

Is Sark an area “of particular Geopolitical Interest”?

An interesting question. Here is a selection of what many international legal and geographical experts and expert bodies think.

1. Sark is on the UN M49 list and in the UNTERM database.
2. Sark is recognised by all levels of HMG including MoJ, FCO and DCMS.
3. The other government in the Bailiwick – The States of Guernsey – and their Law Officers recognise Sark, have confirmed it is separate and doesn't come under their jurisdiction and legislature.
4. The EU acknowledges Sark's individual status alongside other dependent territories within the negotiations over Brexit.
5. Sark is of sufficient geopolitical interest to be cited separately to and equivalent to other dependencies of the Crown in a decision of the [International Court of Justice](#). The evidence in this case contains [references to Sark](#) dating back to the 12th century in international and legal documents.
6. The European Court of Human Rights decision of 1 Mar 2016 examined Sark's constitutional position in exhaustive depth from 1202 to reach their determination and observes that it is “unquestionably unique in Europe”.
7. A [dispute over fishing rights](#) in the “Sark Box” resulted in the involvement of the French navy and British fishing inspectorate in 1996.
8. The Sark flag is flown at official UK State events and to mark Sark's “Fief Day”. It is accorded equal status to those of the other governments of Crown Dependencies and BOTs. International flag authorities also confirm.
9. Sark's relationship with the English Crown dates back to 1066 when William, Duke of Normandy invaded England. The Crown holds Sark as Duke of Normandy. Sark is not, and never has been, part of England, Great Britain, the United Kingdom or the European Union. This is a unique geopolitical status.
10. The current constitutional status of Sark dates back to the granting of Letters Patent by Queen Elizabeth in 1565. This is an international legal precedent creating the jurisdiction and legislature of Sark some 382 years before ISO.
11. Other governments established by Letters Patent are a small but exclusive group: New Zealand, the Falkland Islands and some Australian States. The rare legal basis of establishment makes this of interest.
12. The World Bank. ICSID is one of the 5 organizations of the World Bank (itself an associate member of ISO 3166/MA). It recognises the Court of the Seneschal of Sark as a [competent \(and separate\) Court](#) in accordance with Article 54(2) of the Convention.
13. Sark is in control of its own airspace as confirmed by ICAO member, DCA.
14. The late Professor David Lowenthal, Emeritus Professor of Geography and Honorary Research Fellow of UCL published on Sark in academic journals (including the journals both of the Royal Geographical Society and the American geographical

Society. He also advised Sark <https://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/news-events/news/news-archive/2013/january-2013/david-lowenthal-advises-sark> and submitted an expert opinion in support of Sark's status.

15. Professor Godfrey Baldacchino, President of Small Islands Studies Association, Editor of journals, UNESCO co-Chair in Island Studies at University of Prince Edward Island, Pro-rector at University of Malta has given an expert opinion.
16. Dr Caroline Morris, legal academic at Queen Mary University of London - QMUL, Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Centre of Constitutional and Political Studies King's College London, Founder and Director of the Centre for Small States at QMUL prepared a detailed legal analysis of Sark's Constitutional Status.
17. Professor Henry Johnson, University of Otago, New Zealand has published on Sark in Shima, The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures and has given an expert opinion.
18. The Institute of Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island maintains an [Island Jurisdiction Database](#). The entry on the [Isle of Sark](#) summarises the political history and status, relationship with the Crown and the "special relationship" with the EU in Protocol 3 of the Treaty of Accession.
19. The Global Islands Network was established following a UN Global Conference (on island states) and work with the EU and other international bodies such as ISISA. Its database lists [Sark](#).
20. Atlas Obscura is a global community of explorers with the aim "We are looking for the most unusual, extraordinary, strange, secret, surprising, or otherwise amazing locales on the planet.". Sark is listed as the world's first [Dark Sky Island](#) and for the [world's smallest prison](#). The entries reference Sark's geography and political history including an armed "invasion".
21. The International Dark-Sky Association is the recognized authority on light pollution and is the leading organization combating light pollution worldwide. Sark was the first island in the world to be awarded "Dark Sky" status.
<https://www.darksky.org/our-work/conservation/idsp/communities/sark/>
22. [Shima](#) is a SCOPUS registered peer-refereed international academic journal. A number of articles on Sark have been published by academics.
 - a. [Sark and Brecqhou: Sark Politics and Power](#) An article which "shows that Sark exists in several ways within different island groupings and political relationships, and argues that closer analysis of this island context contributes both a case study of interisland relations to Island Studies, and more broadly to re-thinking the political geography of islands in the context of spatial and power relationships. "
 - b. A [response](#) to that article confirms that the status of Sark is of interest to international legal bodies.
 - c. Peter Goodall, in an [article on literary history](#) refers both to Victor Hugo's and Mervyn Peake's novels on Sark as well as other works and includes a reference that: "...it now seems likely that the Romans meant the nearby island of Sark by the name."

23. The Canadian Journal of Linguistics has published an [article on the Norman French](#) language of Jersey and Sark – establishing both that Sark is of particular interest and also that its language is not associated with Guernsey.
24. This [history of Sark's silver mines](#) refers to the legal basis of mineral and mining rights on the island through rights granted by the Crown and the legal basis on which the current Seigneur's family came into possession of the Fief.

The term geopolitics refers to the "geographical settings and their relationship to political power spatial frameworks embracing political power units such as hemispheres, oceans, land and maritime boundaries, natural resources and culture.". The remit also includes "how geography influences international affairs, diplomacy, power relations and popular/cultural understandings of how that power is constructed and exercise".

The above list of references to Sark are far from exhaustive and clearly show the interest in Sark from a range of international bodies, courts, governments, resources and experts. It includes areas such as international affairs, culture, air and sea boundaries, political units, geographical location, natural resources and how these are understood – both on Sark and in the wider world.

We agree with them!

We therefore submit that this is sufficient evidence to show that Sark is an area of particular geopolitical interest.