



Umberto Boccioni, Elasticity (1912). Museo del Novecento, Milan. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons

Lawyers and the Changing Landscape of European Human Rights Litigation Trajectories, Strategies, Networks

Workshop (in person and online)

4-5 September, University of Strasbourg

Salle Alex Weill, Law Faculty

1 Place d'Athènes, 67000 Strasbourg

Ce travail s'inscrit dans le cadre de l'Institut Thématique Interdisciplinaire MAKerS du programme ITI 2021-2028 de l'Université de Strasbourg, du CNRS et de l'INSERM. Il a bénéficié du soutien financier de l'IdEx Unistra (ANR-10-IDEX-0002), et du/de(s) financement(s) au titre du Programme Investissement d'Avenir dans le cadre du/des projets SFRI-STRATUS (ANR-20-SFRI-0012).

About the Workshop

This workshop examines the evolving role of lawyers in European human rights adjudication. It focuses on legal professionals who represent applicants or contribute to the construction of cases before bodies such as the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union. Broader perspectives on international mechanisms, including commissions and treaty bodies, are also included.

The event brings together interdisciplinary perspectives to explore the careers, networks, strategies, and influence of lawyers in this field. It responds to recent developments, such as increasing restrictions on access to courts and the growing professionalisation of human rights litigation. Key questions include who enters the field, how legal expertise is formed, and what kinds of power dynamics shape legal practice. Contributions combine empirical approaches with theoretical and historical insights to examine how lawyers help shape the evolving field of human rights law.

Organising Team

Salvatore Caserta, Karim Fertikh, Mikael Rask Madsen, Ezgi Özlü and Mélanie Schmitt

The organisation of this workshop was a collective effort. It also benefited from the involvement of many of the speakers and participants listed in the programme.

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PROGRAMME

Thursday, 4 September 2025

14:00 – 14:30

Arrival

14:30 – 14:45

Welcome & Introduction

14:45 - 16:30 **I. Understanding Human Rights Lawyers: Profiles, Methods, and Approaches**

Chair: Karim Fertikh (*University of Strasbourg*)

Mikael Rask Madsen (*University of Copenhagen*)

A Maverick, an Eccentric and Definitely Un-British: The First Generation of European Human Rights Lawyers

Veronika Fikfak (*University College London*)

Mapping Human Rights Lawyers

Ezgi Özlü (*University of Strasbourg*)

Bringing Fields Together: Studying Lawyers in International Human Rights Litigation

Discussant: Mélanie Schmit (*University of Strasbourg*)

16:30 - 17:00

Coffee Break

17:00-18:30 **II. Hijacking the Law: Lawyers and the Infrastructure of Conservative Legal Mobilisation**

Chair: TBA

Salvatore Caserta (*University of Copenhagen*)

The Rights Turn Against Rights: Legal Mobilization and Transnational Strategies of Conservative Movements

Scott Cummings (*UCLA School of Law*)

Pro Bono Trump and the Autocratic Legal Playbook

Discussant: TBA

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Friday, 5 September 2025

09:45-11:45 **III. Lawyers in Conflict: Divided Strategies and Visions of Human Rights**

Chair: TBA

Simon Chaptel (*CNRS, Rennes University*) & Gaëtan Cliquennois (*CNRS, Rennes University*)

Conservative and Liberal Lawyers in the European Court of Human Rights and Their Relations to Legal Movements

Karolina Kocemba (*Erasmus University Rotterdam*)

Legal Mobilization in Changing Political Landscapes: Conservative and Progressive Lawyers in the Fight over Reproductive Rights

Filiz Kahraman (*University of Toronto*)

Labor in Hard Times: Lawyers as Strategists Between the Local and the International

Discussant: Marco Rocca (*CNRS, University of Strasbourg*)

Lunch Break

13:30-15:15 **IV. From the Asylum Bar to the Supreme Court: Legal Careers and Court Prestige**

Chair: Camille Herlin-Giret (*CNRS, University of Strasbourg*)

Liora Israël (*EHESS*)

French Supreme Court Lawyers from a Sociological Perspective: Three Dimensions

Laure Blévis (*University of Paris Nanterre*)

Defending Migrants before the French Conseil d'État (1945–2015)

Sara Dezalay (*ESPOL*)

The “Asylum Bar” in France: Between Crisis Litigation and Vocational Crisis

Discussant: Hélène Michel (*University of Strasbourg*)

15:15-15:30 *Concluding Remarks & Next Steps*

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