



International  
Law  
of Culture  
Interest  
Group



## Call for Abstracts

### *New Technologies at the Service of Cultural Justice*

#### **2024 ESIL Interest Group on International Law of Culture Pre-Conference Workshop**

#### **19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Vilnius Technological Change and International Law**

*4 September 2024, morning, Hybrid mode*

Technological change has transformed contemporary tools for the governance of and access to culture and cultural heritage. It has also affected the ways in which international law of culture is implemented. Some key developments include: the expansion of access to knowledge and opportunities to realize the right to participate in cultural life, the use of satellite imagery for the protection of historic sites and the inventorying of threats, programmes for the digital reconstruction and restoration of damaged or destroyed monuments and sites, the collection of evidence of international crimes affecting cultural life and heritage. Taken together, these developments perform a double movement: technological development influences how we develop culture, but also the needs of international law of culture shape the direction of technological development.

This call for abstracts, launched within framework of the 19th ESIL Annual Conference “Technological Change and International Law”, deals with the former dimension, i.e. the roles, promises, and challenges of the use of new technologies in the international justice and accountability landscape in relation to culture and cultural heritage.

Firstly, we invite submissions that explore and analyse the role of digital evidence in fostering and promoting accountability for the violation of international law obligations towards cultural heritage. Contributions exploring an increase in the use of digital sources of evidence in international criminal law are particularly welcome. The International Criminal Court (ICC) first accepted digital evidence in a legal proceeding against Al Faqi Al Mahdi in the landmark case concerning the destruction of the protected shrines and mosques in Timbuktu, Mali. In May 2023, the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) launched OTPLink. This online platform allows victims, witnesses, non-governmental organizations, and other actors to digitally submit evidence relating to international crimes directly to the OTP. Moreover, in the context of Russia’s full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, private online documentation of alleged crimes, including crimes against protected cultural heritage, has become an important tool in promoting eventual accountability. Legal questions remain about the reliability of this evidence, where technological and cultural conversations around the “authenticity” of culture and its artefacts intersect. While digital footage may enhance the efficiency of international crime investigations, the required expertise and costs of assessing this kind of evidence may create fair trial-based challenges. Given the rise of digital evidence and its contestation, we invite contributions that address these topical questions from both procedural and substantive criminal law perspectives, marrying cultural studies and cultural heritage insights whenever possible. We also encourage submissions debating the role of digital evidence for establishing

and assessing state responsibility for breaches of international law obligations to safeguard cultural heritage during armed conflicts.

Secondly, we invite submissions that analyse the role of new technologies in repairing cultural wrongs. In particular, we encourage proposals for papers relating to the importance and role of new technologies in providing access to lost cultural heritage and cultural identity. These can range from digital restitution, access to archives and digital reconstructions. They can also include digital pathways to revitalize and promote intergenerational transmission of heritage practices. We ask whether technological tools can only serve as reparations for the harm suffered or as a real way of accessing culture, heritage, and the realization of all human rights – not only those related to cultural life.

Abstracts (in English) must be submitted to the IG convenors: [beatriz.barreiro@urjc.es](mailto:beatriz.barreiro@urjc.es); [giovannicarlo.bruno@cnr.it](mailto:giovannicarlo.bruno@cnr.it); [a.jakubowski@inp.pan.pl](mailto:a.jakubowski@inp.pan.pl); [l.lixinski@unsw.edu.au](mailto:l.lixinski@unsw.edu.au), by 25 April 2024, including:

- The author's / authors' name and affiliation;
- A 500-700-word abstract in MS Word file or PDF;
- The author's / authors' CV, including a list of relevant publications;
- The author's / authors' contact details, including email address and phone number;
- Whether the author / authors is / are ESIL member / members;
- The author's / authors' interest in being considered, if selected, for the [ESIL Young Scholar Prize](#);
- Any information the author / authors wish to divulge in helping us enhance equity, diversity, and inclusion at ESIL, in line with ESIL's [Statement of Principles on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion](#).

Multiple abstracts from the same authors will be considered, but only one can be selected. Co-authored multidisciplinary papers are particularly welcomed. Applicants will be informed of the Organizing Committee's decision no later than 30 April 2024.

Publication opportunities: As co-convenors of the IG, we have publication plans for the presented papers. The precise format of publication will be discussed during the conference, and we welcome suggestions from participants.

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 to attend the IG workshops; however, all participants are warmly invited to attend the entire event.

Selected speakers should indicate their interest in being considered for the ESIL Early-Career Scholar Prize, if they meet the [eligibility conditions](#) as stated on the ESIL website.

*The Organizing Committee*

*Beatriz Barreiro Carril, Giovanni Carlo Bruno, Andrzej Jakubowski, Lucas Lixinski*