

OBITUARY

UNIV.-PROF. I.R. DR. DR. H.C. PETER FISCHER

19 May 1939 – 9 July 2025

Peter Fischer, a pioneer of European law in Austria, passed away unexpectedly on July 9 at the age of 86. He was in excellent health, full of confidence and had many plans. Our deepest sympathy goes to his family. The Section of International Law mourns the loss of a particularly amiable and far-sighted university professor who was passionate about his subject.

Peter Fischer's enthusiasm and commitment to Europe and to the independent subject of European law are legendary. In the 1980s, he founded the "Section of European Law" at the former Department of Public International Law – long before Austria's EU membership. He began teaching "European Law" as an "elective legal subject" and knew how to use his pedagogical skills to motivate most students to choose precisely this course. It eventually became a compulsory subject. Peter Fischer headed the newly founded "Institute for European Law" from 1990 until his retirement in 2004. The textbook "Europarecht einschließlich des Rechts supranationaler Organisationen", which he co-authored with Heribert Franz Köck, was published in four editions (1986, 1995, 1997, 2002).

He was also passionate about international investment law. Shortly after the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) was established at the World Bank in 1966, he wrote several articles on the then relatively new phenomenon of international investor-state arbitration. His habilitation on "Die internationale Konzession" (1974) and the "Collection of International Concessions and Related Instruments" (21 volumes, 1976-1988), which he edited, remain important reference works to this day.

Furthermore, he studied the legality of the humanitarian intervention in Kosovo, the question of Taiwan's statehood and international commodity cartels with dedication.

Besides his academic work, spreading the idea of Europe to the younger generation was a matter close to his heart. He organized excursions to Brussels so that students could experience the European institutions personally. After the launch of the Erasmus programme, he joined the European university network "European Legal Practice Integrated Studies – ELPIS" and acted as Erasmus coordinator from 1993 to 2004.

From 1992, Peter Fischer also taught public international law and European law at the Danube University Krems, and in 2004 he became Vice-Rector for International Relations at the Pan-European University in Bratislava. He was awarded the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art, First Class (1996) and an honorary doctorate from Comenius University Bratislava (2008) for his outstanding accomplishments.

Peter Fischer was blessed with a long and productive life with lasting impact. It is with great sadness that we bid him farewell. Yet his achievements and his personality will live on for many generations to come.