Conference theme

International affairs have become less predictable, global partnerships less reliable. Against this backdrop, non-binding international arrangements and soft law have become increasingly popular tools to forge multilateral agreement on contested issues. Prominent recent frameworks include the Global Compact for Migration, the Paris Climate Accord, and the “Iran Deal” political arrangement, which has turned into a binding agreement over time. But can such legally and normatively consequential agreements spark sufficient confidence among their addressees, stabilize cooperation, and prevent conflict? How can non-binding agreements nonetheless commit their addressees?

The 2019 PRIF Annual Conference will debate and analyze non-binding commitments in international politics in general and their coercive character in particular. Possible broad research questions include the following, covering theoretical contributions as well as case studies.

- Beyond legally binding provisions, which other coercive means for enforcement exist?
- What are the downstream effects of non-binding international agreements, especially with respect to divergent expectations on their subsequent compulsory nature?
- What makes resistance to coercion more or less likely?
- What is the ideal balance between coercive enforcement on the one hand and treaty flexibility on the other? – Both (a) to reach an agreement in the first place and (b) to achieve compliance and avoid destructive contestation once it is signed?

Organisation: Stefan Kroll and Anton Peez
(for Research Department International Institutions)

Location: Conference Room, 4th floor, PRIF, Frankfurt/Main

To register as a participant of the Annual Conference, please send an e-mail to annualconference@hsfk.de.
Thursday, 4 July 2019

13:30–14:30 Arrival and light lunch (at PRIF)

14:30–15:00 Welcome and introduction
Nicole Deitelhoff (PRIF/Goethe University Frankfurt)
Stefan Kroll and Anton Peez (PRIF)

15:00–16:30 The Iran Deal (JCPOA): Negotiation and Reliability in International Security
• Christopher Daase (PRIF/Goethe University Frankfurt)
• Katayoun Hosseinnejad (Allameh Tabataba’i University) provided a written statement.
• Holger Janusch (Andrássy University Budapest)
• Chair: Stefan Kroll (PRIF)

Coffee break, bus to Goethe University Frankfurt

18:30–20:30 Agreed to... Nothing? Non-Binding Commitments in Managing Peace and Conflict
• Nicole Deitelhoff (PRIF/Goethe University Frankfurt)
• Janina Dill (University of Oxford)
• Andreas Paulus (Federal Constitutional Court)
• Chair: Thilo Marauhn (Justus Liebig University Giessen/PRIF)

This panel will take place at Goethe University Frankfurt, Normative Orders Building, Max-Horkheimer-Straße 2, 60323 Frankfurt.

Friday, 5 July 2019

09:30–11:00 Negotiation and Compromise in Human Rights and Migration Treaties: the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration
• Caroline Fehl (PRIF)
• Tom Pegram (University College London)
• Dana Schmalz (University of Bremen)
• Chair: Jonas Wolff (PRIF)

11:00–11:15 Coffee break

11:15–12:45 Consensus and Coercion in Environmental Affairs: the Paris Climate Agreement and Beyond
• Robert Falkner (London School of Economics and Political Science)
• Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen (Wageningen University)
• Detlef Sprinz (PIK – Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research/University of Potsdam)
• Chair: Antonia Witt (PRIF)

12:45–13:30 Lunch

13:30–15:00 Neither Shared nor Understood? Commitment and Enforcement Challenges for Cyber Security Norms
• Robert Gorwa (University of Oxford)
• Xymena Kurowska (Central European University/Aberystwyth University)
• Chair: Anton Peez (PRIF)

15:00–15:15 Closing remarks
Stefan Kroll and Anton Peez (PRIF)