

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Monday 22 September 2015

Upcoming public lecture, “Rescue of Asylum Seekers at Sea: A European Perspective”

More than one million refugees are expected to knock at Europe's door this year. Many of them take the dangerous route across the Mediterranean Sea, where more than 3000 people have died in 2015.

For a long time, Europe took the position that as most of the refugees came for economic and not for political reasons, they must be deterred. The EU mission FRONTEX was originally conceived to defend Europe's borders. Those who tried to rescue shipwrecked people were prosecuted for human trafficking. The captains of merchant ships sailing in these areas complained that they ended up in huge rescue operations for which they were not prepared. A catastrophe in April 2015 in which more than 800 people died led to an increase of internal and international pressure on Europe to get engaged in the rescue of refugees in the Mediterranean Sea. It is astonishing that the question of international law played only a minor role in the discussion.

This upcoming public lecture by visiting Research Fellow Dr Matthias Hartwig will explain the factual background of immigration to Europe, describe the European approach in addressing this problem, and analyse the interplay between refugee law and law of the sea and the application of these two legal orders to the current situation. European practice provides an interesting point of comparison given the ongoing controversy in Australia concerning these issues.

About the speaker: Dr Matthias Hartwig is a Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg, Germany, and will be a visiting Research Fellow at the University of Tasmania's Faculty of Law, mid-September to the end of October 2015.

Event details

Who: Public Lecture by visiting Research Fellow Dr Matthias Hartwig. All are welcome to attend this free public event.

What: "Rescue of Asylum Seekers at Sea: A European Perspective."

When: Tuesday 22 September 2015, 6-7pm.

Where: Stanley Burbury Theatre, University Centre, Sandy Bay campus.

RSVP/contact: UTAS.Events@utas.edu.au; (03) 6226 2521.

Please note Dr Hartwig is available between 10am and midday for interviews.

Information released by:

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