



Workshop (Thursday, 15th June 2023)

Legal Clinics and International Law: A Growing Interaction

Roma Tre University, Department of Law.

Event supported by the European Society of International Law

Hybrid event: in-presence (Sala del Consiglio, Via Ostiense 161, Rome) and on-line via Teams

Concept Note

Higher legal education in Europe is facing a major innovation process through the increasing recourse to participatory and practice-oriented teaching activities aimed at maximizing students' learning skills and practical application of the law, partly moving away from traditional theoretical legal education. While multiple activities, such as moot courts, could be included under a learning by doing framework, legal clinics can provide a more engaging and distinctive experience by enabling students to apply legal theory to real-world problems through pro bono cooperation with partner organizations aimed at realizing research and practical outcomes with societal and tangible impact. In recent decades, European universities have finally joined the global clinical movement originally started in the USA with a focus on social justice aims, progressively coupled with the interest to empower students with lawyering skills.

In recent times this trend has increasingly crossed its path with international law through a proliferation of public international law (PIL) clinics in several European universities covering multiple areas, sometime presenting a cross-cutting character with an engagement with domestic legal frameworks or interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. PIL legal clinics have thus been involved in pro bono legal activities ranging from face-to-face assistance to people in need of legal support, implementation of projects, elaboration of desk-studies and researches, strategic litigations, advocacy campaigns and instruments for the wide public and elaboration of legal strategies for a variety of external partners. In such contexts PIL legal clinics are cooperating with traditional counterparts, as individuals and non-governmental organizations, but also extending their partnerships with distinctive actors of the international legal order, as International Organizations or State departments. Similarly, the distinctive role of legal clinics could be recorded through their involvement with international law institutions and its machinery, as for *amicus curiae* or support to complaints in front of international courts and tribunals or monitoring bodies, or assistance directly provided by legal clinics to such international organs and its members.

However, this phenomenon is far from being unproblematic and international law clinics still have to gain a steady foothold in European universities. Multiple challenges can be recorded in their

activities. On the one hand, these difficulties might have a more bureaucratic and structural character, including complex interaction with the more traditional path of legal education requested by national curricula, difficulties to act in Departments characterized by high numbers of students enrolled in law programs, their time-consuming character, shortcomings in financial and staff support, lack of university strategies in this area, and the absence of positions for professorships in clinical activities or a proper recognition for such academic activities. On the other hand, these activities might raise more substantial issues, for instance concerning the relationship with external partners, ethical/political problems, challenges to find their way in contemporary instruments and procedures offered by international law and its institutions, interaction with new perspectives in the teaching of international law, lack of proper networking and cooperation platforms for legal clinics specialized in international law. Such elements could result in an atomization of PIL legal clinics and an undermined visibility both within relevant Departments and the same international law discipline.

Against this background, **the Law Department of Roma Tre University, with the support of the European Society of International Law**, has decided to organise a workshop involving representatives from PIL legal clinics, partner organisations, and other international law academics interested in such activities for an engaging discussion on the growing interaction between international law and legal clinics in the European context. To facilitate a fruitful discussion, **Directors of PIL legal clinics acting in Europe are kindly invited [to fill an on-line questionnaire](#)** (a first survey involving more than 40 PIL legal clinics is [available here](#)). This survey will permit to map PIL legal clinics in Europe and assess challenges and opportunities in their activities. Results will be circulated in advance to the meeting among participants to increase the visibility of PIL legal clinics and share experiences.

Based on this survey and broader assessments, the workshop will be articulated around some main axes, paving the way for discussions. First, an overview of international legal clinics will focus on areas of expertise, structural aspects, characteristics of projects and an assessment of their role in selected branches of international law, both regarding mainstream areas and undermined ones. Second, the workshop will focus on interactions with external partners and international law institutions also to reflect on the role, challenges and opportunities of legal clinics in the international law machinery. Finally, a roundtable will focus on ways to consolidate PIL legal clinics, permitting this workshop to potentially act as pushing effect both for Directors and staff of existing legal clinics and for colleagues interested to explore this opportunity.

The workshop will be held on **Thursday 15th June 2023 in hybrid form**, allowing both in-presence and on-line participation. Directors and staff (eg. supervisors) of PIL legal clinics are highly welcomed to attend in-presence in Rome.

To register for this workshop (in-presence or on-line) please fill the form at this [link](#).

Scientific organisation

Giulio Bartolini, Full Professor of International Law,
Director of the Roma Tre IHL Legal Clinic

This event is related to the activities of the Erasmus+ Grant '[International Humanitarian Law: Research, Education, Dissemination \(IHL RED\)](#)' managed by the IHL Legal Clinics in Bochum, Leiden and Roma Tre

Programme

Wednesday 14th June: Arrival of participants and social dinner

Thursday 15th June

Roma Tre University (Via Ostiense 161, Rome) and on-line via Teams

9.00 Introductory remarks

Welcome remarks (ESIL Representative)

Presentation of the workshop (Giulio Bartolini, International Humanitarian Law Legal Clinic, Roma Tre University)

Session I:

Mapping international law legal clinics in Europe

PIL Legal Clinics in Action (Areas of PIL, activities and projects) (Rapporteur: Sofia Larriera Santurio, Fair Trails Clinic, University of Amsterdam)

PIL Legal Clinics engaging with domestic/interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary aspects (Lutz Oette, International Human Rights Legal Clinic, SOAS)

Embedding PIL legal clinics in legal education and Departments (David Rossati, Climate Change & Sustainability Law Legal Clinic, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

The role of clinic students and teaching assistants (Laura Di Gianfrancesco, International Human Rights Law Legal Clinic, Roma Tre University)

Session II:

International law legal clinics and external actors

Partnership with external actors (Anastasios Gourgourinis, Trade Law Clinic, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

International legal clinics and the international law machinery: embedding legal clinics in the activities of international bodies/institutions (Julia Grignon, Clinique de droit international d'Assas, Université Paris II Panthéon-Assas)

Q&A Session

11.15-11.30 Coffee-break

Session III: A survey of legal clinics in selected branches of international law

Chair: Alice Riccardi (International Human Rights Law Legal Clinic, Roma Tre University)

Mainstream legal clinics: A Comparative Assessment

Human Rights Law Legal Clinics (Eva Brems, Human Rights and Migration Law Clinic, Ghent University)

International Refugee/Migration Law Legal Clinics (Bérangère Taxil, The Lighthouse-Law Legal Clinic, Université Angers)

Emerging/Neglected areas for international law legal clinics

International Economic/Trade Law (Colette Van Der Ven, TradeLaw International Economic Law Clinic, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva)

International Institutional Law (Daniel Peat, International Administrative Law Clinic, Leiden University, Member ESIL Board)

Q&A Session

12.45-13.45 Light lunch

Closing roundtable:

Fostering the international law clinic movement in Europe

Chair: Giulio Bartolini (IHL Legal Clinic, Roma Tre University)

Discussants:

Networking opportunities for PIL legal clinics (Alasdair Tyrrell, EU Public Interest Clinic, New York University in Paris)

A perspective from the Global South: The network of human rights clinics in Latin America (Felipe Gonzáles Morales, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, Legal Clinic on International Human Rights Law, University Carlos III, Madrid)

Supporting the creation of legal clinics (Robert Heinsch, International Humanitarian Law Legal Clinic, Leiden University)

Adriana Di Stefano (Member of the ESIL Board, Head of the Clinical Programme, Catania University) ESIL and legal clinics

Q&A Session

14.45 Closure of the workshop

Form of the questionnaire [to be filled on-line here](#) by 18th May

The legal clinic and its activities		
1	Title of the Legal Clinic and University information (name of University and relevant Department)	
2	Focal point/s (eg. Clinic's Director. Please specify your academic role/qualification):	
3	Website of the Legal Clinic and/or other contact info (eg. email address of the clinic):	
4	Academic background information (eg. please specify: year of establishment; whether the Clinic is recognized as a compulsory/optional course; academic credits awarded to participants; working languages; institutional challenges and opportunities)	
5	International law area of expertise	
6	Interaction with domestic law (please specify whether, apart from PIL aspects, your legal clinic also engages with 'purely' domestic law issues in relation to separate projects - eg. domestic environmental law vs. IEL aspects – and/or addresses domestic aspects in relation to your projects focused on PIL aspects)	
7	Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches (Please specify whether in managing some projects you have also engaged in interdisciplinary legal approaches and/or multidisciplinary ones)	
8	Typologies of projects (eg. drafting of desk studies/reports; strategic litigation; face-to-face legal assistance; non-technical material for advocacy campaigns, etc.)	
9	Main projects carried out (please briefly describe the main projects carried out by your legal clinic in the past and your ongoing projects. If possible, please report any success-stories, as well as the main challenges and opportunities in project management)	
Structural characteristics		
10	Students' background and empowerment activities involving students (eg. selection process; potential academic requirements for participation; percentage of foreign students; theoretical training provided to participating students prior to or during the legal clinic; activities aimed at fostering soft-skills for students, such as public speech; challenges and opportunities)	

11	Support staff involved (eg. please specify the role of assistants and their background, e.g. former clinic students, PhD candidates; illustrate whether financial support is offered to staff and highlight challenges and opportunities)	
12	Relationship with the hosting University/Department (eg. financial support, venues, admin support, challenges and opportunities)	
	External partnerships	
13	Relationship with external partners (characteristics of external partners/commitments of projects; ways to get in contact with them; facilitations, e.g. financial support, post-clinic internships, supervision; challenges and opportunities)	
14	Ethical/Political aspects (eg. did you face any ethical issue during project management? Were you involved in political controversies in relation to potential partnerships?)	
15	Relationship with other legal clinics (please specify whether your clinic participates to formal/informal networks and/or domestic/international cooperations, and whether you have engaged in visiting/internship programs for other legal clinics' directors and staff)	
	Miscellaneous issues	
16	Do you have any further relevant information/comment/suggestion on legal clinics' management?	
17	Do you have any further suggestion or proposal for the 15 th June workshop and for any follow-up to this initiative?	