

**Don't kill the bee!**

**Legal insights to combat the biodiversity crisis**

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**PANEL 2. Legal challenges to achieve a regulatory body that embraces an ecocentric and biocentric approach**

**Protecting, conserving and restoring marine carbon sinks for the benefit of climate and marine ecosystems: a global regulatory challenge**

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With the capacity to absorb over 25% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and more than 90% excess heat, oceans form the most important carbon sink in the world and can be a solution for climate change. However, oceans are highly threatened by climate change and ocean acidification, deoxygenation and other phenomena. Such phenomena not only impair the capacity of the oceans to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, but also threaten the survival of the species present therein and of those communities depending from the oceans, especially coastal communities. Therefore, protecting, conserving and restoring ocean sinks (such as mangroves, salt marshes and seagrass meadows) is essential to both fight climate change and to protect the rich biodiversity of these habitats.

However, there is not yet a coherent system for the regulation of marine carbon sinks. Notwithstanding the rising focus on the oceans in the climate regime in recent years, marine carbon sinks, contrary to terrestrial carbon sinks, are still largely unregulated and a framework such as the REDD+, which the UNFCCC has put in place for forests, is currently missing. Comparably, the protection, conservation and restoration of marine carbon sinks are under-regulated also in other relevant areas of international law, such as the Law of the Sea and the CBD regime, as well as in the ongoing BBNJ negotiations. My research project aims to understand how marine carbon sinks are and can be collocated in different regimes, highlighting the areas of positive interaction and the challenges faced to advance ecosystem protection and climate measures in the field. The ultimate objective is to propose a framework for marine carbon sinks conservation, protection and restoration through normative and institutional interaction, both within and beyond the climate regime.