Including humankind’s progeny into the “common possession of the earth”

The move taken by the recent judgement of the European Court of Human Rights in the Case of KlimaSeniorinnen vs. Switzerland towards extending environmental human rights to future generations is prone to legal criticism. Yet it can be related to Kant’s re-interpretation of the traditional natural law motif of mankind’s “original common possession” of the earth: Being transformed from a historical hypothesis into a transtemporal normative idea, it suggests a birthright to a viable place on earth not only for present-day but also for all future humans. This would establish general legal limits on the use of environmental resources by the privileged parts of present-day humankind.

With Speaker Stefan Hammer

Stefan Hammer studied law and oriental studies at Vienna University where he has obtained his PhD and his post-doctoral “habilitation” in public law and legal philosophy. His areas of research include political philosophy, comparative constitutionalism, and human rights from an intercultural perspective. He has been teaching at Vienna University as well as in Senegal, the USA, Slovakia, France, Ethiopia, and Bhutan, and has been conducting international research projects in constitutionalism as well as dialogue conferences with Islamic countries. He has served as a member of the Board of Advisors of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO).