

DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF LAW NEWSLETTER

FALL / WINTER 2025-2026

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Dear PhD Candidates and Colleagues,

Welcome to the first edition of the Doctoral School of Law (DSL) Newsletter (Fall/Winter 2025-2026).

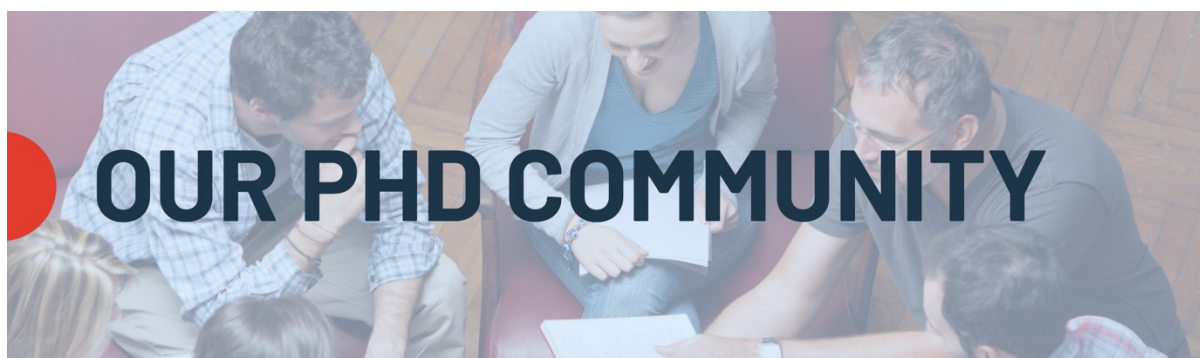
Here are the latest updates and highlights from our research community, bringing together doctoral researchers from the Department of Law (DL) of the FDEF and the Luxembourg Centre for European Law (LCEL).



Prof. Eleftheria Neframi



Julie Fonseca
and
Chloé Schonckert



Welcome to our new PhD candidates

01/09/2025 Margherita BRANCA (DL) “Social considerations in EU public procurement”, supervisor: prof. Luca RATTI

01/09/2025 Flora Annie Ljuba JUNG (DL) “Financial institutions and enforcement against environmental crime”, supervisor: prof. Stanislaw TOSZA

01/09/2025 Maéva SCASSELLATI (LCEL and DL) “Digitalisation in European Business Law”, supervisor: prof. Thomas MASTRULLO

01/10/2025 Vitória FERNANDES ANTUNES DIAS (DL) “Gouvernance multi-niveaux du marché intérieur de l'UE : le rôle des agences nationales autonomes à l'ère des transitions verte et numérique”, supervisor : prof. Jörg GERKRATH

01/10/2025 Sophia Marie SCHICK (DL) “Standard Essential Patents and the Digital Transition” supervisor: prof. Martin STIERLE

01/11/2025 Eleonore FUZIER (DL) “The use of soft law in digital regulation – evolution of the field”, supervisor: prof. Herwig C. H. HOFMANN

01/01/2026 Lorenzo SCARCELLA (LCEL), “Conceptualising minimum harmonisation in the area of freedom, security and justice”, supervisor: prof. Takis TRIDIMAS

01/02/2026 Aritz CASTRO LANDAZURI (LCEL) “Upholding the EU's common values: towards Article 2 TEU as an enforceable norm”, supervisor: prof. Takis TRIDIMAS

01/02/2026 Solène ROUXEL (DL) “Personnes, Familles, Patrimoines à l'heure du numérique et de l'intelligence artificielle”, supervisor : prof. Luc GRYNBAUM

The DTU GREITMA

Margherita BRANCA, Vitória FERNANDES ANTUNES DIAS, Eleonore FUZIER, Flora Annie Ljuba JUNG, Maéva SCASSELLATI, Sophia Marie SCHICK joined our [Doctoral Training Unit on Green and Digital Transitions in the Single Market \(DTU-GREITMA\)](#).

The DTU-GREITMA had already welcomed in Spring 2025 five PhD candidates:

15/02/2025 Erik Paessler (FHSE) “Understanding the green transformation of energy in the EU – Preference-shaping processes in domestic and supranational arenas”, supervisor: ass. prof. Anna-Lena Högenauer

01/03/2025 Lisa Haro (DL) “Setting the Global Standard Beyond Borders: The International Impact of the European Union Digital Single Market”, supervisor: prof. Mark COLE

01/03/2025 Eirini Botza “The digitalization of financial forensic investigations, through the prism of criminal justice”, supervisor: prof. Silvia ALLEGREZZA

01/03/2025 Nicole Visco Comandini (DL) “Non-Conviction-Based Confiscation in EU Law: A Test Case for the Presumption of Innocence”, supervisor: prof. Katalin LIGETI

01/04/2025 Sotiris Zakynthinos (DL), “The impact of national tax measures pursuing environmental objectives on EU law”, supervisor: ass. Prof. Aikaterina PANTAZATOU

Since October 2025, the DTU-GREITMA PhD candidates have been coordinated by [Léo GARGNE](#), postdoctoral researcher.

Prior to joining the University of Luxembourg, Léo was a PhD candidate at Tilburg University where he completed his doctoral thesis on the integration of sustainability considerations in EU Free Trade Agreements. Within the GREITMA project, Léo will further pursue and expand his research on the EU’s green and digital transitions.

Discover the DTU-GREITMA [webpage](#)

PhD Defenses:

We congratulate our former doctoral researchers who successfully defended their theses between September 2025 and March 2026.

08/10/25 Alexandros Politis (DL) "The Court of Justice's interaction with the EU legislature in interpreting and applying primary law", supervisor: prof. Werner HASLEHNER

09/10/25 Ziwei Xu (DL) "Safeguarding Social Purpose: A Comparative Legal Analysis of the Asset Lock in European Social Enterprise Law.", supervisor: prof. David HIEZ

28/11/25 Arman Melikyan (LCEL) "Reconfiguring the Evolving Legal Interface of Trade and Sustainable Development Chapters of Free Trade Agreements: Substantive Obligations, Dispute Settlement and Compliance", supervisor: prof. Helene RUIZ FABRI

19/01/26 Gustavo Becker (LCEL) "Private Dispute Resolution and the Right to an Effective Remedy in Transnational Business and Human Rights", supervisor: prof. Helene RUIZ FABRI

21/01/26 Isabella Lorenzoni (DL) "The More Digital and Data-Driven Approach to Competition Law", supervisor: prof. Herwig C. H. HOFMANN

22/01/26 Bruno Walter (LCEL) "Strategic Litigation before the CJEU A Procedural Law Approach", supervisor: prof. Herwig C. H. HOFMANN

29/01/26 Marcin Biskupsi (DL) "Enforcement of tax offices against corporate offenders", supervisor: prof. Katalin LIGETI

17/02/26 Franck Salentiny (DL) "The Economic Approach in Luxembourg Tax Law and its relevance for the right of corporate taxpayers to deduct financing costs", supervisor: prof. Werner HASLEHNER

27/02/26 Stanislav Gubenko (DL), "Human rights and Corporate Social Responsibility within Chinese energy projects in the Western Balkans. A Study of How Chinese Enterprises and Banks Conceptualise and Operationalise Human Rights in Overseas Infrastructure Development", supervisor: prof. Jörg GERKRATH

05/03/26 Antonio Caiola (DL), "Analysis of a pivotal constitutional case law of the EU Court of Justice on legal bases. The questionable evolution of the Court's jurisprudence as a result of institutional disputes on the relationship between intergovernmental sectors and other policies of the European Union", supervisor: prof. Eleftheria NEFRAMI

Bringing PhD Researchers Together

The DSL organised dedicated meetings to bring PhD candidates together and strengthen the doctoral community. From [induction days](#) designed to build a supportive environment, encourage professional connections, and facilitate the exchange of career advice, to an interactive forum, these initiatives create valuable spaces for dialogue. The PhD Forum held on 28 January 2026 gathered candidates to share feedback on the programme, helping identify areas for improvement and better understand their needs and expectations. The session concluded with New Year's drinks, providing an informal setting for networking and continued discussion.

The DSL Course Programme

Thanks to the active participation of university professors and postdoctoral researchers, as well as external experts from academia and practice, the DSL [course programme](#) provided PhD candidates with valuable training and practical insights.

Insights from three of our invited speakers in our Doctoral School Programme



Elaine Fahey, Professor of EU Law at the City Law School, City St. Georges, University of London

“I enjoyed teaching the doctoral course students. They were very enthusiastic and well motivated and we enjoyed good discussions. There was a nice atmosphere in the group and they are all undertaking very interesting and valuable projects. The organisation of the teaching was excellent. It was a pleasure to be involved with the group and the Doctoral School of law. “



Amedeo Arena, Professor at the Faculty of Law of the University of Naples “Federico II”

“Teaching at the Doctoral School of Law at Uni.lu was a truly rewarding experience: the PhD candidates were highly engaged, well informed, and intellectually curious, which made the discussion especially stimulating. I very much appreciated both the quality of their questions and the welcoming academic environment.”



Florin Dascalescu, Senior Legal Counsel - Corporate & Institutional Affairs · European Investment Fund (EIF)

“It was a pleasure teaching my sessions on the role of subsidies and the green transition at the Doctoral School of Law, Uni.lu. The proposed format, bringing together PhDs from different areas, was in my view very beneficial, as it enriched the class debate with different perspectives and made the exchanges more dynamic. I particularly appreciated the fact that the course remained interactive: the students showed interest, proved intellectually curious and engaged, and willing to challenge ideas – thus, I have no doubt on the success of their research projects.”

PhD Testimonials – Interviews with Doctoral Researchers

Discover two engaging interviews conducted by **Elisabeth Güllering** with LCEL doctoral researchers, offering authentic insights into the PhD experience. These testimonials highlight two key stages of the doctoral journey:

- Starting a PhD – motivations, first challenges, and early discoveries
- Nearing completion – reflections, lessons learned, and advice for future candidates

I just started my PhD



By *Maria Ana Pocas Lourenco*
Doctoral Researcher (LCEL)

I'm finishing my PhD



By *David Althoff*
Doctoral Researcher (LCEL)



Distinctions:

Pierre Pescatore Prize



On behalf of the DSL council members, the Pescatore Prize committee choose **Luisa KUNZEL's** thesis as the awardee of the Pescatore Prize 2025. Title of the thesis: "Fund Governance - Enhancing Investor Protection Through Technological Implementations in Fund Governance", supervisor: Prof. **Dirk Andreas ZETZSCHE**.

Jacqueline Noël Scholarship



In 2025, the scholarship was awarded to **Dr. Silvia RIZZUTO FERRUZZA** for the outstanding quality of her thesis: "Frontex and Effective Remedies: Assessing Mechanisms of Legal Protection in a Shared Enforcement Space", supervisor: prof. **Eleftheria NEFRAMI**.

This merit-based scholarship, granted by the Fondation Jacqueline NOEL under the aegis of the Fondation de Luxembourg, recognises outstanding female doctoral graduates who successfully defended their theses during the past academic year.

Pierre Werner Scholarship



On 20 October 2025, four doctoral researchers from the University of Luxembourg, [Donatella Casaburo](#), [Alexandre Mortelette](#), [Javier Sanchez Bachiller](#), and [Susana Isabel Teixeira de Matos Rosa](#), were officially presented with the Pierre Werner Scholarship during a ceremony hosted by the Faculty of Law, Economics and Finance (FDEF).

The event took place in the presence of [Luc Frieden](#), Prime Minister of Luxembourg and President of the Fondation Pierre Werner, under the aegis of the [Fondation de Luxembourg](#).

Congratulations to Damien Negre !



We are very pleased to share that **Damien Negre** has been awarded the qualification for the position of **Maître de conférences** by the **French National Council of Universities (CNU)**. This achievement reflects the collective commitment and high-quality work carried out across our faculty, department, and doctoral school. It is a success that honors our entire academic community.

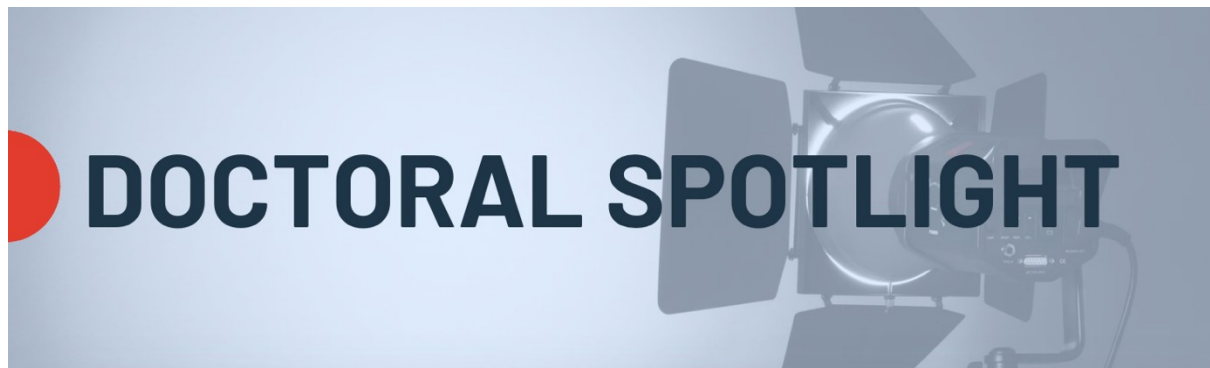
Damien Negre defended his thesis on 5 October 2023.

Title of the thesis: “L'activité professionnelle en droit européen de la consommation. Etude d'un critère de qualification”, supervisor: prof. **Elise POILLOT**

Publications:



Publication de la thèse de Damien Negre aux Editions LGDJ, collection Thèses, Bibliothèque de Droit Privé



Here are a few examples of outreach by advanced doctoral researchers

Tanja Hilpold

PhD candidate under the supervision of prof. **Herwig C. H. HOFMANN**

Title of the thesis: “The Court of Justice - between Supreme Court and Constitutional Court”

Publication:

- “The 2024 Reform of the EU Judicial System and the Transformation of the Court of Justice into a Constitutional Court” (2025) 10 *European Papers*, 837-862.
 - Part of the Special Section “Perspectives on the Reformed EU Judicial Architecture”, which includes numerous contributions written by members and ex-members of the Court of Justice of the EU (AG Tamara Čapeta, former AG Michal Bobek, former Judge Ornella Porchia, Référendaire Leila Rezki)
 - Link: <https://www.europeanpapers.eu/e-journal/2024-reform-eu-judicial-system-transformation-court-justice-constitutional-court>

Presentations:

- “Rethinking the EU Judicial System after the 2024 Reform of the Statute of the CJEU” at the European University Institute (EUI), 9 December 2025
 - <https://www.eui.eu/events?id=582215>

On 9 December 2025, I had the pleasure of giving a presentation at the European University Institute (EUI) on the 2024 reform of the Statute of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the future of the EU judicial system, with Professor Sabine Saurugger and researchers from the EUI acting as discussants.

The presentation analysed the structural consequences of the 2024 reform for the EU judicial system, identified its shortcomings, and assessed its impact on the respective

roles of the Court of Justice and the General Court. In particular, it examined several procedural amendments introduced by the 2024 reform that contribute to strengthening the constitutional role of the Court of Justice.

As the 2024 reform probably represents only the first step in a fundamental reimagining of the EU's judicial architecture, the presentation also reflected on potential future developments of the EU judicial system. It underscored the need for a clear demarcation of responsibilities between the Court of Justice and the General Court and the articulation of a long-term vision for the respective roles of these two courts. The 2024 reform of the EU judicial system has enabled the Court of Justice to focus increasingly on constitutional questions and may, in the long term, pave the way for its evolution into a fully-fledged constitutional court.

I am very grateful for the insightful comments and engaging discussion, which provided a valuable opportunity to further refine my research project.

Andreas Kanakakis

PhD candidate under the supervision of prof. **Katalin LIGETI**

Title of the thesis: "Digital Investigatory Measures: Evidence Admissibility and the Rights of the Person Concerned"

- **Blog post:** 'Patchwork Policing: The Fragmented Regulation of Police AI in Germany, France, and Luxembourg' (co-authored with M. Kühne), *Verfassungsblog*, 2025 (<https://verfassungsblog.de/police-ai-tools/>)

This blogpost examines the fragmented regulation of police use of artificial intelligence (AI) in Germany, France, and Luxembourg. It shows how recent legislative developments (ranging from automated data analysis in German police laws to AI-supported video surveillance in France and Luxembourg) reflect a broader trend of expanding police powers without a coherent regulatory framework. Despite constitutional guidance, particularly in Germany, and the emerging influence of EU instruments such as the AI Act, national approaches remain inconsistent and often driven by political contingencies. The analysis highlights the resulting risks for fundamental rights, especially privacy and data protection, and underscores the need for a more harmonised, rights-centred European approach to police AI.

- **Book Chapter:** 'Evidence Law, Data Protection Standards and the Use of AI for Investigation and Prosecution' (co-authored with P. De Hert and J. Sajfert), in K. Ligeti (ed), *AI Evidence and Criminal Proceedings*, Bloomsbury Professional & Hart Publishing, 2026 (<https://www.bloomsburycollections.com/monograph-detail?>)

[docid=b-9781509976591&pdfid=9781509976591.ch-003.pdf&tocid=b-9781509976591-chapter3\)](#)

‘Evidence Law, Data Protection Standards and the Use of AI for Investigation and Prosecution’ is the third chapter of the book “AI Evidence and Criminal Proceedings” and examines the complex interplay between evidence law, data protection standards and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the context of crime investigation and prosecution. It begins with an overview of how these fields interact, followed by concrete examples from the European courts, highlighting their reluctance to sanction the admission of evidence obtained through privacy and data protection violations, and their ways of counterbalancing this reluctance. The discussion moves then to the core principles of EU data protection law, including notification rights granted to the data subject, and links them to the data-quality requirements mandated under the EU AI Act. Finally, the chapter explores the dual role of law enforcement agencies as both controllers of personal data and developers or deployers of high-risk AI systems, focusing on the obligations and responsibilities these roles entail under the relevant legal frameworks.

Milena Mitrović

PhD candidate under the supervision of prof. **Pierre-Henri CONAC**

Title of the thesis: “Administrative Enforcement of European Sustainability Reporting Standards”

Milena, who previously worked at the LCEL, is now affiliated with the FDEF. Her latest contribution focuses on sustainability reporting in the financial sector, offering valuable insights into evolving regulatory and reporting practices.

Read more about her work here: [Sustainability Reporting in the Financial Sector – Milena Mitrović](#)



“The EU’s Green and Digital Transition, Multi-Level Enforcement and the Interaction of Legal Orders”



On 13 and 14 November 2025, the Doctoral School of Law of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Finance, supported by the FNR-Luxembourg National Research Fund (PRIDE23/18689571/GREITMA) organised a conference marking the closing of the Doctoral Training Unit on “Enforcement in Multi-Level Regulatory Systems II” (DTU-REMS II), which was successfully led by Prof. Joana Mendes, and the opening of the Doctoral Training Unit on the “Green and Digital Transition in the Single Market” (DTU-GREITMA), which is led by Prof. Eleftheria Neframi. Both DTUs have been funded by the FNR’s PRIDE Programme.

<https://www.uni.lu/research-en/events/the-eus-green-and-digital-transition-multi-level-enforcement-and-the-interaction-of-legal-orders/>

The conference opened with contributions from **Anne Calteux**, Representative of the European Commission in Luxembourg, **Peteris Zilgalvis**, Judge at the General Court of the EU and **Elaine Fahey**, Professor at City St George’s, University of London.

The conference provided a platform for doctoral graduates of the REMS-II project to showcase their final research and discuss its impact on their professional paths. Similarly, the doctoral candidates of the GREITMA project, who are still in the early stages of their PhD journeys, had the chance to present their research as well as act as discussants on the second day of the conference

This successful two-day conference featured over 40 speakers from numerous countries who offered unique insights from various perspectives, be it as policymakers, members of the judiciary, or academics.

One of the highlights of the conference was the keynote speech delivered by **Prof. Inge Govaere**, who focused on the regulatory challenges that the internal market faces post-Lisbon Treaty.



[Impressions by Sophia Schick](#)

PhD candidate under the supervision of prof. Martin STIERLE

[University of Luxembourg + University of Illinois Spring 2026 Colloquium: A Transatlantic Academic Exchange](#)

Summary by **Tanja HILPOLD**

On 28 January 2026, the University of Luxembourg, together with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, convened a Spring Colloquium, bringing together professors and doctoral researchers from both institutions. The event provided a valuable platform for PhD and JSD Candidates to present their ongoing research, addressing key challenges in international, European, and comparative law.

Following opening remarks by **Prof. Margareth Etienne** (Illinois) and **Prof. Eleftheria Neframi** (Luxembourg), the colloquium featured two panels of researcher presentations, each followed by discussion and feedback from faculty members of both institutions.

The first panel brought together contributions that, despite their diversity, converged around a shared topic: the evolving role of courts.

Oluwakemi Adeyemi (Illinois) analysed the role of U.S. courts in international corporate bankruptcy proceedings, focusing on how judicial cooperation across jurisdictions can be structured.

In the following, **Tanja Hilpold** (Luxembourg) examined the importance of EU procedural law in shaping the constitutional role of the Court of Justice. She discussed recent developments in EU procedural law and concluded with an outlook on the

possible future development of the EU judicial system, emphasising the need for a long-term vision of the Union's judicial architecture.

Mohammad Khalilzadeh (Illinois) turned to constitutional theory, examining how judicial doctrines such as the Major Questions Doctrine may act as safeguards against democratic backsliding. His comparative perspective showed how an independent judiciary, relying on such doctrines, could resist executive power grabs that threaten the democratic foundations of states.

Taken together, the three presentations highlighted a common thread: courts are not merely adjudicators of disputes, but also key institutional actors in defining the constitutional architecture of their respective legal orders.

The second panel continued with equally engaging contributions. **Thallyta Cavoli** (Illinois) introduced the Poverty Status Principle, proposing that poverty should be recognised as an autonomous legal status capable of reshaping how legal norms are interpreted, applied, and enforced.

Afterwards, **Emmanuel Renoud Delarque** (Luxembourg) analysed how emergency migration measures developed during the 2015 crisis have been integrated into the EU's 2024 New Pact on Migration and Asylum, blurring the line between exceptional and ordinary governance. He argued that this normalization enhances technocratic discretion—particularly for the Commission—while weakening legal safeguards, judicial oversight, and objective criteria for action. Furthermore, he warned that embedding crisis logic into routine migration policy risks undermining the rule of law, democratic accountability, and the EU's legitimacy.

Edna Obiri (Illinois) analysed fisheries governance in Ghana, highlighting the tensions between imported legal models and local socio-economic realities, and advocated for more context-sensitive regulatory approaches.

Across both panels, discussions were enriched by comments from faculty members, including **Professors Thomas Mastrullo, Luigi Lonardo, Eleftheria Neframi, Elise Poillot** (Luxembourg), and **Lesley Wexler** and **Kenworthy Bilz** (Illinois).

A highly engaging and thought-provoking keynote speech was delivered by **Prof. Colleen Murphy** (Illinois) on "Transitional Justice, Rule of Law, and the Trump Administration". This was followed by equally insightful comments from **Prof. Johan Van der Walt** (Luxembourg), which further deepened the discussion.

Participants widely praised the colloquium for its excellent organisation and, above all, for the valuable opportunity it offered to strengthen academic exchange between the two universities – a collaboration that will hopefully continue to grow and deepen in the years to come.