



— ESIL 2024

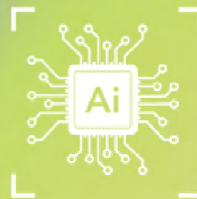
# TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

19th Annual Conference of the European  
Society of International Law



**September 5-6, 2024**

Vilnius, Lithuania



**CALL FOR PAPERS**



The 19th Annual Conference of the European Society of International Law will convene in Vilnius on Thursday 5 and Friday 6 September 2024. The main conference will be preceded by workshops organised by the Society's Interest Groups on Wednesday 4 September 2024.

## THE GENERAL THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

Technological changes and scientific discoveries have been transforming societies, social structures and values. Our theme invites participants to reflect on how recent technological advances transform the international community and the main pillars of international law. How, if at all, is new technology changing our perception and practices of international law? What were past international legal responses to technological change? When and how can we regulate new technology at the international level, if at all? Which new technologies need to be regulated at the international level?

The conference will start with a key dialogue about Europe's place in this new technological world. Six fora will discuss a range of topics from "Race as Technology", "A new theory of (human) rights adapted to governance by data" to "Technologies of Warfare" and "Peace and Security in a Digital Age".

## THE THEMES OF THE AGORAE

The ESIL 2024 conference will convene twelve agorae, ten based on the following themes, and two based on agora proposals submitted by ESIL Interest Groups. ESIL invites innovative paper proposals concerning one of the Agora themes:

### 1. International Markets, Money, and Labour in Times of Technological Change

The fourth industrial revolution poses a challenge of adapting the labour market to its demand of technology-savvy employers. Fintech with its reliance on automation and AI provide ample opportunities for newcomers in the market and leads to the development of shadow banking. Cryptocurrencies, virtual assets, Internet-enabled global commerce raise issues of taxation, applicable quality standards, etc. Technological innovation leads to legal uncertainties and the need for fine-tuning of international legal regulation. How can international law foster global cooperation in setting new standards to bridge the particularities of domestic market structures? How can international law be used to provide protection for vulnerable participants of changing markets?

### 2. Digital Platforms and the Public Sphere: International Law and Democratic Disruption

Digital platforms can become an instrument for spreading disinformation and fake news. They can be used to try to manipulate the democratic processes, notably during elections. Does international law provide sufficient protection for the value of democracy in these contexts? Should international law impose an obligation on digital platforms to remove certain content? Should international law limit the powers of digital platforms to limit the freedom of speech online? Should digital platforms be allowed or required to limit the powers of politicians or government agencies to post harmful content online? What should the role of self-regulation and of private social media oversight boards be in addressing problems arising in the public sphere?



### 3. Digital Technologies in Humanitarian Law

Digital technologies make it possible to collect data related to humanitarian crises, such as natural disasters and armed conflicts, as well as to communicate the needs to the world and to use online platforms for collecting and allocating aid. The benefits of such tools are apparent, but what is left below the radar? The availability of open-source data enables better assessments and should contribute to better disaster relief efforts and sustainable development policies. But what are the risks of these technologies, and what regulation could manage those risks? How should international humanitarian law embrace digital technologies? How do we impose limits on ourselves and the destructive technology that we create? How do we negotiate and coordinate international competition for power and technological dominance?

### 4. Technologies of Security and Surveillance

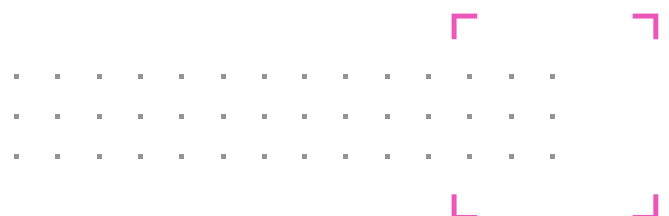
Surveillance can limit privacy, have a chilling effect on the exercise of fundamental freedoms, reinforce inequalities and raise other human rights concerns. New technologies offer even more opportunities for ensuring the effectiveness of surveillance and, as a corollary, pose more danger to the human rights of those monitored. Using digital technology to control the COVID-19 pandemic was one example of how taking care of the public good by employing advanced surveillance technologies could raise issues of transparency, trust, and mistrust among the public. As our everyday surroundings (such as the Internet of things) increasingly offer more opportunities for being monitored at any time, should international law redefine the limits of acceptable interference with privacy?

### 5. Forensic Activism - New Technologies in Human Rights, Migration and Criminal Justice

Digital forensics deals with data stored electronically. Electronic evidence is a component of almost all criminal activities and digital forensics support is crucial for law enforcement investigations. The transnational element is prominent in such investigations and international law is particularly relevant. The integrity of such evidence needs to be ensured for it to be admissible in judicial procedures. At the same time, the accused has to be offered all the necessary fair trial guarantees related to the use of digital evidence. Technologies used in migration, notably automated decision-making, raise human rights issues (bias, fairness of procedure, etc.) and also raises the question of whether legal regulation in this area is sufficient. Is the international human rights law framework sufficient for ensuring accountability for human rights harms caused by technology?

### 6. Environment, Ecological Disasters, and Technology in International Legal Context

AI is good at analyzing vast and complex data. It makes it possible to identify and measure the environmental impacts of corporate activities and products and thus double-check the environmental claims of companies. AI may also be used to identify environmental risks. Technologies, such as unmanned aerial systems or AI-based analysis of satellite images, can also help to alleviate the negative consequences of ecological disasters. Are there areas where international law needs to be updated relying on scientific data processed by AI? On the other hand, what are the environmental impacts of new technologies (AI) and is new regulation needed?



## 7. Oceans / Outer Space - Sensing, Constructing, and Commodifying the Global Commons

Technologies make far-away spaces more accessible and provide new possibilities for exercising control and asserting power over those territories. As new technologies may not necessarily be universally accessible, being in possession of such technologies provides a competitive advantage in trying to benefit from access to those spaces. Is technology the new sovereignty? Does the term terra nullius acquire any new shades of meaning when used for analysing how the interests of states possessing technologies that allow them to exercise certain control of faraway spaces should be aligned? Does technological progress require updating existing definitions of spaces?

## 8. Critical and Historical Perspectives on International Law's Turn to Technology

What are the big debates about technology in the international law doctrine? Can technology-neutral and technology-specific international law co-exist? When did the turn to technology-specific international law occur? Is the turn of law to technology a new phenomenon? Does the technological change necessarily precede the legal change? Does the technological change necessarily lead to legal change? Do answers to the above question depend on the subject area of international law?

## 9. International Law, Technology, and the Posthuman / More-than-human

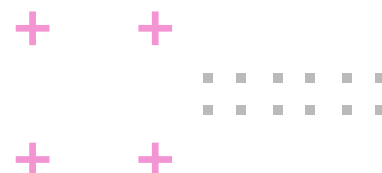
Traditionally international law was meant for states but with rather heavy humanistic and anthropocentric connotations. The current leaps in technology and human immersion in virtual worlds question the place of humans at the pinnacle of legal systems. To what extent is Artificial Intelligence an object or subject of law? How does the posthuman / more-than-human component in the recent discourse affect international law?

## 10. New Technologies and the Legal Profession: Education, Litigation, Research, Activism

Technologies affect the way the law is taught, learnt, and practised. AI-based products can be of great assistance for identifying relevant legal material but also pose challenges in evaluating the level of proficiency in law achieved by a student who relied on AI during the study process. Over-reliance on technologies can lead to incomplete or biased outcomes of research used for academic or practical purposes, e.g. in examining cases in court. For activists, technologies can simplify the task of substantiating their claims with legal arguments. Are technology-related challenges related to teaching and practising international law different from those arising in the context of domestic law? Do vagueness and fragmentation of international law play an important role?

## 11. Agora proposed by ESIL Interest Group

## 12. Agora proposed by ESIL Interest Group



# INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION

## Selection criteria

The abstracts will be assessed by the programme committee, which consists of the agora Chair, plus representatives from the ESIL Board and the host institution, on the basis of:

- Originality and innovative nature of the work;
- Originality and innovative nature of presentation (e.g. videos, animation, installations, etc.);
- Relevance to one of the agora themes;
- Diversity criteria, in accordance with the ESIL Statement of Principles on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion.

We welcome proposals in French or English.

Only one abstract per author will be considered.

Joint submissions are possible, but a reduced registration fee is applicable to only one of the selected speakers.

In an attempt to ensure a broad range of speakers at ESIL events, we particularly encourage proposals from scholars who have not spoken at previous events. Submissions from those who were selected speakers at the most recent Annual Conference or Research Forum will be regarded as ineligible.

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## Information to be included:

Proposals must be sent via email to [info@esil2024vilnius.lt](mailto:info@esil2024vilnius.lt).

The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 31 January 2024.

The following information must be included:

- The agora for which the paper should be considered (one agora only);
- An abstract, not exceeding 500 words, plus a short biography (100 words) to be included with the abstract;
- The author's name and affiliation;
- The author's contact details, including email address and phone number;
- The author's CV, including a list of relevant publications (max. 800 words) (please note: the CV is consulted at a second stage, after review of the abstract, so as to ensure a balanced panel in line with the ESIL principles in relation to diversity, equality and inclusion);
- Whether the author is a current ESIL member;
- Whether the abstract should be considered for the ESIL Early-Career Scholar Prize (see below) and, if so, the relevant information (about eligibility and ESIL membership).

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## Submission of Agora panel proposals by ESIL Interest Groups

Two agorae will be reserved for ESIL Interest Groups, which are invited to submit panel proposals. Agora proposals can only be submitted by ESIL Interest Group conveners and must be submitted via email to [info@esil2024vilnius.lt](mailto:info@esil2024vilnius.lt) by 31 January 2024.

The proposal must include the following information:

- The name of the ESIL Interest Group submitting the proposal;
- The contact details of the person(s) submitting the proposal, including email address and phone number;
- The title of the proposed panel and a description of the overall theme of the panel and the insights expected from the discussion;
- The format of the agora: panel, roundtable, or other format (please note: all agorae are scheduled for



- 1.5 hours and there can be a maximum of 4 participants, e.g. one chair and three speakers);
- A full set of abstracts of the individual works that are to be part of the panel, with the information required for proposals (see above);
- An explanation of the process by which the proposal was selected. It is expected that agora proposals be selected through an open and transparent process, and that the proposed composition of the agora panel reflects geographical, gender, and institutional diversity.

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### Full papers

Selected speakers should submit a first draft of their work (min. 3,000 words) prior to the conference. The work will be shared with the chair and the other agora speakers with a view to creating interactions during the session. The quality of the drafts will be screened by the programme committee, which may request amendments.

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### Timeline

The deadline for submission of abstracts is 31 January 2024.  
Successful applicants will be informed no later than 31 March 2024.  
The deadline for submission of full papers is 1 July 2024.  
The conference runs from 4-6 September 2024.  
The deadline for (optional) submission of final papers (to be included in the ESIL Paper Series and/ or a future conference publication) is 1 November 2024.

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### Finances

All selected speakers must register for the conference and, if ESIL members, will be eligible for a reduced conference registration fee.

A limited number of travel grants and carers' grants is available to ESIL members to encourage and facilitate attendance at ESIL events. Application details for these grants can be found on the ESIL website. In order to be eligible for a grant, membership of ESIL is required by the deadline for the submission of abstracts, i.e. 31 January 2024.

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### Publication

After the conference, ESIL provides the opportunity to publish papers in the ESIL Paper Series and also plans to publish selected high-quality papers in a volume of the ESIL Book Series (published by OUP). Further details about how to submit papers for publication will be provided to all speakers immediately after the conference.

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### ESIL Early-Career Scholar Prize

ESIL will award the ESIL Early-Career Scholar Prize again in Vilnius. Further details about the Prize can be found on the ESIL website. The Prize will be awarded for the best paper submitted to the conference or to a pre-conference Interest Group workshop by a scholar at an early stage in her or his career. Early-career scholars are (i) candidates for a postgraduate degree in law; (ii) PhD candidates or those who have had their oral defence no longer than 3 years prior to the submission of an abstract; or (iii) those who are within the first 5 years of their career following the award of their last academic degree (other than a PhD). Candidates for the Prize must be ESIL members at the time of submitting their abstract. Co-authored articles will only be considered for the prize if all authors fulfil the eligibility criteria.



To be considered, please provide the following information when submitting the abstract:

- An expression of interest in competing for the ESIL Early-Career Scholar Prize;
- Date of enrolment in PhD programme / date of PhD defence or date of award of the last academic degree (to indicate how the eligibility criteria are met);
- Date of joining ESIL.

Upon acceptance of the abstract for presentation at the conference or in a pre-conference IG workshop and notification that they are eligible for the Prize, authors must submit a paper of between 8,000 and 12,000 words (including footnotes) to the ESIL Secretariat ([esil.secretariat@eui.eu](mailto:esil.secretariat@eui.eu)) by 1 July 2024 for consideration by the jury.

## CONTACT

For further information, consult our website [www.esil2024vilnius.lt](http://www.esil2024vilnius.lt) or please write to [info@esil2024vilnius.lt](mailto:info@esil2024vilnius.lt)

