



ELI

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ELI Newsletter

June 2025

Cover: Đuro Sessa (President of the International Association of Judges)

Project Spotlight: Marek Dubovec (Director of Law Reform Programs at the International Law Institute (ILI))

Spotlight: Emma Ruttkamp-Bloem (Philosopher of Science and Technology, AI Ethics Policy Advisor and Machine Ethics Researcher)





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International Association of Judges
promoting an independent judiciary worldwide

the beginning of the International Association of Judges' (IAJ) existence, the main aim, I would dare to say, its mission in the world of international justice, has been to safeguard the independence of the judiciary, which is an essential requirement of the judicial function, guaranteeing human rights and freedom.

The IAJ was founded in Salzburg, Austria in 1953 as a professional, non-political, international organisation, bringing together national associations of judges, not individual judges. The organisation currently encompasses 92 such national associations or representative groups, from five continents, with status of observer with the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe, participating in numerous activities including the European Law Institute.

In the early days, the IAJ was basically a place in which a few judges, mainly from Europe, used to meet no more than once a year to discuss the subjects chosen by the (at that time only) three study commissions. Things changed dramatically after the fall of the Berlin Wall, with the accession of many of the countries, which had been part of the former communist bloc. In the early and mid-nineties of the last century, the IAJ started to deal with concrete, serious and unprecedented problems affecting all of the thinkable (and unthinkable) issues of judicial independence. This was due to several reasons. Mainly, to the fact that those systems were emerging from decades of dictatorship and discovering for the first time the principles of the rule of law.

Because of this, one can easily imagine the enormous size of the unprecedented problems IAJ had to face by the increase in

the number of associations from different countries and regions joining the IAJ. The first solution the IAJ found was to create four Regional Groups, from an idea of the then IAJ Secretary General Justice, Massimo Bonomo. At that time the leadership of the IAJ understood immediately that these were the right 'arenas' to discuss these new kinds of problems. Therefore, we started to debate concrete issues affecting judicial independence by creating commissions, issuing recommendations, letters, resolutions, among others, and trying to act by contact with other organisations and international bodies. We intensified our contacts with the UN (and in particular, since it was created, in 1994, with the Office of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of Judges and Lawyers), the Council of Europe, the European Union and other institutions. In the meantime, the number of IAJ member associations was constantly growing, posing new types of problems, or challenges, as they are named now in new the 'think positive dogma'.

However, this is not the end of the story (and of our troubles). In the last six or seven years, the IAJ has had to face other unprecedented kinds of challenge, and perhaps the hardest ones. It started with the very well-known tragedy in Turkey, where we had to realise immediately that our 'usual' strategy, consisting of issuing resolutions and recommendations, sending letters to international bodies, sending delegations to the spot, tasking independent observers in trials against colleagues, among others, had to be complemented with something new.

We understood that we had to do much more. The IAJ decided, in 2016, to create a special fund for assistance to judges and

prosecutors, as well as their families, who are victims of their regime's persecutions. Up to now, the IAJ has paid out sums (donated by judges, judicial associations and judicial bodies from all over the world) in a total amount of about EUR 245,000.00, intended to help the families of Turkish judges and prosecutors who were persecuted by the regime, deprived of their functions and often imprisoned. A Committee, specially constituted within the European Group of the IAJ, examines the requests for support and approves the disbursement, through a network that operates in a confidential way, but in constant contact with the IAJ.

Nevertheless, as always in life, trouble does not come alone. Over the past few years, the number of countries that have begun showing serious problems in relation to the issue of judicial independence has only increased, even exponentially, even in countries which in the past were considered as lighthouses in this matter. It will be enough to mention, among the most recent cases, the situation of Poland which its new Government tries to address, not with serious difficulties. But at that time the IAJ launched, in agreement with the Polish Association 'IUSTITIA', a specific and very intense number of initiatives, before and after the highly publicised 'March of the 1000 robes,' which on 19 January 2020 gathered a large number of judges, from every European country, in the streets of Warsaw, to demonstrate their solidarity with their Polish colleagues and their concern for the demolition of the rule of law in that country.

The same happened in February 2025, when more than 5000 Hungarian Judges and their supporters gathered on the streets of

Budapest to protest against the derogation of the principles of the rule of law and where the European Association of Judges (EAJ) and IAJ showed support and took a stand before such a huge audience. More recently, the IAJ and its European Regional Group took the unprecedented step of filing a lawsuit with the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) against the EU Council's decision to release Recovery and Resilience Funds to Poland. We argued that the conditions imposed by the EU were insufficient to guarantee the effective protection of judicial independence and that they ignored previous CJEU rulings on these matters.

Problems emerge in many other countries such as Israel, Guatemala and Tunisia, always with the same denomination, that is, attempts of the executive power to put judges under their influence and control.

Furthermore, the humanitarian crisis that affected judges in Turkey has, in some ways, reoccur, though in different and, at times, even more dramatic forms, in Afghanistan. There, the IAJ was called upon to assist in a rescue operation involving the physical relocation of hundreds of female and male judges and prosecutors from the country. This occurred within a highly complex international context that demanded, and continues to demand, unprecedented collaboration with multiple governments to coordinate this vital and commendable effort.

Shortly afterward, the brutal Russian invasion of Ukraine and the resulting humanitarian catastrophe unfolded, an event that inevitably affected the judiciary as well, particularly in a country whose association of judges has been an active member of the IAJ since 2004.

In light of these events, the IAJ has been compelled to rethink and reorganise its activities, not only as a forum for judges worldwide to exchange ideas and best practices, but more importantly, as a platform to demonstrate solidarity with national associations in their struggle to uphold judicial independence. The IAJ must also leverage its contacts and influence to alert international organisations and the public to the dangers that threaten citizens when the principle of judicial independence is not preserved and protected. In this general context, already thirty years

ago, between 1993 and 1995, the various regional components of the IAJ adopted Charters on the statute of the judge:

- The 'Judges' Charter in Europe,' adopted by the European Association of Judges – European Regional Group of the IAJ in 1993;
- The 'Statute of the Ibero-American Judge' (Estatuto del Juez Iberoamericano), adopted in 1995 by the Ibero-American Group of the IAJ;
- The 'Judges Statute in Africa,' adopted in 1995 by the African Group of the IAJ.

A few years later, in 1999, after a long process of reflection, the Central Council of the IAJ, during its annual meeting, held in Taiwan, adopted a Universal Charter of the Judge, subsequently revised, integrated and updated in Santiago de Chile, in 2017.

Starting, therefore, from 1999 and since the adoption of the Universal Charter, the IAJ has conducted long and intense work on the minimum standards for guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary. In addition, the various Regional Groups and the Central Council of the IAJ have adopted numerous resolutions that refer to these standards, gradually creating, in this way, a corpus of specific rules for this organisation.

This has also occurred, notably, in the wake of numerous international instruments adopted over the past few decades, many under the auspices of the Council of Europe. These include the European Charter on the Statute for Judges (1998), Recommendation No R(2010)12, various opinions issued by the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE), the Magna Carta of Judges (2010), and the reports and initiatives of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ).

All of these documents and such activities have witnessed an intense and decisive contribution offered by representatives of the IAJ.

This is just a short glimpse of the way the IAJ has changed in these years, adapting itself, while consistently growing up, to new needs of this complex contemporary world.

Duro Sessa graduated from the University of Zagreb Faculty of Law in 1980 and passed the Bar exam in 1984. He has served as a judge since, working at Municipal Courts in Petrinja, Sisak and Zagreb. In 1991, he became President of the Civil Department at the Zagreb Municipal Court.

From 1993 to 1996, Sessa was Consul Counsellor at the Croatian Consulate General in Perth, Australia. Upon returning, he resumed judgeship and later became President of the Zagreb Municipal Court. Between 2002 and 2008, he served as a judge and Civil Department President at the Zagreb County Court.

He was appointed Supreme Court Justice in 2008 and served as President of the Supreme Court from 2017 to 2021, continuing as Justice thereafter.

He was Deputy President of the National Judicial Council (2005–2009) and served a second term (2009–2010). A founder of the Association of Croatian Judges, Sessa was its President from 2005 to 2017.

Actively involved in the International Association of Judges (IAJ) and its regional group EAJ since 2000, he was elected President of EAJ in 2023. He also served as President of the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE) from 2017 to 2019 and has represented Croatia in CCJE since 2000.

Over the past decade, he has worked with the Council of Europe, European Union, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and others as an expert on judicial independence in multiple countries. Since 2018, he has been a member of the UN-affiliated Global Judicial Integrity Network Advisory Board.

He was also part of Croatia's EU accession negotiation team for Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Human Rights).

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Representation



Representational activities held in June 2025



BUNDESGERICHTSHOF

5 June 2025 | Online

- ELI President, Prof Dr Pascal Pichonnaz, met President of the German Federal Court of Justice. More [here](#).



6 June | Online

- ELI President-Elect, Prof Dr Teresa Rodríguez de las Heras Ballell, met European Land Registry Association (ELRA) leadership. More [here](#).



WORLD BANK GROUP

13 May 2025 | Online

- ELI President, ELI President-Elect and ELI Secretary General, Dr Vanessa Wilcox, met World Bank Group representatives. More [here](#).



18 June 2025 | Vienna, Austria & Online

- ELI Secretariat hosted group from Modernate College, from the Netherlands. More [here](#).



26 June 2025 | Vienna, Austria & Online

- ELI Secretariat hosted People's Procuratorate of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. More [here](#).

Not an
ELI
Member?



Join the voice of the
European
Legal Community.

Projects

ELI Celebrates its 14th Anniversary with its Members' Day



■ 4 June 2025

On 4 June 2025, ELI celebrated its 14th anniversary by hosting its third Members' Day Webinar, this year dedicated to the Governance and Regulation of Quantum Technologies.

With:

- Pascal Pichonnaz (ELI President; Professor, University of Fribourg)

Physicist:

- Klaus Mølmer (Professor, Niels Bohr Institute)

Industry Perspective

- Robert Harrison (Governing Board Member, European Quantum Industry Consortium; Founding Partner, Sonnenberg & Harrison)
- Heike Riel (IBM Fellow; Department Head of Science & Technology, IBM Research)

Legal and Ethical Perspective:

- Matthias C Kettemann (Professor of Innovation, Theory and Philosophy of Law; Head, Department of Theory and Future of Law, University of Innsbruck; Director, Innsbruck Quantum Ethics Lab; Rapporteur on Quantum Ethics and ad personam member, UNESCO COMEST)
- Christopher Docksey (Honorary Director-General, EDPS; Data Protection Authority of Guernsey; European Centre on Privacy and Cybersecurity, Maastricht University)
- Pascal Maillot (Acting Head of Unit for Quantum Technologies, DG CONNECT, European Commission)

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Project Dissemination

ELI Guiding Principles and Model Rules on Digital Assistants for Consumer Contracts (DACC Model Rules)

- **5 June 2025:** Webinar I on its General Framework and Design Requirements. More [here](#).
- **24 June 2025:** Webinar II on Contracts for the Supply of a Digital Assistant and Algorithmic Contracts. More [here](#).

ELI Third Party Funding of Litigation Principles

- **26–27 June 2025:** The Principles were presented at the 'A European Tribute to Roberta Romano' Conference, Madrid, Spain, by Project Reporter, Susanne Augenhofer. More [here](#).

Read more [here](#).

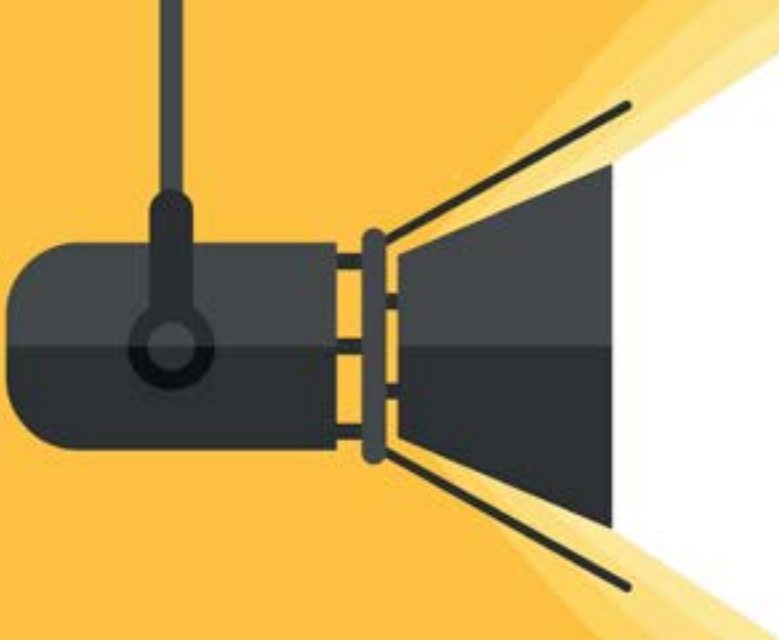
ELI Webinar Series on its Guiding Principles and Model Rules on Digital Assistants for Consumer Contracts

5 June 2025, Webinar I:

- Pascal Pichonnaz (ELI President; Professor, University of Fribourg)
- Christian Twigg-Flesner (ELI Project Co-Reporter; Professor, University of Warwick)
- Sophia Tang (Professor, Wuhan University)
- Simona Staikova-van Bommel (Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, European Commission)

24 June 2025, Webinar II:

- Pascal Pichonnaz (ELI President; Professor, University of Fribourg)
- Marie Jull Sørensen (ELI Project Co-Reporter, Professor, University of Aalborg)
- Dirk Staudenmayer (Head of Unit for Digital Transition and Judicial Training of the DG Justice and Consumers at the European Commission)
- Sophia Tang (Professor, Wuhan University)



Quantum Technology: To Govern or Not to Govern

Discussed recently by ELI in celebration of its Member's Day on Governance and Regulation of Quantum Technologies

2025, the United Nations (UN) Year of Quantum Science and Technology, highlights the enormous potential of quantum research to address '... critical societal challenges such as climate, energy, food production, healthcare and clean water as reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals ...' (UNESCO 2023). While there is growing concern over the decryption capabilities of quantum computing, a serious and well-founded threat to global peace and security¹, this brief intervention focuses on three other concerns that are often underemphasised, despite their significant potential for social and ethical disruption. The factors I highlight relate to the inequality gap, concerns around the transparency and explainability of quantum systems and the current immaturity of quantum research amidst a new global order.

This first concern, which quantum technology shares with other emerging technologies, relates to

geopolitical imbalances. In the realm of advanced technologies, the divide between those who have access and those who do not becomes increasingly pronounced. The potential impact of quantum technology² will be global, affecting both those with access and those without. Also, there are those who have access not only to the benefits of deploying and engaging with this technology, but also to what might be needed to protect themselves from potential harm resulting from such engagement; those who have access to the capabilities required to design and develop these technologies, and those who do not have access to any of these processes.

This complexity, the potential for widening this 'quantum divide'³, should be guarded against when considering issues of inclusivity and diversity in the context of quantum technology. This complexity also relates to a concern, highlighted in the forthcoming World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific

Emma Rutkamp-Bloem is a Philosopher of Science and Technology, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) ethics Policy Advisor and a Machine Ethics Researcher. She is the Chairperson of the UNESCO World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST). She is an Expert Advisory Board Member for the Global Commission on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain and recently joined the WEF's Global Future Council on Autonomous Systems. She is an Associate Editor for Science and Engineering Ethics, and a Full Member of the International Academy for the Philosophy of Science. Currently, she is the Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Pretoria, and leads the AI ethics group at the South African Centre for AI Research (CAIR). Emma was a Member of the UN Secretary General's AI Advisory Body 2023-2024. Emma led the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group that prepared the draft of the 2021 UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI and contributed to development of its implementation instruments. She continues working with UNESCO as a Member of UNESCO's AI Ethics without Borders and Women4EthicalAI initiatives. She is a Member of the Global Academic Network, Centre for AI and Digital Policy, Washington DC and has worked on AI governance projects with the African Union Development Agency and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights.

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Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) report on the ethics of quantum computing, that the existing knowledge asymmetry in quantum research might affect the potential for future democratic governance measures and processes.⁴

The second factor I highlight relates to a new opacity problem that arises in the context of quantum science and technology. This problem impacts not only how we think about the need for transparency and explainability in quantum systems, but also how we consider accountability and responsibility, since the nature of opacity in the quantum systems directly influences the level of trust they can inspire.

This quantum opacity is closely related to the ‘measurement problem’ in quantum science. A measurement is made whenever data is extracted from a qubit. However, in the quantum context, measurement requires that the system be in a ‘defined state’, which implies that all data contained in the system prior to measurement is lost. Measurement thus fundamentally disrupts a quantum state:

‘it [the quantum state] ‘collapses’ the aspect of the wave function that was measured into a single observable state, resulting in a loss of data. After the measurement, the quantum object’s wave function is that of the state that was detected, rather than that of its premeasurement state’ (Grumbling & Horowitz, 2019, 57).

In this context, Possati (2023) raises important ethical questions:

‘[h]ow can we explain and justify the decision-making process of a quantum algorithm if we lose all the data before the measurement? How can we be sure that the process followed by a quantum algorithm is ethically correct if we cannot completely access it as it unfolds before the measurements? How can we be sure that phenomena such as entanglement and superposition do not produce effects contrary to ethical standards and protocols, such as the use of sensitive data to reduce the decoherence of the system?’

Thirdly, while the current immaturity of quantum technologies implies that we cannot yet fully determine their societal impact, this should not be used as an excuse to delay governance discussions and negotiations, as such conversations are urgently needed. A key reason for this urgency is the significant role of private sector funding in global quantum research. This raises the need for serious reflection on what Ian Bremmer and Mustafa Suleyman, in the context of AI technology, have called the AI power paradox⁵. This paradox might easily also arise in the case of quantum technology, as the world is confronted increasingly with a new global order shaped by private-sector power with serious geopolitical power.

In conclusion, in light of these and other concerns, it becomes a moral imperative to put in place mechanisms for international collaboration on quantum governance, sooner rather than later.

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¹ Apart from the threat to cyber security and current encryption robustness, the uneven access to post-quantum encryption is also a concern.

² Key areas of quantum technology development include quantum computing, quantum sensing, and quantum communication.

³ See, eg, de Wolf 2017.

⁴ See, eg, Vermaas 2017 and Wolbring 2022.

⁵ <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/podcasts/how-ai-could-upend-geopolitics-ian-bremmer-mustafa-suleyman>

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Projects

ELI Publishes its Principles and Guidance for Enforcement Against Digital Assets

■ 16 June 2025

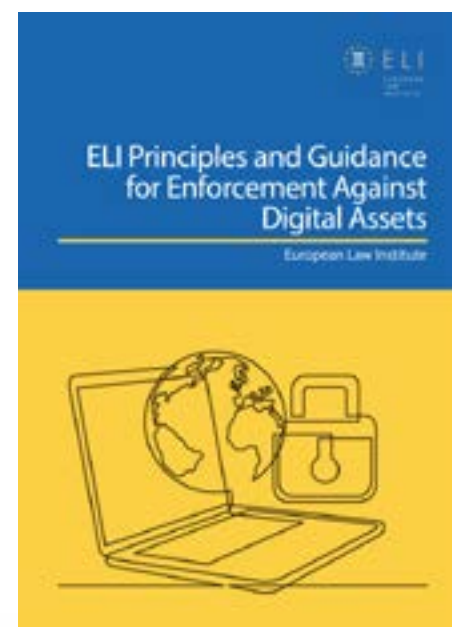
ELI publishes its landmark Principles and Guidance for Enforcement Against Digital Assets

On 8 May 2025, ELI Fellows formally adopted its Principles and Guidance for Enforcement Against Digital Assets (ELI PGEADA).

Drafted by Prof Dr Teresa Rodríguez de las Heras Ballell, Mr Jos Uitdehaag and Prof Dr Sjef van Erp (until September 2022), this groundbreaking statement offers a comprehensive framework to support courts,

lawmakers, enforcement agents, regulators, and international bodies in addressing the challenges of enforcing rights against digital assets.

Structured into ten principles and their accompanying guidance, this ELI output provides both high-level principles and practical guidance to assist in adapting legal procedures, improving enforcement mechanisms, and clarifying the property status and legal treatment of digital assets within national and cross-border contexts.



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ELI Webinar on the ELI Principles and Guidance for Enforcement Against Digital Assets

18 June 2025

- Pietro Sirena (ELI Treasurer; Dean and Professor at Università Bocconi)
- Teresa Rodríguez de las Heras Ballell (ELI Co-Reporter; Professor, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)
- Jos Uitdehaag (ELI Co-Reporter; First Vice-President International Union of Judicial Officers)
- Anna Veneziano (Deputy Secretary General of the UNIDROIT, International Institute for the Unification of Private Law)
- Hideki Kanda (Emeritus Professor, University of Tokyo)
- Marek Dubovec (Director of Law Reform Programs at the International Law Institute (ILI); Professor, University of Arizona)

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ELI Council Convenes to Discuss Ongoing and Prospective ELI Projects

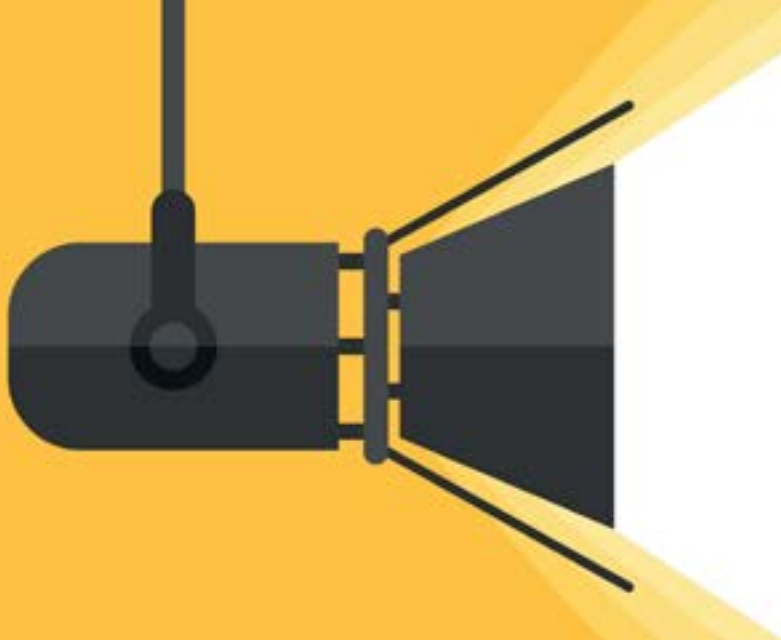
■ 30 June 2025

At its most recent meeting, the Council approved the results of ELI's Extra-Judicial Administration of Justice in Cross-Border Family and Succession Matters project, led by Prof Dr Elena Bargelli, Prof Dr Anatol Dutta and François Trémosa.

The Council also adopted two new projects.

- **Proof of Consent and its Knowledge in the Law of Sexual Offences**, to be co-led by Mrs Justice Bobbie Cheema-Grubb DBE and Prof Dr Anna Coninx.
- **Guiding Principles on Seizing Sanctioned Assets**, to be chaired by Sir Geoffrey Vos, and the project will be co-led by Prof Dr Philippa Webb, Prof Dr Burkhard, Prof Dr Nadakavukaren Schefer and Dr Illia Chernohorenko.

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On ELI's Principles and Guidance for Enforcement Against Digital Assets

Published recently

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he [ELI Principles and Guidance for Enforcement Against Digital Assets](#), approved in May 2025, provide helpful guidance and an overarching framework for crafting actual legislative and practical solutions concerning enforcement against digital assets.

The Principles recognise the quickly changing functional, technological and operational characteristics of digital assets that challenge private law and regulatory frameworks. Lack of identifiable location, the ability to transfer digital assets almost immediately across borders, and other functional attributes put a premium on crafting:

- (i) a uniform approach to conflict of laws issues, and
- (ii) a harmonised approach to substantive law.

While the Principles (a total of ten) primarily address the latter goal, they also address questions of applicable law pertaining to various enforcement issues. Even though the Principles are inherently legal, they also formulate helpful technological guidance,

such as with respect to the interconnection and interoperability of registries. They are addressed principally to legislators, international organisations supporting reforms, courts and parties involved in enforcement proceedings.

The Principles add to the library of resources providing guidance concerning various enforcement issues arising in the digital economy, including the 2021 Global Code of Digital Enforcement by the International Union of Judicial Officers, the 2022 [ELI Principles on the Use of Digital Assets as Security](#), the 2023 UNIDROIT Principles on Digital Assets and Private Law ('DAPL') and the soon to be finalised UNIDROIT Best Practices for Effective Enforcement. While all these resources deal with enforcement, they approach the topic differently. The Global Code provides guidance on the use of digital technology in the enforcement of judgments and contracts that may necessitate legislative changes. UNIDROIT's DAPL addresses applicable law, transfers, custody and security rights. DAPL also contains Principle 18 on

Dr Marek Dubovec is Director of Law Reform Programs at the International Law Institute (ILI). For over 15 years, he has worked with international organisations like UNCITRAL and UNIDROIT to help modernise commercial laws through conventions, model laws and guides. He has led reform projects funded by the World Bank Group, EBRD and others across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Latin America, focusing on secured transactions, factoring, and warehouse receipts. Marek's work includes drafting laws, developing collateral registries and training stakeholders. He has authored policy papers and publications for organisations such as the EBRD and World Bank, and co-authored the 2019 book *Secured Transactions Law Reform in Africa*. He teaches at the University of Arizona, and has been a visiting scholar at the Bank of Japan and University of Puerto Rico.

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procedural law, including enforcement, providing specific examples of how the procedural law may need to be adjusted to facilitate enforcement against digital assets. The 2022 ELI Principles also take this narrow approach to enforcement in the context of security rights. UNIDROIT Best Practices include an entire Part devoted to enforcement on digital assets, recognising their growing importance in economic transactions. Part III takes a pragmatic approach, formulating best enforcement practices regardless of the characterisation of the digital asset under a substantive law; the key consideration is whether digital assets have value that can be realised in enforcement. The recommendations are technology and business-model-neutral. The Principles are most closely aligned with the UNIDROIT project.

The types of digital assets covered by the Principles (Principle 1) are records that have value for enforcement purposes, including those linked to other assets, also known as digital tokens. Principle 2 does not suggest specific enforcement rules or procedures against digital assets. However, the commentary cautions against relying on analogous application of the general rules that may generate uncertainty. The Principles apply to enforcement executed by a public authority, thus excluding other important measures, such as those agreed to privately in a security agreement upon default. While aiming to foster harmonisation, Principle 3 sets out important considerations to determine the law applicable to the proprietary aspects of transactions with digital assets, deferring to Principle 5 for approaches concerning linked assets. Several

Principles address disclosure of information, duties of the debtor, access to digital assets, among others, requiring proportionality and adequacy in executing enforcement measures. Enforcement agents, designated wallets, and other mechanisms to value digital assets play important functions in enforcement, which are respectively addressed in the remaining Principles.

I want to conclude with some thoughts for future guidance to build on the excellent work done by ELI thus far. Principle 5 recognises that the law governing various aspects of linked assets is to be determined by the law governing the asset to which the digital asset is linked. For digital assets subject to registration in a public registry, the *lex registrationis* determines the legal effect of the link. The principle refers to the public registry, but does not provide definitional guidance. Principle 8(4) also refers to a public registry contemplating notations to make enforcement effective against third parties. Would a decentralised or publicly available registry not maintained by a public authority qualify? Interim relief for equipment finance has been well-defined and applied by the courts under the Cape Town Convention. Interim relief is referred to in Principle 8, but it could be further fleshed out in connection with digital assets, especially those linked to another asset, such as goods. Several Principles refer to a particular infrastructure, such as regulated or recognised markets and exchange platforms. Guidance on what constitutes a recognised market, registry and exchange platform, not only for enforcement purposes, but more broadly for transfers of digital assets, would be welcome.

ELI High Level Forum on Democracy and Judicial Independence

■ 25 June 2025



High Level Forum on Democracy and Judicial Independence

This High-Level Forum brought together 70 distinguished participants, including representatives of European Ministries of Justice, Presidents of Supreme and Constitutional Courts, judges and Advocates General of the Court of Justice of the European Union, representatives of international organisations, and other key stakeholders. It offered a unique platform for in-depth dialogue on the pressing and timely topic of safeguarding liberal democracy and ensuring judicial independence.

The primary focus of the Forum was an in-depth discussion of the [ELI Charter of Fundamental Constitutional Principles of a European Democracy](#) and the [ELI-Mount Scopus European Standards of Judicial Independence](#), which offer critical analysis and forward-looking recommendations concerning constitutional developments within the EU as well as judicial independence, against the backdrop of international Standards.

Through presentations and interactive sessions, the Forum aimed at fostering a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Europe today. It identified practical pathways for enhancing legal coherence, safeguarding the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, upholding fundamental rights, and strengthening the overall resilience of constitutional democracy across Europe.



“

Promoting and upholding the rule of law and judicial independence will always be a collective responsibility. Standards on judicial independence, such as those prepared by the European Law Institute, provide an important contribution in that respect.

Such standards contribute to a better understanding of the concept of judicial independence and help build and further strengthen a genuine rule of law culture. So, allow me ... to thank [ELI for its] work in strengthening that rule of law culture.

”



Michael McGrath
Commissioner for Democracy,
Justice, the Rule of Law and
Consumer Protection

Speakers & Discussants:

Speakers:

- Pascal Pichonnaz (ELI President; Professor, University of Fribourg)
- Sir Geoffrey Vos (ELI Second Vice-President Elect; Master of the Rolls and Head of Civil Justice in England and Wales)
- Nicolaas Bel (Deputy Head of Unit Rule of Law, European Commission)
- Takis Tridimas (Project Co-Reporter; Professor, Founding Director of the Luxembourg Centre for European Law, University of Luxembourg)
- Sophie Turenne (Project Co-Reporter; Assistant Professor, University of Cambridge)

Discussants:

- Sir Jeffrey Jowell KCMG KC (Co-Chair; Professor, Blackstone Chambers)
- Shimon Shetreet (Project Co-Reporter; Professor, Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

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New Individual Members

Iulia Boghirnea, National University of Science and Technology Politehnica Bucharest, Romania

Popescu Corina Florența, Ecological University of Bucharest, Romania

Elena-Ana Iancu, Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad, Romania

Pier Mario Lupinu, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

Carmen-Constantina Nenu, National University of Science and Technology Politehnica Bucharest, Romania

Morten Lau Smith, NOVI Attorneys, Denmark

Oana-Andreea Stefan, King's College London, United Kingdom

Ata Türkfiliz, Faculty of Law of University of Antwerp, Belgium



New Institutional Members



The Law Society of Libya is an independent, non-governmental legal institution based in Tripoli, dedicated to strengthening the rule of law, advancing legal awareness, and promoting access to justice in Libya. The Society manages the country's most extensive open-access legal archive, covering constitutions, legislation, judicial rulings, treaties, and official gazettes. It works closely with universities, legal professionals, and civil society to digitise and classify legal documents, publish research and legal commentary, and deliver training programs in legal technology, legislative research, and digital archiving. The Society is active in transitional justice dialogues and legislative modernization efforts, supporting both institutional reform and public legal empowerment. As an Institutional Member of the European Law Institute, it seeks to share Libya's legal transformation experience and contribute to comparative legal reform and cross-border dialogue in Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Global South.

ELI Annual Conference on Fundamental Rights and the Environment

22–24 September 2025 (Vienna, Austria)



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SUNDAY | 21 SEPTEMBER 2025

16:30–17:30	Imperial Crypt Tour (Kapuzinergruft Neuer Markt/Tegetthoffstraße 2 1010 I)
17:50–18:30	Fiaker Tour (Departure Point: Kapuzinergruft Drop-Off Point: Plachutta)
19:00–23:00	Welcome Dinner (Plachutta Wollzeile 38 1010)

MONDAY | 22 SEPTEMBER 2025

Venue: University of Vienna | Main Building (Room: Oktogone) | Universitätsring 1 | 1010

08:30–09:00	Registration (Council Members Only) (Oktogone)
09:00–12:00	ELI Council Meeting (Senatsaal)
11:00–16:30	Conference Registration (Oktogone)
13:00–13:05	ELI Membership Meeting and Opening of the ELI Council Elections (Grosser Festsaal) ■ Pascal Pichonnaz (ELI President; Professor, University of Fribourg)
13:05–13:30	Welcome Address (Grosser Festsaal) ■ Pascal Pichonnaz (ELI President; Professor, University of Fribourg) ■ Sebastian Schütze (Rector, University of Vienna)
13:30–15:00	Panel 1: Enterprise Foundations in Europe (Grosser Festsaal) ■ Chair: Anne Birgitte Gammeljord (ELI Vice-President; Lawyer, Rovsing & Gammeljord) ■ Project Co-Reporter: Anne Sanders (Professor, University of Bielefeld) ■ Pelle Munk-Poulsen (General Counsel, Legal, Novo Nordisk Foundation) ■ Philip Yun (Chair, Global Philanthropy Forum Steering Committee; Co-CEO, Commonwealth Club World Affairs)
15:30–16:30	Ole Lando Memorial Lecture (Grosser Festsaal) ■ Chair: Pascal Pichonnaz (ELI President; Professor, University of Fribourg) ■ Siofra O’Leary (Former President, European Court of Human Rights) ■ Zoé Jacquemin (President, Trans Europe Experts)

Venue: [Austrian Academy of Sciences | Doktor-Ignaz-Seipel-Platz 2 | 1010](#)

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|-------------|---|
| 17:15–18:15 | Austrian Academy of Sciences Tour (Austrian Academy of Sciences) |
| 18:30–20:00 | Industry Event: Greening Supply Chains (Austrian Academy of Sciences) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chair: Pascal Pichonnaz (ELI President; Professor, University of Fribourg) ■ Adil Najam (President, World Wide Fund for Nature International) |
| 20:30–23:30 | Opening Reception and ELI Young Lawyers Award Presentation (Austrian Academy of Sciences) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chair: Pascal Pichonnaz (ELI President; Professor, University of Fribourg) ■ Michael Umfahrer (President, Austrian Civil Law Notaries) ■ Armenak Utudjian (President, Austrian Bar Association) ■ Christiane Wendehorst (President, Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, Austrian Academy of Sciences) |

TUESDAY | 23 SEPTEMBER 2025

Venue: [Café Landtmann | Universitätsring 4 | 1010](#)

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|-------------|---|
| 08:00–09:00 | Sustaining Members Networking Breakfast |
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Venue: [University of Vienna | Main Building \(Room: Oktogone\) | Universitätsring 1 | 1010](#)

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| 09:30–11:00 | Panel 2: Corporate Criminal Liability in the European Union (Grosser Festsaal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chair: Pietro Sirena (ELI Treasurer; Professor, Bocconi University) ■ Project Co-Reporter: Fabio Nicolichia (Researcher, University of Ferrara) ■ Donal Gerard O'Donnell (Chief Justice of Ireland) ■ Geneviève Helleringer (Vice-Chair, European Corporate Governance Institute (ECGI)) |
| 11:30–13:00 | Panel 3: ELI Climate Justice – New Challenges for Law and Judges (Grosser Festsaal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chair: Aneta Wiewiórowska-Domagalska (ELI Executive Committee Member) ■ Project Co-Reporter: Henrik Andersen (Professor, Copenhagen Business School) ■ François Chaix (President, Swiss Supreme Court) ■ Michelle Jonker-Argueta (Senior Legal Counsel, Greenpeace International) |
| 14:00–15:00 | Keynote Panel: Fundamental Rights and the Environment (Grosser Festsaal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chair: Pascal Pichonnaz (ELI President; Professor, University of Fribourg) ■ Moderator: Owen Bowcott (Former Correspondent, The Guardian) ■ Georg E Kodek (President, Austrian Supreme Court) ■ Sirpa Rautio (Director, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) |
| 15:30–17:00 | Panel 4: Succession of Digital Assets, Data and Other Digital Remains (Grosser Festsaal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chair: Teresa Rodríguez de las Heras Ballell (ELI President-Elect; Professor, University Carlos III of Madrid) ■ Project Co-Reporter: Edina Harbinja (Professor, University of Birmingham) ■ Danguolė Bublienė (President, Supreme Court of Lithuania) ■ James Norris (Founder, Digital Legacy Association) |
| 17:00–17:30 | ELI Membership Meeting and Announcement of the Council Election Results |
| 17:45–18:45 | ELI Council Meeting and Elections of the Innominate Members of the Executive Committee |

Venue: [Palais Ferstel | Strauchgasse 4 | 1010](#)

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|-------------|--|
| 19:00–19:45 | Registration |
| 19:30–22:30 | Drinks Reception, Gala Dinner & Hub and SIG of the Year Award Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pascal Pichonnaz (ELI President; Professor, University of Fribourg) ■ Anna Sporrer (Austrian Federal Minister of Justice) |

WEDNESDAY | 24 SEPTEMBER 2025

Venue: University of Vienna | Main Building (Room: Oktogone) | Universitätsring 1 | 1010

10:00–11:30	Keynote Panel: Green Finance and Green Investment (Grosser Festsaal) ■ Chair: Sir Geoffrey Vos (ELI Vice-President; Judge; Master of the Rolls and the Head of Civil Justice in England and Wales) ■ Michael Strauss (General Counsel, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) ■ Neale H Bergman (Senior Legal Officer, United Nations) ■ Margarita Pirovska (Director of Policy, UN Principles for Responsible Investment)
12:00–13:30	Panel 5: Advance Choices for Future Disablement (Grosser Festsaal) ■ Chair: Pietro Sirena (ELI Treasurer; Professor, Bocconi University) ■ Project Co-Reporter: Adrian D Ward (Founder Chairman, NHS Trusts and a Mental Health Association) ■ Angelina Rosiak (Legislative Officer, European Commission) ■ Heidrun Mollenkopf (President, AGE Platform Europe) ■ Ivana Jelić (Vice-President, European Court of Human Rights) ■ Margherita Cassano (First President, Italian Supreme Court)
13:30–13:45	Closing Session

Venue: Heiligenstadt U-Bahn Station | 1190

18:15–17:15	Heurigen Express Liliput Through Vienna’s Vineyards
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Venue: Mayer am Pfarrplatz | Pfarrpl 2 | 1190

19:30–23:30	Farewell Dinner
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Conference Garneres Notable Media Coverage, Highlighted in Forbes

Jon McGowan, an ELI Member, Forbes contributor and ESG attorney, underlines the timeliness of the 2025 European Law Institute Annual Meeting in Vienna, which will focus on sustainability and climate law, among other topics, as the EU revisits key aspects of the Green Deal, including reforms to the CSRD and CSDDD.

McGowan also emphasises the importance of the event in light of recent court rulings and the growing global legal emphasis on climate action.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Hubs and SIGs

For Hubs and SIGs upcoming events and activities, please consult [ELI Website](#).

9

Hub and SIG meetings and other activities were held throughout June 2025.

Hubs and SIGs are country- and topic-specific groups, respectively.

Hubs and SIGs serve as dedicated working groups within ELI, aimed at facilitating discussion, sharing and monitoring legal developments, and stimulating project proposals. As such, they are of fundamental importance to ELI's success.



Austrian Hub

Past Events:

- **2 June 2025:** Webinar on International Disputes under Current Problems of Private Business Law Webinar Series (Online and University of Innsbruck). More [here](#).
- **23 June 2025:** Webinar on Rezoning of Land: Questions of Admissibility & Liability under Monday Webinar Series (Online and University of Innsbruck). More [here](#).



Italian Hub

Upcoming Event:

- **16 July 2025:** Hub supports training course on European Protections of Human and Fundamental Rights (Online and Castel Capuano). More [here](#).



Croatian Hub

Past Events:

- **17 June 2025:** Annual ELI Croatian Hub Members Meeting. More [here](#).
- **17 June 2025:** 43rd Webinar under its Webinar Series on 'AI³: Ethics, Law, Code'. More [here](#).



French Hub

Past Event:

- **23 June 2025:** Second Meeting on the 2026 ELI Annual Conference and Possible Contributions (Online). More [here](#).



Spanish Hub

Past Event:

- **12–13 June 2025:** 10th Annual Meeting (University of Zaragoza's Faculty of Law). More [here](#).



Baltic Hub

Past Event:

- **18 June 2025:** Conference on Civil Law and Justice in the Baltic States (University of Latvia & Online). More [here](#).


Family and Succession Law
SIG

Past Event:

- **12 June 2025:** Conference on Challenges Recognising Gender Equality (Online). More [here](#).

Upcoming Event:

- **16 July 2025:** Conference on How Legal Professionals Shape Modern Divorce Proceedings. More [here](#).



Call for Interest – Maritime Law SIG

ELI Members are invited to register for the above SIG by contacting the ELI Secretariat.

Maritime law is gaining strategic and economic importance as Europe faces challenges in climate change, global trade, technology, and sustainability. This complex field spans shipping, port regulation, marine environmental protection and offshore energy. The newly proposed SIG on Maritime Law will explore how EU law interacts with international maritime frameworks and national legal systems, aiming to identify best practices. Key focus areas include:

- Regulation of green fuels and maritime inclusion in the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS)
- Legal frameworks for autonomous and unmanned vessels
- Emerging issues in maritime insurance, including cyber risks and climate impacts
- Maritime finance, including green investments, state aid, and regulatory compliance
- Sustainable marine and coastal tourism, especially cruise and recreational activities

Its proposed chairmanship is the Piri Reis University Faculty of Law (Türkiye), as an ELI Institutional Member, Prof Dr Başak Başoğlu (Assoc Professor, Piri Reis University) and Prof Samim Ünan (Director, Maritime Law Centre, Piri Reis University). The SIG will host seminars, promote scholarship, and support EU policy and research efforts. Participation is open to scholars and practitioners in maritime, transport, environmental, insurance, tourism and international law.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Call for Interest – Criminal Law SIG

ELI Members are invited to register for the above SIG by contacting the ELI Secretariat.

The Criminal Law SIG aims to advance understanding of criminal law and procedure amid rapid societal and technological changes. With growing complexities in justice systems, particularly due to Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies, there is a clear need for legal analysis that enhances both fairness and effectiveness, while safeguarding fundamental rights. The SIG is set to be chaired by Fabio Nicolichia (Criminal Procedure Researcher, Department of Law, University of Ferrara). His primary research focuses on corporate criminal liability and procedure

Through interdisciplinary collaboration, the SIG addresses key issues such as forensic reliability, the psychology of criminal behavior and socio-economic influences on crime. Its main objectives are to:

- Organise expert seminars and publish outcomes;
- Foster cooperation with institutions for joint research initiatives;
- Develop policy recommendations that inform academic debate and support practical legal reforms, engaging stakeholders to promote evidence-based change.

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European Law Institute

- Pan-European, democratic, membership-based organisation
- Uniting prominent jurists of all legal professions
- Aiming to improve the law in Europe
- Carrying out projects with immediate practical application

Members of the ELI can contribute to its projects and gain access to an international network of jurists. Apart from other activities, the ELI organises its Annual Conference and Meetings, bringing together Europe's leading experts in diverse fields of law.

Executive Committee

President:

1st Vice-President:

2nd Vice-President:

Treasurer:

Other Members:

Pascal Pichonnaz

Anne Birgitte Gammeljord

Sir Geoffrey Vos

Pietro Sirena

Sylvaine Poillot Peruzzetto

Teresa Rodríguez de las Heras Ballell

Aneta Wiewiórowska-Domagalska

ELI in Vienna

The Secretariat of the ELI, which is hosted by the University of Vienna, is located in the heart of the Austrian capital, close to the main building of the University, the representation of the European Commission in Austria as well as the information office of the European Parliament.

We cordially invite you to visit us whenever you are in Vienna.



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