



Press Release

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The Relevance of the Past: Honouring Outstanding Work at the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History in Frankfurt

What does legal history have to do with current social and political issues? Quite a bit indeed, according to the jurors of the Helmut Coing Award and the award of the renowned law firm of Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, being awarded here for the first time. Oliver Haardt and Eva Fischer are the lucky recipients. His prize will allow him to finance a research stay at the MPI for European Legal History in Frankfurt, and she will be able to continue her studies at the postgraduate level at the Goethe University of Frankfurt. Daniel Damler is also contributing to current debates. The lawyer, who also serves as an Affiliate Researcher at the MPI, investigates the institutional transformation of corporations since the 19th century – as well as cultural and artistic reactions to it – in his new book 'Konzern und Moderne' ('The Corporation and Modernity'). All three works will be presented and honoured on 2 November from 6 pm at the MPI for European Legal History in Frankfurt.

In his book, which appears as the anniversary edition and 300th volume of the *Studien zur Europäischen Rechtsgeschichte* (Studies in European Legal History) from the Vittorio Klostermann publishing house, Daniel Damler presents a 'psychological profile of high modernity'. Analysing the work of directors, cartoonists, graphic designers, painters, journalists, economists and jurists, he reveals hidden motifs and thought patterns in 20th century legislation, legal judgments and science to strengthen their connections to the present.

Oliver Haardt also pays attention to current issues. The federalist developments in the German Empire, which he treats in his dissertation on "The Federal Evolution of Imperial Germany (1871-1918) in International Context", bring to mind current debates about federalism in Europe. As the young constitutional lawyer at Trinity College in Cambridge says, 'The lack of a uniform constitution plays a central role'. Now the young Cambridge scholar is in line to receive the Helmut Coing Award, an honour endowed by the 'Friends of the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History' with 6,000€ and presented worldwide only on a triennial basis. 'Oliver Haardt is an outstanding talent in history, especially constitutional history. He combines the university cultures of Frankfurt and Cambridge in especially



stimulating and innovative ways' in the words of Michael Stolleis, Scientific Member of the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History and one of the evening's speakers.

'My experience as a fellow at the International Max Planck Research School here at the MPI for European Legal History inspired me to return to Frankfurt', explains Oliver Haardt. 'The library has a unique collection, whole periods, which I need for my research'. After obtaining his doctorate, Haardt would like to stay in academia, and his interest in constitutional law extends to current events. 'I'd like to contribute to current debates', says Haardt. In fact, he has already done so, having published his view in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in March 2016.

Eva Fischer is the proud recipient of the Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer Award, which the Legal History Institute at the Goethe University of Frankfurt is presenting for the first time this year thanks to the generous pledge of the international corporate law firm, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer. The 1,500€ prize goes to the best term paper of 2015 submitted in pursuit of a law degree. 'The term paper challenges the students to come to grips with the freedom of a research question', explains David von Mayenburg, Professor of Modern Legal History, History of Canon Law and Civil Law at the Goethe University, Frankfurt. Eva Fischer wrote her prize-winning paper about 'The Law on Missing Persons in the Context of National Socialist War Policy'. Currently articling at the district court in Darmstadt, she commented that 'this rule has retained its legal relevance now as then. That's what grabbed me'. David von Mayenburg welcomes the esteem this lends the discipline. 'Major firms see the connection between legal history and current events and are prepared to commit resources. That's great'.

The celebration will begin at 6 pm on 2 November 2016 in the lecture hall of the MPI for European Legal History. After a lecture by Catherine MacMillan from King's College London on 'The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council: Law and the British Empire', the MPI for European Legal History and the Goethe University of Frankfurt will present the two awards. The subsequent reception is dedicated to the publication of the 300th volume in the *Studien zur Europäischen Rechtsgeschichte* series. The event is part of the Frankfurt Evening Lectures on Legal History hosted by the MPI for European Legal History and the Institute for Legal History of the Goethe University, Frankfurt.