



Distinguished Lecture Series: CCCL Distinguished Lecture: The End of the Cold War, German unification and the constitutional transformation of Europe (12 May 2023)

18 May 2023

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In light of a forthcoming book on Histories of International Law in China: All Under Heaven? (edited by Ignacio de la Rasilla, Jiangyu Wang, and Congyan Cai, Oxford University Press 2025), the Centre for Chinese and Comparative Law (CCCL), in partnership with Wuhan University Law School and Fudan University Law School, is organizing a massive series of public lectures on the histories of international law from both Chinese and global perspectives. On 12 May 2023, the Centre for Chinese and Comparative Law (CCCL) of the City University of Hong Kong's School of Law hosted the fourth distinguished lecture to assist students and lawyers in discovering theories of the history of international law during the Republican period. **Prof. Randall Lesaffer**, Professor of Legal History, KU Leuven and Tilburg University was invited as our distinguished speaker.

Chen Yifeng, Associate Professor, Peking University delivered a welcome speech to start the public lecture.

Prof. Randall Lesaffer studied law and history at the universities of Ghent and Leuven. From the later university, he obtained his Ph.D. in Law on a study on early-modern and Cold War peace and alliance treaties. He is a professor of legal history at the KU Leuven and at Tilburg University. Since 2018, he is head of the Department of Roman Law and Legal History. He has been a professor of legal history at Tilburg University since 1999, where he also served as dean of Tilburg Law School from 2008 and 2012. He is the founder of i-Hilt, Institute of the History of International Law.

He began the lecture by briefly introducing some key dates in European history, including 9 Nov 1989, Berlin Wall falls, marking a Cold War victory by the United States and Western Allies, and 10 November 1989, one day after the Berlin Wall has fallen, which various politicians spoke at Rathaus Schöneberg, such as Helmut Kohl, chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany at the time. In the following 319 days, Kohl pushed for German unification at EC and announced intentions of a Bundestag. Germany finally unified on 3 October 1990. He believed that there are three rises of the new world order not only including German unification but also the Persian

Gulf Conflict and the Dissolution of the Soviet Union from 1989 to 1991. To summarize, he argued that German unification could be seen as a clash between two constitutional views on Europe, that it is a highly legalized subject that at a top-level international law played a role in the discourse of self-determination, not only to convince the public but also to destabilize the kind of ambiguous talk.

Prof. Simon Chesterman, David Marshall Professor of Law & Vice Provost, National University of Singapore led a discussion session following **Prof. Randall Lesaffer**'s thought-provoking speech, in which they shared their insights. The majority of all those attending took the opportunity to express themselves, and many of them were insightful and imaginative. **Chen Yifeng** gave a closing remark in which he thanked all of the attendants for their contributions to the lecture's success.



Prof. Randall Lesaffer.



Chen Yifeng.



Prof. Simon Chesterman.