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ENERGY TRANSITION: A LABOUR LAW RETROSPECTIVE

Lecture of the Jean Monnet Chair SESaMe

Abstract

The lecture discusses how and why different energy paradigms and their political economies have affected labour and industrial relations institutions over time. It is argued that sustainability of working conditions depends largely on organised labour's access to, and control over, the natural, energy resources on which workers' livelihoods depend. Drawing on a novel literature that intersects energy and labour justice, the following trajectories are presented and discussed. While the possibility of labour control over the mining and distribution of coal has favoured the development of democratic institutions and welfare state in Western jurisdictions and in recently developed economies in the so-called Global South, 'petro-capitalism' and the political economy of nuclear energy have contributed to the dismantling of internal labour markets and to the crisis of classical labour law and industrial relations institutions. In contrast to oil and nuclear power, renewable energy sources could favour the transition from an extractive economic model to one that is generative and participatory: by democratising the political and economic power of energy, renewables might be able to better serve human welfare in a way that is compatible with ecological limits. However, the transition away from fossil fuels is not straightforward and should not be idealized. As the current energy crisis and the geopolitical turmoil demonstrate, it comes with many contradictions and distributional conflicts, imposing a reconsideration of the legal and institutional foundations of capitalism.

Programme

- 12:00 Introduction**
Prof. Luca RATTI, University of Luxembourg, Jean Monnet Chair Holder
- 12:15 Keynote speech**
Prof. Paolo TOMASSETTI, University of Milan and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow at Centre de droit social, Université Aix-Marseille
- 13:15 Discussant**
Dr. Antonio GARCIA- MUÑOZ, University of Luxembourg
- 14:00 Closing**

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 **SESaMe**
A Jean Monnet Chair at the
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