

Call for Papers

7th Young European Law Scholars Conference (YELS)

‘A Union of Crises: In Search of Constitutional Resilience’

6-7 June 2024, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Law

After the successful 6th edition of the Young European Law Scholars (YELS) Conference held at University of Maastricht, the 7th annual YELS Conference will be held on 6-7 June 2024 at Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

We invite young scholars of European law (i.e. scholars who have not yet secured a full professorship) to come together and discuss the resilience of the EU constitutional legal order in times of crises. In keeping with the format of previous YELS conferences, scholars whose papers are selected will be given the opportunity to present their work at the conference and to receive dedicated, individualised feedback on their paper from a distinguished scholar in the field of European law, followed by a plenary discussion of the paper.

Conference theme

The European Union seems to have been in a state of perpetual crisis. Not only was it almost proverbially built as a response to one of the largest crises in the history of Europe – WW2 – it has gone through several political crises in its early years. Throughout the past decades, the EU and its Member States have continuously had to devise responses to a plethora of crises (or “crises”): the economic, financial and subsequent Euro crisis, the ongoing refugee and migration crisis, the Covid-19 health crisis, and the security and energy crises related to the invasion of Ukraine. Some have had a pronounced existential note for the EU: think of Brexit, the rule of law crisis, the acute climate crisis, or the evermore present need for future-proof regulation of artificial intelligence and digital threats generally. Many of these crises have pertained to different areas (and types) of EU competence, have different origins (endogenous vs exogenous), different durations (acute emergencies vs long-standing crises), and carried different potential for political and legal contestation over the appropriate responses.

Though few of these multi-faceted crises fit into a single box as they spill over into political, economic, and other dimensions, the responses and the scholarly attention to this multitude of crises seem to have been largely parochial, case-specific, and ad hoc. This conference aims to take stock of the plurality of crises the Union has experienced; to critically reflect on the differences and commonalities in how the EU and other actors have responded to these crises; and to explore whether a meta-narrative of EU crisis law and governance that transcends the specificities of each individual crisis situation can be developed. The overarching goal of this exploration is to better understand and evaluate the constitutional resilience and the ability of the EU to react to past, present and future crises and disruptions.

Submissions on any aspect of this theme are welcome, including those that consider broader aspects of the EU constitutional architecture as pertaining to crises, as well as those dealing with responses to specific crises of the past and the future. We understand the more general term “EU crisis law” to include the more specific “EU emergency law”, and we welcome submissions on both. We encourage submissions from a broad range of theoretical, empirical, socio-legal, comparative, historical, and interdisciplinary perspectives on EU law. By way of guidance, a list of non-exhaustive topics and questions that can be considered include:

- What defines a crisis? Are all crises, discussed in these terms in the context of the EU, rightfully considered as such?

- How does the context of a crisis influence the relationship between the EU and the Member States? How does power shift between the national, the supranational, and the international in times of crisis? And can the EU learn from other multilevel systems in striking the right balance of powers in crisis situations?
- How do different responses to crises by the EU and other relevant actors impact the protection of fundamental rights in the EU?
- Who are the actors involved in negotiating, executing, and overseeing responses to crises and emergencies? What democratic credentials do these actors have?
- What accountability mechanisms exist in EU crisis law? What is the role of the Court of Justice in emergency situations?
- What legitimacy and accountability concerns arise in responses to crisis? Are those different to the ones that are pertinent in non-crisis situations?
- How can EU constitutional law find the balance between efficient emergency response and accountable and democratic exercise of public power?
- Have the EU and the Member States responded to crises by resorting to inventive ad hoc legal approaches? Or have they employed the existing constitutional bases and tools? Does diversity among the Member States impact the approaches to crises and their effectiveness?
- Can we identify a “common core” that different EU legal responses to various crises share? If so, what are the principles underlying EU crisis or emergency law? Should there be such a “common core”?
- Does the EU already have an “emergency constitution”? Does it need one?
- What legal tools could be adopted to better equip the EU to address future regional and global challenges? Should the Treaties be amended? What should be the inspiration for the EU (e.g., specific solutions in international or federal settings)?
- What is the role of solidarity and trust in coping with crises?

Guidelines for submission

The conveners of the 7th YELS conference invite young scholars of European law to submit an abstract (max 500 words) by **31 January 2024** [here](#). Contributions should be submitted and presented in English.

Scholars who have their abstracts selected for the conference will be required to submit a full paper (8,000-10,000 words, including footnotes) by **30 April 2024**. These papers will be sent to expert commentators before the conference. The organisers will strive to publish a selection of the presented papers in a special issue of an international journal or an edited volume.

Organisation

The organisers will aim to partially cover travel and accommodation costs for the speakers, but no guarantees can be made at this point. Further information will be offered at a later date.

Participation in the conference is free of charge. General registration will open in spring 2024. If you have questions about the event, please contact yels2024@pf.uni-lj.si.

Conference conveners

The conference conveners are Jaka Kukavica (University of Ljubljana, European University Institute) and Marjan Kos (University of Ljubljana).