

Judicial Governance in the EU and Beyond: Institutional Design, Cooperation, and (Dis)trust

How do we design judicial systems that can be trusted, both within one country and across borders?

Cooperation has steadily become the norm and the operational reality for courts acting transnationally. National courts rely on one another through mutual recognition. EU institutions depend on domestic judicial systems to uphold shared legal commitments. Transnational dispute resolution bodies interact with national and regional legal orders. Yet this cooperation rests on a fragile foundation: trust in how judicial institutions are governed. Judicial governance is about the often-invisible structures behind judicial institutions. It includes how courts are administered, how judges are appointed, evaluated, and disciplined, how resources are allocated, how disputes are channeled through different procedures, and how courts relate to other institutions and to each other. These governance choices shape not only efficiency and expertise, but also transparency, accountability, and ultimately public trust in judicial institutions.

Across Europe and beyond, public trust in judicial institutions is under pressure. Debates about judicial independence, disciplinary mechanisms, court reforms, and political influence increasingly spill across borders, testing assumptions of mutual trust that underpin cooperation within the EU and in the wider international legal order. At the same time, new institutional forms (such as specialized courts, hybrid tribunals, small claims systems, and expanding alternate dispute resolution mechanisms) are reshaping how judicial outcomes are delivered and governed.

Addressing these foundational questions requires us to move beyond abstraction and toward a collective formulation of research that probes the mechanics of judicial governance. This PhD training event invites doctoral researchers to explore judicial governance as a site of institutional design and contestation. We are interested in how governance choices affect cooperation between judicial actors, how transparency and accountability interact with independence, and how trust in judicial institutions is built, strained, or repaired.

Relevant topics may include:

- cooperation between courts of different types and levels
- interactions between judicial and administrative institutions
- cross-border judicial dialogue, mutual recognition, and enforcement
- governance of judicial appointments, discipline, and court administration
- specialization of courts and tribunals (e.g. patent courts, investment tribunals, small claims systems)
- governance challenges of mediation, arbitration, and online dispute resolution
- judicial governance and rule of law in the EU accession process

The workshop is designed as a space for research in progress. We particularly encourage PhD researchers to present developing ideas, conceptual or methodological dilemmas, or projects at an early or intermediate stage. The goal is to create a collaborative environment for refining research design, deepening analysis, and building intellectual connections across fields and jurisdictions.



Submission Requirements

Please submit a 500-word abstract outlining:

- your core research question
- the theoretical, doctrinal, or empirical approach you are using or considering
- and one key challenge, uncertainty, or design choice in your project on which you would particularly welcome feedback

Reflexivity through Creativity: A Soliloquy

To conclude the workshop, we will hold a session that invites participants to step back from formal academic presentation and reflect more creatively on their research journey, questions, and motivations. This is not a second research presentation, and we are not looking for polished artistic masterpieces. Instead, we invite a “creative soliloquy”: a moment where you step away from the formal ‘we’ of academia and use non-traditional formats to reflect on the core of your research puzzle.

We ask that you creatively map or express your core research problem. This could take several forms, such as:

- A visual or physical mapping: Using simple materials (paper, string, color, diagrams) to illustrate the flows, tensions, or blocks in your governance problem.
- Creative text: A short poem or a piece of flash fiction that captures the dilemma at the heart of your research.
- Experimental formats: Any medium that helps translate a complex institutional or legal issue into a metaphorical idea.

Selected presenters may optionally submit either an extended abstract (maximum 1,500 words) or a draft article (6,000–8,000 words, excluding footnotes) approximately one month before the date of the event.

Abstract Submission Form: [Call for Papers: Annual PhD Event - Judicial Governance in the EU and Beyond](#)

Deadline for Abstracts: 15 June 2026, 23u59

Met vriendelijke groeten | Best,

Dr. Courtney Marsh-Rosseel
Onderzoeksmanager | Research Manager

(Ik ben op vrijdag niet aanwezig | I am not in the office on Fridays)



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