

Freedom of the seas and freedom of the individual: a critical appraisal

21 May 2026, 9:30-17:00

SOAS University of London, Brunei Gallery, Room BG01

Programme

9:30 – 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 10:15	Welcome and Introductions Irimi Papanicolopulu (SOAS University of London) and Gina Heathcote (University of Newcastle)
10:15 – 12:15	Session I <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ ‘The Terrestrial Foundations of the Freedom of the Seas: A Critical Legal History’ Presenter: Eduardo Cavalcanti de Mello Filho (UCL)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discussant: Matilde Rocca▪ ‘Commodifying the Oceans: Rethinking the Freedom of the Sea through Marxist and TWAIL Perspectives’ Presenter: Priya Meenakshi (Gujarat Maritime University)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discussant: Aravind Ganesh▪ ‘An Intellectual History of Freedom of the Seas and the Individual in the Nineteenth Century’ Presenter: Matilde Rocca (SOAS University of London)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discussant: Paulo Henrique Reis de Oliveira
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch Break

13:30 – 15:00	<p>Session II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘Waves of Freedom: Kant and the Sea’ Presenter: Aravind Ganesh (University of Sussex) - Discussant: Eduardo Cavalcanti de Mello Filho ▪ ‘Freedom of the seas and the criminalisation of seafarers: jurisdictional fragmentation and the absence of a uniform legal framework for maritime labour in criminal cases’ Presenter: Paulo Henrique Reis de Oliveira (University of São Paulo) - Discussant: Priya Meenakshi
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break
15:30 – 16:30	<p>Keynote Speech</p> <p>Loveday Hodson (University of Leicester)</p>
16:30 – 17:00	<p>Concluding Remarks</p> <p>Irini Papanicolopulu (SOAS University of London) and Gina Heathcote (University of Newcastle)</p>

The Workshop will bring together international lawyers to explore and debate the relationship between freedom of the seas, as a concept and as a legal principle, and freedom of persons in a critical perspective.

The workshop is jointly organised by Professor Irini Papanicolopulu (SOAS), Professor Gina Heathcote (Newcastle University), and Dr Matilde Rocca (SOAS). It is funded by the British Academy under Professor Irini Papanicolopulu's project GP/400339 “Freedom of the Seas and Human Rights Protection”.