

*Call for papers*

**The Sustainable Development of European Human Rights Protection**

Workshop, 4-5 December 2025

Faculty of Law, University of Copenhagen

Through its dynamic interpretation of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR), the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has been at the forefront of securing and developing human rights in Europe. By recognizing rights pertaining to LGBTQ+ individuals, freedom from mass surveillance or a right to a healthy climate the ECtHR has adapted and developed its jurisprudence to meet new societal realities and challenges that were impossible to envision by drafters of the Convention. In so doing, it has expanded human rights protection for individuals within the Council of Europe, both in substance and scope. At the same time the Court has been tackling a monumental backlog of cases, been subject to repeated reforms, faced non-compliance and instances of backlash from both illiberal and liberal member states. Hence, the development of enhanced and extended human rights protection in Europe has not been unhinged.

The aim of this workshop is to understand the ‘pushes and pulls’ and assess the evolving practices of the ECtHR through the lens of sustainable development (SD). Under the SD lens ‘development’ is seen as a process and ‘sustainability’ as a measure of the extent to which this process can advance or progress. In the context of European human rights, development may encompass enhanced and extended human rights protection in Europe, through the ECtHR’s dynamic interpretation of the rights enshrined in the Convention. To be sustainable, this development must be attuned to and proceed within a set of substantive, procedural or institutional constraints that are embedded in the convention texts, the Court’s rules of procedure, budget or political capital.

By bringing together theoretical and empirical perspectives the workshop seeks to address questions such as: how to conceptualize the aims and direction of human rights protection in Europe? What constrains its development? How do constraints vary across contexts, such as issue areas of the Convention, member states and time? How can the aims of the human rights system be achieved without violating the conditions which the constraints impose?

To address these questions, we welcome:

- 1) **Theoretical contributions** discussing a) the normative content of rights including the dynamics between positive and negative obligations of states; b) the form and scope of ECHR rights, and c) the development of political and societal function and context of human rights in European societies.
- 2) **Empirical contributions** that identify and assess the role of substantive and institutional constraints, such as a) limitations inherent in the Convention texts and the Court's Rules of Procedure, b) constraints embedded in legal principles expecting consistency and coherence in ECtHR case law, c) economic and budgetary limitations and d) demands from the Court's constituents, including civil society organizations, academics, states and government officials, applicants and their legal representatives, or domestic compliance constituents.

Contributors are encouraged to adopt interdisciplinary perspectives, and combine legal doctrinal analyses with social scientific methods in studying e.g. the Court's practices in specific areas of the Convention, its practices against specific member states or at different stages of the process.

## Details

Interested parties are encouraged to submit an abstract of maximum 300 words and short bio (in the same file) to the workshop organizers, Amalie Frese ([amalie.frese@jur.ku.dk](mailto:amalie.frese@jur.ku.dk)) and Zuzanna Godzimirska ([zuzanna.godzimirska@jur.ku.dk](mailto:zuzanna.godzimirska@jur.ku.dk)) by **25 June 2025**. Please indicate



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“Workshop on Sustainable Development of European Human Rights Protection” in the subject field of your email. Applicants will be informed of the results of the selection process by 15 July 2025.

Selected participants will be expected to submit a paper (ca. 8.000 words) by 15 November 2025. Contributions will be considered for subsequent publication in an edited volume or special issue.

The workshop will be held in person at the Faculty of Law at the University of Copenhagen on 4-5 December 2025. The organizers will cover expenses related to travel, accommodation and dinner in Copenhagen for workshop participants.

### **Organizers**

The workshop is organized by Amalie Frese, Associate Professor of Social and Equality Law and Zuzanna Godzimirska, Associate Professor of Human Rights and International Institutions, iCourts, Centre of Excellence for International Courts and Governance at the Faculty of Law, University of Copenhagen.

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