

# 2026 Annual Conference of the Dutch-Flemish Law & Society Association

## Dates and Venue

The 2026 Annual Conference of the Dutch-Flemish Law & Society Association (VSR) will be hosted by the **Department Law, Society & Crime at Erasmus School of Law**. The conference will take place on **Thursday 29 and Friday 30 January 2026** in **Rotterdam, The Netherlands**.

## Conference Theme

The theme of the 2026 VSR Annual Conference is ***Crossing Borders: Navigating Law and Society in a World of Turbulence***.

This conference takes place amidst stormy conditions that challenge a variety of borders and boundaries. The world's greatest powers openly disregard the border sovereignty of other nations. International institutions appear powerless in the face of ongoing genocides and find themselves under attack when they attempt to act. AI technologies develop rapidly and disruptively, driven in large part by influential Big Tech companies who reject safeguards and regularly foster antidemocratic sympathies. Global threats such as climate change seem to have fallen down the hierarchy of priorities. At the same time, migrant border crossing is presented as one of the gravest threats to rich Western societies and people with migration backgrounds are increasingly scapegoated as the root of diverse societal problems. Such narratives are used to justify harsh policy measures that challenge the boundaries of rule of law and human rights.

Against this backdrop, a range of pressing questions emerges for scholars of law and society. Which implications do the current geopolitical dynamics have for the viability of international law? What role does legal mobilization play in addressing urgent problems that receive inadequate political attention? How do legal professionals and bureaucrats cope with laws and policies that are constitutionally or morally problematic? And particularly pressing is also the position of the judiciary, traditionally viewed as a last line of defense, which increasingly finds itself at the center of constitutional and political conflicts. We welcome applicants to engage these and other questions in their contributions to the conference.

### Keynote lecture

The keynote of the conference is titled ***Law's Judgment, Racism's Shadow: Reckoning with Ethnic Profiling at the Border***, and will be delivered by Prof. Maartje van der Woude, Professor of Sociology of Law at the Van Vollenhoven Institute for Law, Governance and Society, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

## Call for Abstracts and Proposals

The conference welcomes submission of both individual papers and full panels. Moreover, this year several panels have been pre-formed that invite submissions on their topics. The panels are listed below with their titles and organizers. When submitting an abstract of an individual paper via the designated link (see below) you will have the option to indicate a preferred panel for your submission. The primary language of the conference will be English and all communications will be in English. However, please note that submissions of papers and panels in Dutch are also warmly welcomed. For submitting an individual paper, we ask you to submit a title and an abstract (max 200 words). It is not compulsory to submit to a specific panel, individual papers can also be submitted independently. In all cases, the conference organizers decide on the final allocation of papers to specific panels. For full panel submissions, please provide the title of the panel session, the designated chair of the panel and at least three paper abstracts from participants.

The submission link for individual papers is here:

<https://www.eur.nl/en/esl/submission-form-individual-papers>

For the submission of panels please mail to

[vsr2026@law.eur.nl](mailto:vsr2026@law.eur.nl)

**The deadline for both individual paper and panel submissions is 24 November 2025.**

You will be informed about your submission mid-December.

Pre-formed panels calling for individual paper proposals:

**- Law & Nature**

[Edwin Alblas](#) & [Niels Hoek](#)

**– Judiciary**

[Lyana Francot](#) & [Nina Holvast](#)

**- Decision making by street-level bureaucrats**

[Eline Linthorst](#) & [Lieke Oldenhof](#)

**- Law and AI**

[Elke Olthuis](#) & [Anna van Duin](#)

**- Compliance**

[Malouke Kuiper](#) & [Nina Tobsch](#)

**- Legal mobilization**

[Jeff Handmaker](#), [Michal Stambulski](#) & [Sanne Taekema](#)

**– Legal profession and legal education in turbulent times**

[Tamara Butter](#) & [Hedwig van Rossum](#)

- **Regulation and enforcement**

[Melanie Ehren](#) & (tbc)

- **Migration & law**

[Elise Maes](#) & [Ricky van Oers](#)

- **Pop-up Law & Society Book Club: 38 Londres Street: On Impunity, Pinochet in England and a Nazi in Patagonia**

[Jeff Handmaker](#) & [Willem-Jan Kortleven](#)