



2026 Annual Toogdag Call for Abstracts

Deadline for Abstract Submissions: March 19, 2026

The Erasmus School of Law invites submissions for the 2026 Annual Toogdag to be held on June 11. The theme of the annual conference from the Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research is:

Safeguarding Human Rights in the Technological Age

The impact of technology and digitalization on human rights is a critical area of concern in today's society. As technology continues to evolve, it plays a significant role in shaping the landscape of human rights, both positively and negatively. On the one hand, advancements in technology have the potential to enhance the protection of human rights. For example, biometric identification systems can secure access to essential services, remote sensing and IoT devices can provide ongoing environmental monitoring, and data analytics can help identify patterns of discrimination or inequality in various sectors.

However, technology can also have negative impacts. For instance, surveillance technologies can lead to invasive monitoring of individuals, infringing on privacy rights and enabling authoritarian regimes to suppress dissent. Additionally, the proliferation of social media can facilitate the spread of hate speech and misinformation, potentially inciting violence and discrimination against marginalized groups. Furthermore, the rise of automation and artificial intelligence in the workplace can result in job displacement, posing a threat to the right to work for many individuals. Simultaneously, the resource-intensive infrastructure required to support most of these technologies can negatively affect the right to live in a healthy environment.

Furthermore, the digital divide remains a pressing issue. Not everyone has equal access to technology and the internet, which can exacerbate existing inequalities. Individuals without digital literacy or access to online resources may find themselves further marginalized and unable to benefit from the advancements that technology offers. This disparity can impede their ability to engage with legal systems and access justice. Additionally, the lack of representation in the development of technology and the data used to inform it can lead to further alienation and discrimination. The digital divide is compounded by the actions of private actors, particularly large businesses, whose platforms shape access to technology and create barriers for users. Their influence extends not only to citizens but also to governments, granting these businesses significant control over who is included or excluded from access to technology, thereby hindering the protection to human rights.

In the Netherlands, these challenges are becoming increasingly relevant. Digitalization alters the relationship between governments and citizens, as governmental actors use AI tools and data to



profile citizens and run the risk of exacerbating discrimination against marginalized groups. We have seen examples of tensions between profiling and non-discrimination in digital systems used by the Dutch Tax Authorities (Belastingdienst) and the Dutch Border Control Police (Koninklijke Marechaussee). Collaborations in technology between state actors and private actors leads to widespread data collection, which can complicate the respect of citizens' human rights. This situation necessitates complex oversight of algorithms and privacy measures (Dutch Data Protection Authority). Additionally, it is essential to ensure non-discrimination (NJCM) and to address barriers to accessing the judiciary (Council of State).

The 2026 Toogdag, hosted by Erasmus School of Law and its Erasmus Center of Law and Digitalization, will explore these themes in depth. The plenary sessions will address the broader implications of technology on human rights, while parallel sessions will focus on specific themes related to the digital age, business, migration, climate, and economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as areas of Dutch law such as administrative and criminal law. The program also welcomes contributions in Dutch, reflecting the inclusive nature of the discussions.

Submission

Prospective contributors are invited to submit their abstract (350 words maximum) with a provisional title to digitalization@law.eur.nl by March 19, 2026. Please indicate "Toogdag 2026" in the subject line of the email. Selected papers will be announced by the end of March. Moreover, a PhD networking activity (incl. dinner) is scheduled to take place on June 10.

Participation at the conference is free of charge but registration is required. Registration for non-speakers should be addressed to digitalization@law.eur.nl by May 1, 2026.

Questions may be directed to conference organisers at digitalization@law.eur.nl.

Organization committee

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