

Call for abstracts for the first Jean Monnet NOVA-EU workshop

Digitalisation, Ethics and EU Fundamental Rights



Format: 1.5-day workshop

Date: 9-10 January 2020

Venue: Maastricht, the Netherlands

1. Introduction and scope of the workshop

The **Maastricht Centre for European Law**, in collaboration with the **Maastricht European Centre on Privacy and Cybersecurity (ECPC)**, is launching a **call for papers** for a workshop on **Digitalisation, Ethics and EU Fundamental Rights**. This workshop forms part of a series of four workshops within the **Jean Monnet NOVA-EU project** coordinated by Professor Dr. Andrea Ott. **NOVA-EU** aims to stimulate a discussion and enhance research into four key challenges (**Digitalisation, Ethics and EU Fundamental Rights, Migration and Borders, Social and Sustainable Europe v. Free Trade Europe?, EU Rule of Law and Democracy**) that heavily impact the European Union's governance structure, regulatory framework, identity and, most importantly, its future.

The debate on the impact of digitalization on EU fundamental rights and the development of ethical principles is gradually gaining attention. In the context of digitalization, new and emerging technologies - such as IoT, blockchain and smart cities, AI, Big Data, etc. - pose challenges and threats in relation to the existing EU fundamental rights framework. On the one hand, these technologies put pressure on the fundamental rights framework. On the other hand, the application of these new technologies can also help empower citizens and aid in strengthening and reinvigorating fundamental rights in practice. Hence, the development of

digital tools may not only have a negative impact on EU fundamental rights and ethical principles but can also lead to the creation of tools to protect those rights and principles.

Even though fundamental rights to privacy and data protection have been at the centre of attention of recent debates, EU fundamental rights and ethical challenges related to digitalization go way beyond these two fundamental rights. Notably, algorithmic decision-making in highly sensitive matters such as tax or credit scoring can result in discrimination prohibited under Article 21 Charter; this also raises the question of which ethical standards should be developed for such decisions. Freedom of expression (Article 11 Charter) is endangered through opaque personalization algorithms used to organize newsfeeds online, and its relation to competing fundamental rights in the digital environment, such as the protection of intellectual property (Article 17 Charter), remains unclear. Its enforcement is further affected by the increasingly fragmented (national and EU) regimes involving the participation of Internet Service Providers and users themselves. The emergence of these new regimes calls into question the ensuring of fair trial principles (Article 47 Charter) in the broader context of combatting illegal online content. Moreover, freedom of the upcoming European elections (Article 39 Charter) could be put into question if digitalization tools such as micro-targeting of voters are misused in the electoral campaign. Finally, in the EU policy documents, such as guidelines and various codes of conduct, the use of ethical principles rather than reliance on fundamental rights is often a preferred option. The workshop seeks to discuss the implications of such a policy approach.

2. Format of the workshop

The workshop **Digitalisation, Ethics and EU Fundamental Rights** aims to contribute to the academic and policy debate by discussing these highly important questions in an interdisciplinary setting. It aims to include speakers from **law, political science, philosophy (ethics), social sciences and technology**. We expressly encourage both **junior (PhD or PostDoc level) and senior researchers** to apply. Given the applied nature of NOVA-EU project, we strongly encourage participants **to reflect on the problems also from the policy perspective** with the view of **offering policy recommendations** during the workshop. The latter will form as a springboard for two policy briefs to be presented to the European Commission as one of the outputs of the project.

Selected papers will be published online in the [Maastricht Faculty of Law Working Paper](#) series. At the end of the two-year NOVA-EU project (autumn 2021), a number of papers from all four workshops of the NOVA-EU project will be published in an edited volume with a renowned publisher.

We specifically encourage interdisciplinary papers on the following topics:

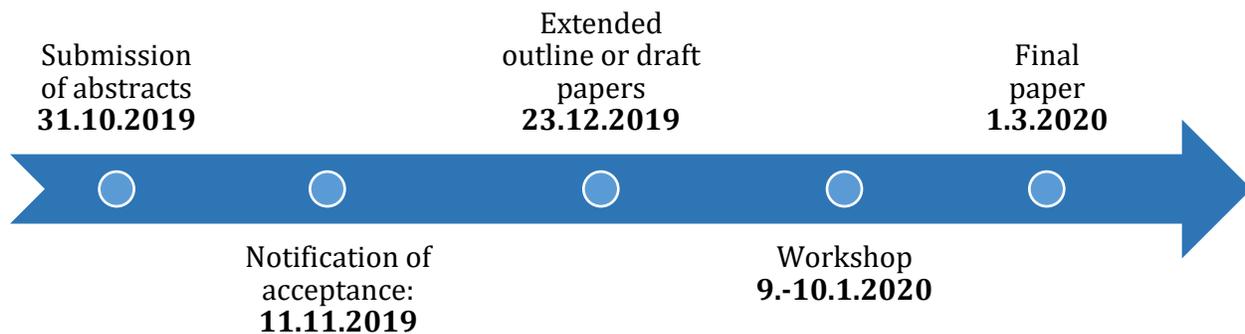
- Privacy, data protection and freedom of expression in the age of digitalization
- Equality, ethics and dignity-related rights
- EU citizens' rights and access to courts
- Tension between EU fundamental rights and ethical principles in the field of digitalisation (e.g. regarding their scope of application and weight in various policy documents)

- (Need for) regulation of digitalisation the context of ensuring EU's values
- Obligations of creators of digital tools from the fundamental rights and ethical perspectives
- How can digital tools help safeguard fundamental rights

3. Practical information

If you are interested to participate as a speaker and deliver a paper, please upload a **300-500 words abstract** of your paper by **31 October 2019**, together with a short bio, through the online system, available under the following link: <https://www.aanmelder.nl/110473/subscribe>.

Important deadlines:



4. Organisational matters

Covered expenses: Accommodations costs (one night), travel costs (with a maximum limit) and meals will be covered for paper-givers.

For more information about the workshop, do not hesitate to contact **Ms. Elke Hundhausen** per e-mail: elke.hundhausen@maastrichtuniversity.nl.

5. Academic workshop committee

- Dr. Maja Brkan, Associate Professor of EU Law, Associate Director of the Maastricht Centre for European Law, Member of the Maastricht European Centre on Privacy and Cybersecurity (Chair of the workshop committee)
- Prof. Dr. Paolo Balboni, Professor of Privacy, Cybersecurity, and IT Contract Law, Maastricht European Centre on Privacy and Cybersecurity
- Prof. Dr. Monica Claes, Professor of European and Comparative Constitutional Law
- Dr. Herke Kranenborg, Member of the European Commission's Legal Service, Visiting Fellow at the Maastricht European Centre on Privacy and Cybersecurity
- Prof. Dr. Christopher Kuner, Professor of Law and co-chair of the Brussels Privacy Hub at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Visiting Fellow at the Maastricht European Centre on Privacy and Cybersecurity
- Dr. Karolina Podstawa, Lecturer in EU Law, Member of the Maastricht European Centre on Privacy and Cybersecurity
- Christopher Mondschein, Researcher at the Maastricht European Centre on Privacy and Cybersecurity