



Rebalancing Public & Private Interests  
& Erasmus Centre for Empirical Legal Studies

# Conference “Law, Regulation and Technology: Healthy, Safe, and Sustainable Smart Cities”

## Call for Papers

Deadline for Abstract Submissions: **25 March 2024**

Building on the previous successful academic events organised by Erasmus School of Law (ESL) on law, regulation and technology, the ESL invites submissions for the new Conference “Law, Regulation and Technology: Healthy, Sustainable, and Safe Smart Cities” to be held on **26-27 June 2024**. The purpose of this two-day conference is to stimulate discussion addressing the array of challenges law and regulation are facing when referred to the creation and development of smart cities. This conference seeks to approach this issue in a sensible and holistic way, by looking at the relationship between law, regulation and technology through the lenses of core concepts such as rule of law, ethics, philosophy of technology, human rights, democracy, accountability and (public/private) power. Against this background, it takes a multidimensional approach intertwining legal, ethical and technology dynamics perspectives with a view to better understand how law, ethics and information technology interact and influence each other in the creation and development of smart cities. Likewise, it poses more fundamental questions on the impact that smart cities may have on the relationship between public power, techno-power and citizens.

Within this overarching theme, the conference will focus on three more specific cluster topics related to smart cities:

### **(1) Technology & Power: Uses and Abuses of Technology by the Industry and Public Authority**

This conference theme will focus on the following questions: Does the complexity of the technology play a special role in regulating smart cities? Do (supranational or subnational) regulators have a sufficient understanding of the technology that they are trying to keep in check? Should (supranational or subnational) regulators use the law or can there be alternative ways to address techno-power? What are the limits and safeguards that should always be guaranteed by law? Another dimension to analyse is the one between the State, or any other competent authority, and citizens. Hence, another question to be addressed in this theme is as follows: What forms of automated decision-making, techno-regulation and use of big data by public authorities should be deemed acceptable?

## **(2) Technology As a Game Changer in The Relationship Between Public and Private Responsibilities: Legal and Ethical Perspectives**

Technological innovation may have put multiple “old world” dogmas at odds, blurring public and private responsibilities. Main discussion points in this theme will focus on legal and ethical challenges and implications of the privatization of public power through digitalization, legal tech, the possible collusion between (big) tech companies and public authorities on data collection and processing, surveillance policy agenda-setting, and the development of frameworks to assess technology and technological developments.

## **(3) Technology & Human Rights**

The use of AI, algorithms, surveillance and large-scale data collection and processing have seen an exceptional increase in the use of both the private and public domains. This trend can impinge on the respect of different human rights. Focus areas in this rather horizontal theme will revolve around the mixed impact of human rights at a both general (e.g., the burgeoning discussion on whether to hold accountable private authorities for human rights violation) and more granular level at different governance levels (i.e., privacy and data protection regime).

The organisers welcome contributions that integrate doctrinal legal research with insights from philosophy of law, ethics and philosophy of technology, political science and governance studies, economics, and law & technology. The envisaged conference output is an edited book or a special journal issue.

This event is supported by the Small Grants Scheme of the research initiatives on ‘Rebalancing Public & Private Interests’ and Erasmus Centre of Empirical Legal Studies of Erasmus School of Law.

### **Submission**

Prospective contributors are invited to submit their abstract (max. 500 words) with a provisional title to [lawandtech@law.eur.nl](mailto:lawandtech@law.eur.nl) by **25 March 2024**. Abstracts may be accompanied by a brief running bio of no more than 150 words.

Selected papers will be announced by the **beginning of April 2024**. A full draft of the paper (between 6,000 and 8,000 words, incl. references) is due by **15 June 2024** with the objective of publishing an edited book or a special issue. Draft papers will be circulated among the participants in advance.

Participation in the conference is free of charge but registration is required.

Contributors to the conference are expected to partake in the book project or special issue. The organisers will make the final selection of papers and reserve the right not to select a presented paper.



**Funding of travel costs**

There will be limited funds available to cover accommodation costs for one night. Subject to later confirmation, there may be limited funds for covering (part of) the travel costs for the selected participants.

Questions may be directed to conference organisers at [lawandtech@law.eur.nl](mailto:lawandtech@law.eur.nl).

*Organising Committee*

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