



Center for
Oceans Law and Policy



News Release

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First Ever International Workshop on HVDC Power Cables in the Context of International Submarine Cables and Pipelines and the ABNJ

On 7-8 April 2016, in Ankara, Turkey, an important academic milestone was reached when High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cables in the Area Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) or high seas proper were studied by a blue ribbon team of international legal scholars, diplomats, environmental scientists, and industry experts. This study was a part of the DEHUKAM International Workshop 2016 “Legal Status of Submarine Cables, Pipelines and ABNJ”, the inaugural workshop by the Research Center of the Sea and Maritime Law of Ankara University (DEHUKAM). The workshop was held jointly by the Center for Oceans Law and Policy (COLP) of the University of Virginia, the Center for International Law (CIL), National University of Singapore, the University of Bergen in Norway, and the International



ICPC). State participation included representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Iceland. Distinguished participants from the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea included the President Judge Vladimir Viadimirovich Golitsyn (Russian Federation), Vice-President Judge Boulalem Bouguetaia (Algeria), and Judge Markiyan Kulyk (Ukraine).

The workshop drew over 100 international participants who heard and exchanged detailed information with legal, scientific, and industry experts who examined the applicable legal provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the operational realities of laying and repairing international cables in ABNJ, and the well-established peer reviewed science about these activities and the marine environment in ABNJ. While submarine fiber optic cables have been studied before in international workshops, this was the first time that HVDC power cables received such careful scrutiny and study in an international multidisciplinary forum. Particular emphasis was placed on a modern review of the environmental impacts of submarine cables in the ABNJ marine environment. The workshop marked the debut of a new educational video “Ocean Currents” on submarine power cables that is now available to the public through the ICPC.

Participants remarked that the timing of the long-planned workshop could not have been better, given the discussions at the Preparatory Commission convened this year by the United Nations to examine activities in the BBNJ, and the possible need to allow for a new implementing agreement that may deal with Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA).

The workshop was superbly organized by DEHUKAM. A cordial welcome by key ministers of the Turkish Government, such as Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications and Ministry of Defense

and enthusiastic support by law students from the Ankara Law School made the event memorable not only for the quality of the academic presentations, but for the collegial environment that fostered frank debate about ABNJ, international environmental and legal issues.

According to the Director of DEHUKAM, Dr. Hakan Karan, the results, presentations, and papers of this strategic workshop will be published by DEHUKAM later this year. ICPC participants included Lars Lervik of Nexans, Pete Fisk of Pelagian, Dr. Lionel Carter, international environmental advisor, and Doug Burnett, international legal advisor.

About DEHUKAM: The Research Center of the Sea and Maritime Law ([DEHUKAM](#)) supports academic and scientific research, education, and discussion on the sea and maritime law issues. As part of the Ankara University, it is the key research institution in Turkey founded in 2015 following the recommendation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Some of its core aims are to unify all Turkish academics under one roof, to encourage academic and interdisciplinary interaction at all levels, address international, regional and local issues, assist State's law and policy making activities and organize international workshops within this field. Presently, the advisory committee of DEHUKAM is comprised of more than 100 Turkish academics, researchers and state personal working in the field of sea and maritime law affairs. DEHUKAM further aims to construct a purpose built library and to make its contents digitally available for all as well as desiring to commit to a joint partnership with other reputable institutions such as the Rhodes Academy.

About COLP: The [Center for Oceans Law and Policy](#) (COLP) was founded as a part of the University of Virginia School of Law in 1976. COLP is a non-profit institution that supports research, education and discussion on legal and policy issues related to the global oceans. The Center's goals are primarily achieved through an Annual Conference, law school teaching, and coordination of a three week summer session of the Rhodes Academy of Oceans Law and Policy. COLP has one of the world's largest distinct collection of ocean law and policy volumes, manuscripts and archival materials housed in the law library. From time to time, COLP occasionally sponsors workshops, seminars and other events related to the law of the sea.

About ICPC: The [International Cable Protection Committee](#) was formed in 1958 and its primary goal is to promote the safeguarding of international submarine cables against man-made and natural hazards. The organisation provides a forum for the exchange of technical, legal and environmental information about submarine cables and, with 154 members from over 60 nations, including cable operators, owners, manufacturers, industry service providers, as well as governments, it is the World's premier submarine cable organisation. For further information about ICPC, visit: www.iscpc.org or send an e-mail to: secretary@iscpc.org.

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