



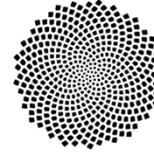
Utrecht
University



Earth
System
Governance



European Research Council
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PROBLEMSHIFTING

Symposium and Author Workshop on Earth System Law, 12 and 13 November 2025

Hosted by: Wageningen University and Research, Utrecht University (the Netherlands), and Colorado College (USA)

The [Earth System Governance Project's Task Force on Earth System Law](#) invites participants of diverse backgrounds and career stages to a two-day event series interrogating the prospects and implications of earth system law. This two-day event series, hosted by Wageningen University and Research, Utrecht University and Colorado College (USA), will convene scholars and practitioners to critically assess the development of earth system law, identify its real-world applications, and shape a collective future research and policy agenda.

On 12 November, a symposium at Wageningen University and Research will provide space to debate the state of the art, explore emerging practices, and examine how earth system law might meaningfully intervene in the structural transformations required for planetary stewardship.

On 13 November, a follow-up author workshop at Utrecht University will facilitate the collaborative development of a co-authored perspective paper to be published in a high-impact journal. This workshop will synthesize insights from the symposium and lay the groundwork for a strategic, action-oriented agenda for earth system law.

We invite contributions that engage with the theory, practice, and future directions of earth system law. Please see below for more information. For questions, please contact Işık Girgiç (i.girgic@uu.nl).

Symposium, 12 November 2025, Wageningen University and Research

Exploring New Frontiers in Earth System Law: From Theory to Practice

Environmental law has failed to drive the structural transformations that are required to confront the planetary crisis. The Anthropocene requires a different legal paradigm, a new generation of laws, and a novel approach to legal regulation that contribute to ensure a realistic prospect for all present and future life to flourish on a disrupted planet.

Earth system law has been proposed as an alternative framework to start thinking about the design of such a new legal paradigm for the Anthropocene. Earth system law should ultimately respond

to the unique epistemic, ontological, and normative characteristics, demands, and nature of earth system governance in the Anthropocene.

Since its introduction in [2019](#), the idea of earth system law has increasingly been studied. Some have embraced it with approval and continue to further develop earth system law scholarship, while others remain more sceptical. A main critique is that while the theoretical foundations of earth system law have been developing well, its practical value and application to real life sustainability challenges it specifically aims to solve, are less clear.

This symposium seeks to engage with and respond to this critique by asking: What are the practical uses of earth system law as a legal imaginary? Is it more than just an imaginary? Which forms and practices of earth system law are already emerging or in place? Which actors are engaging with the elements of earth system law and how? Whither earth system law scholarship and practice?

The aim of this symposium is threefold:

- To take stock of the historical theoretical development of earth system law to date, to critically reflect on major milestones during this period, and to construct a concise state-of-the-art scientific assessment of earth system law.
- To interrogate what this updated state-of-the-art scientific assessment could mean in practice, to identify existing forms and practices of earth system law, and how earth system law could be further applied to real world sustainability challenges.
- To craft a future earth system law research and policy agenda for the next decade that aligns with and is responsive to the insights developed above.

We invite symposium contributions addressing any or all of these three aims. Interested participants are invited to submit brief paper abstracts of approximately 250 words by Monday 15 September 2025 through this link: <https://forms.gle/Qm82ywtuYTFrHdZp8>. Notification of acceptance will be given on Tuesday 30 September 2025.

Date: 12 November 2025

Location: Wageningen University and Research

Participation: In person and virtual

Costs: All symposium fees and meals will be covered for accepted participants. Participants will only cover travel and lodging expenses (some limited travel assistance may be available for early-career participants).

Author workshop, 13 November 2025, Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University

Exploring New Frontiers in Earth System Law: From Theory to Practice

Departing from the insights that we have harvested during the symposium, including the expertise and experience of earth system law scholars, the author workshop offers an in-person opportunity to co-create a perspective paper addressing the three aims of the symposium. The workshop will be interactive, and participants will be required to prepare responses to a set of questions in advance. All participants in the author workshop will be co-authors of the perspective paper that will be submitted to a high impact journal.

We invite all symposium participants to take part in the author workshop to be hosted at Utrecht University. Participation is in person only. Please use the registration link below to register by no later than Monday 15 September 2025.

Date: 13 November 2025

Location: Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University

Participation: In person

Costs: All workshop fees and meals will be covered for accepted participants. Participants will only cover travel and lodging expenses (some limited travel assistance may be available for early-career participants).

Registration link: Same as above.