



## **Private International Law Journalists: searching for news, commenting on it, understanding it from an SDG-based perspective**

### **Authors**

Antonia Durán Ayago, Universidad de Salamanca (Spain)

### **Type of activity**

Teaching innovation activity incorporated into the teaching of the compulsory subject Private International Law in the Law Degree curriculum.

### **Target educational level**

It is an activity that can be extrapolated to any educational context. Initially intertwined with university studies.

### **Information entry**

Private international law (PIL) is a complex discipline. It is taught at the end of the degree program because it requires knowledge of practically all branches of our legal system in order to be fully understood. Many of the concepts we deal with are new to students. They are used to substantive law, to having the answer at hand in the code, without having to search too hard. In contrast, in IPL, it is quite an odyssey to find the relevant regulatory text that governs a particular issue. Therefore, using real-life examples from day one to explain this subject is stimulating for those who are studying it for the first time.

On the first day of class, I bring a recent news story from the media to introduce the subject. It is not difficult to find a suitable news story. There are many cases that make the news that can serve as examples, although I tend to choose clear examples so that students have no difficulty visualizing the subject matter.

In that initial session, I show them the importance of the media in highlighting private international situations, and I invite them to pay attention to the news to identify situations that they consider to be or may be subject to private



international law. I invite them, therefore, to be “PIL journalists,” so that they are “on the hunt” for news related to our discipline.

To make it easier for them to share news items that catch their interest with everyone, I open a forum on my university's Moodle platform. All the students in the group and I, as the professor, are members of this forum. In the first few months of class, when students contribute news items, they simply need to justify why they consider the situation described in the news item to be a matter of private international law. Depending on what the students contribute, I can guide the discussion, suggesting ideas or asking questions. It often happens that, at the beginning, many news items tend to be posted on the forum which, due to their international component, students tend to think are subject to PIL, without considering whether they are private or public situations. This initiative is therefore a very important tool that contributes in a simple and enjoyable way to learning how to classify, which is useful for all disciplines and especially for PIL.

As the course progresses, the news items that reach the forum are always private international situations, and what the students contribute at this point is whether the Spanish courts would have jurisdiction to hear the case and what law they would apply. It is most satisfying to see how those who at the beginning of the course did not clearly distinguish the situations that were the subject of PIL now dare to apply their legal reasoning to complex cases, in many cases even providing case law to support their arguments.

The final phase of the project is for students to be able to identify, from the perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Goal that would be related to the topic covered in the news item.

For example, during this course, a student sent this news item:

<https://elpais.com/us/economia/2024-05-30/estados-unidos-denuncia-a-hyundai-por-usar-mano-de-obra-infantil-ilegal-en-alabama.html>.

He commented that it was linked to the issue of corporate due diligence and non-contractual civil liability. He also said that the SDG involved would be Goal 8, Decent work and economic growth, noting that one of the main targets of this goal is to eradicate child labor and forced labor.

## Goals



This experience has the following objectives:

1. Become familiar with the scenarios that are the subject of private international law.
2. Know how to classify them appropriately, integrating real-life scenarios into specific legal categories.
3. Identify the applicable regulations to determine whether Spanish courts would have jurisdiction and, if so, which law they would apply.
4. Propose solutions to the case presented, providing legal arguments for the answers.
5. Identify the SDG to which the news item relates and its impact on it.
6. Share ideas with other classmates, contributing to a kind of collaborative learning.