government regulations concerning climate change.

Section 1(a) –(i) of the Act sets an ambitious but realistic target of the years 2050-2070 as a time frame to achieve net-zero carbon emissions. Accordingly, the Act sets forth the priority of climate change adaptation finance, national climate resilience, and other policies aimed at combating climate change.

b) Establishment of the National Climate Council and Secretariat: The Act establishes the National Climate Council. The Council will see to implement Nigeria's climate change action plan, execute commitments, and introduce policy directions. The President shall head the Council as its Chairman, the Vice President as its Vice Chairman and members drawn from government and stakeholders. The Act empowers the Council to perform a number of functions, including the mobilization of finance for climate change adaptation, overseeing the country's carbon tax regime, implementation of the country's climate change plan, etcetera. In furtherance of the objectives of the Council, the Act also establishes a Secretariat, to be headed by a Director-General, which shall aid the Council in the performance of its duties and objectives.

c) Carbon Budget: Under the Act, the Federal Ministry of Environment is responsible for preparing the Country's Carbon budget. The budget will serve a five-year circle with the overall aim of ensuring that Nigeria achieves its net-zero carbon emission target between 2050-2070. Each budget circle is to be submitted to the Federal Executive Council for approval before implementation.

d) Climate Fund: Also, the Act establishes a Climate Change Fund to be administered by the Council. The Fund is to be funded by budgetary allocations by the National Assembly, fines obtained from entities found to have breached the Act's provisions, and other funding sources to be prescribed by the Council from time to time. Amongst several objectives, the overall intent of the fund is to support national programs on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

e) Nation Climate Change Action Plan. Under the Act, the Secretariat must set up a five-year action plan. Among other things, the plan will ensure that Nigeria's emissions are in line with its carbon budget; provide guidelines for the achievement of the nation's climate goals, and ensure climate proofing of the nation's infrastructures, that is, ensuring that infrastructure such as buildings remain functional even as the environment changes.

Commendation or upbraid?

As a measure to ensure compliance with the Act's provisions on carbon emission reduction, the Act commendably mandates varying levels of compliance from Nigerian entities, including government agencies and private businesses. According to the Act, government bodies must adhere to carbon budgets without any exception or immunity from sanctions or fines. In addition to submitting an annual report to the Secretariat of Council, private entities are required to describe their efforts to adhere to carbon budgets and climate adaptation plans. The above and other advantages that this Act will attract for the overall drive towards achieving a healthy environment and securing the future of generations are worthy of commendation. But the Act is not yet a regulatory mechanism that can effectively enforce environmental laws in sensitive sectors like the petroleum sector. Also, the Council may not be so effective with the President as Chairman as its independence may not be ensured. Besides, the President is already overseeing the nation's affairs in general and may not be so disposed to having a close watch on the matters of the Council. I hope an amendment will be made to make the Act a regulatory instrument that strictly enforces climate change regulations.

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