Virtual workshop on Tuesday, 1 December 2026: Jacco Bomhoff on “IS THIS CONFLICT REALLY NECESSARY? Private International Law and Mid-Century Legalism”



On Tuesday, December 1, 2026, the Hamburg Max Planck Institute will host its monthly virtual workshop Current Research in Private International Law at 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (CEST).

Jacco Bomhoff (London School of Economics and Political Science) will speak, **in English**, about the topic

“IS THIS CONFLICT REALLY NECESSARY? Private International Law and Mid-Century Legalism”

About the Speaker:

Jacco Bomhoff is Professor of Law at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). His main interest is in the comparative and historical, cultural, study of legal thought, in relation to both private international law (conflict of laws) and constitutional law. His current monograph project is on mid-century legalism in Western Europe and North America.

About the Topic:

The early post-war decades were a period of intensive institution-building and world-making, in North America and Western Europe (the focus of this project), as well as in many newer nation states. Private international law and associated forms of international legal ordering, such as projects for transnational law or 'world legal order' were central to these efforts. This project aims to situate private international legal thought within its intellectual contexts during the period of the 'long 1950s' (roughly: the end of World War II, up to the mid 1960s). The project has two main goals. First, to better grasp the character of private international law – its disciplinary aesthetics and world-view, notably – by approaching it as a key instantiation of a distinctively 'mid-century' brand of legalism. Second, to develop a more refined sense of mid-century legalism itself, as an intellectual formation and cultural phenomenon, by looking in detail at scholarly work and institutional advocacy in relation to private international legal ordering specifically. Key themes in this account are (a) a remarkable degree of *faith in law*, and in technical devices more generally; (b) an attachment to ideas of *order*, notably as a necessary and precarious antidote to 'chaos'; and (c) a commitment to various forms of *calibration, comparison, and commensuration*. Authors central to this project include Hessel Yntema, Henri Batiffol, Willis Reese, Roger Traynor, Wilhelm Wengler, and Petros Vallindas.

About the Virtual Workshop Series:

The virtual workshop series "Current Research in Private International Law" is organised by Ralf Michaels and Antonia Sittig. The series features leading national and international scholars who present and discuss their work on current developments and research topics in private international law. The workshops are geared to scholars who are researching in the field of private international law,

but attendance is open to all individuals having an academic interest (doctoral candidates and students are expressly invited).

The presentation will be followed by open discussion. All are welcome. More information and sign-up here.

If you want to be invited to these events in the future, please write to veranstaltungen@mpipriv.de.