



## Call for Papers

### ‘Technology, Vulnerability and Human Rights Law’

IG on International Human Rights Law Annual Workshop

19<sup>th</sup> ESIL Annual Conference

4-5-6 September 2024 Vilnius, Lithuania

*Technological change has deeply impacted individuals and society. New technologies have affected our daily life as well as our enjoyment of fundamental rights. While the impact of the digital revolution on human rights is undoubted, there is still more to understand in relation to how technologies create human rights harm, who is most at risk of being subjected to it and how international human rights law can respond to these challenges.*

*Extensive scholarship has widely discussed how technological developments have impacted a range of human rights: from surveillance impacting on the right to privacy and creating a chilling effect on several more rights to artificial intelligence used for automated decision-making threatening discrimination, freedom of expression, and fair trial among others.*

*The concept of vulnerability is intrinsic in international human rights, and laws and practice have developed to protect individuals and groups in vulnerable situations. Emerging technologies are impacting in various ways on the notion of vulnerability and on those who are considered vulnerable.*

*On the one hand, technology worsened existing vulnerabilities, amplifying discrimination, and reducing the enjoyment of human rights for several groups. This has happened both at the level of groups in vulnerable situations, such as migrants, the elderly or human rights defenders, and at a geo-political level, further perpetrating old dynamics of power between the Global North and the Global South. Likewise, technological developments are also challenging and redefining the understanding of vulnerability and, therefore, creating new groups at risk or in vulnerable situations.*

*On the other hand, new and emerging technologies could also be used to address existing vulnerabilities and to provide new tools and means to individuals and groups to enjoy their human rights. This is the case, for instance, of support systems for people with disabilities or online systems that enable communications and dissemination of information worldwide.*

*Lastly, it has become apparent that the existing international human rights law framework is struggling to provide adequate protection from the harms brought by technology, both for limits in the laws and in its enforcement. Scholars are also divided on whether international human rights law is able to offer appropriate legal protection to individuals and groups in the age of technology and what legal and policy interventions are needed.*

*We welcome contributions that address how new technologies have impacted on existing or new vulnerable groups, both in positive and negative terms, as well as how they have created and shaped new understandings of vulnerability. We also welcome contributions that investigate the procedural channels offered by international human rights law to address the harm caused by technology. We invite interdisciplinary perspectives from law, social science, and technology.*

### **Date/time and location**

**Date:** Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (exact time tbc)

**Location:** Vilnius, in person and online

### **Selection**

The aim of the Workshop is to foster an interdisciplinary exchange with leading experts from diverse disciplines and communities of practice.

ESIL selection criteria:

- Originality
- Methodology
- Relevance to the theme
- Geographical, gender and expertise balance

We aim to ensure balance between more senior scholars and early career researchers.

The IG co-conveners will decide and inform submitters about the results by early May 2024.

### **How to Submit**

**Submission deadline:** 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Please, email your CV and abstract in pdf (max 400 words) to: [Elena.Abrusci@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:Elena.Abrusci@brunel.ac.uk) **and** [joyce.deconinck@ugent.be](mailto:joyce.deconinck@ugent.be) indicating in the object of

your email “ESIL IG IHRL Call for Papers”. Do specify if you wish to present in person in Vilnius or online.

## Programme

We aim to organize the presentation and discussion of the selected papers into different thematic blocks. A detailed programme of the workshop will be circulated and published by the end of May 2024.

## Publication plans

We plan to publish a peer-reviewed Special Issue with selected papers from the workshop. More information will be provided closer to the date. Full drafts before the workshop are encouraged but not required.

## Early-Career Scholar Prize

Early career scholars may apply for the Early-Career Scholar Prize. The prize is awarded by the ESIL Board. Young scholars who may wish to apply for this prize should indicate this in their abstract submission, if they meet the [eligibility conditions](#) as stated on the ESIL website.

The ESIL secretariat must be informed of all selected speakers who wish to be considered for the Prize before 30th April 2024.

## Important Information

The Interest Group is unable to provide funding for travel and accommodation. Selected speakers will be expected to bear the costs of their own travel and accommodation. Some [ESIL travel grants](#) and [ESIL carers' grants](#) will be available to offer partial financial support to speakers who have exhausted other potential sources of funding.

Please see the [ESIL website](#) for all relevant information about the conference.

All participants at ESIL Interest Group workshops are required to register for the Annual Conference.

There will be an option to register just for one day to attend the workshop; however, all participants are warmly invited to attend the entire event.

We look forward to meeting you at our annual workshop!

For any questions, please email us at: [Elena.Abrusci@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:Elena.Abrusci@brunel.ac.uk) and [joyce.deconinck@ugent.be](mailto:joyce.deconinck@ugent.be)

## Your conveners:

Elena Abrusci, Joyce De Coninck, Otto Spijkers, Pierre Thielboerger

