



ATRIP

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF
TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

**44th Annual Congress, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil
June 28 – July 1, 2026**

Congress Website: <https://www.atrip2026.org.br/>

Call for Paper Proposals

Intellectual Property and Politics: From Power Relations to Realpolitik

Background

Intellectual property (IP) laws have never existed in isolation. They are continuously shaped by broader political forces, from the earliest copyright statutes to current debates over authorship and inventorship in the age of artificial intelligence (AI). Today, with rising geopolitical tensions and debates concerning technology governance and digital sovereignty, the interrelation between IP and politics is more visible and more contested than ever.

Politics is a complex, sometimes ambiguous concept with multiple meanings depending on context. It is one of those terms that is difficult to define yet easier to describe and recognize. It may carry a positive connotation, as in a “political compromise solution,” or a negative one, as in “self-serving and manipulative conduct.” At its core, politics refers to decision-making within groups and the relations it creates. It encompasses institutional politics (*e.g.*, law-making bodies, policy agendas, treaty negotiations), organizational politics (*e.g.*, international organizations, local agencies, civil society), power dynamics (*e.g.*, geopolitical divides, stakeholder influence), and ideological frameworks (*e.g.*, liberalism, neoliberalism). Politics also shapes academia: teaching, research, publications, and funding often reflect — consciously or not — the political environments in which scholars operate, whether through their institutions, power dynamics, or ideological settings.

Politics is not only a driver of formal legal frameworks but also of the gap between “law in the books” and “law on the ground.” It leaves its imprint on responses to new technologies (digitization, AI), enforcement practices, and questions of economic distribution. Political forces can generate trends that grow into movements, ultimately transforming legal frameworks and driving social change. Identifying and analysing these forces is essential for understanding current realities and anticipating future developments.

The 44th ATRIP Congress embraces the broadest sense of the term politics, from power relations to realpolitik, to explore how politics shapes IP law and how IP law, in turn, serves political purposes.

The Theme of the Congress

The thematic focus of the Congress is the interface between IP and politics. We ask whether, how, and to what extent politics influences IP law, and how IP law, in turn, functions as a political tool in various contexts. The elusiveness of the concept of politics merits in-depth analysis to illuminate the many ways it shapes IP law and uses it to advance broader political objectives.

Moreover, the Congress will examine how political contexts and dynamics shape academic IP scholarship. As ATRIP is an association of IP law scholars, such self-reflective inquiry is of significant value.

We welcome all research methodologies (e.g., doctrinal, empirical, comparative) and perspectives. Papers focusing on strictly descriptive national developments will be considered only if they offer insights of broader relevance to the Congress theme.

Possible Topics

Proposals may address IP generally or focus on specific areas (copyright, patents, trademarks, designs, etc.) and explore, among others:

- **Theoretical Inquiries into the Notion of Politics and IP** (Are IP politics special? Do they differ across subfields such as copyright, patents, and trademarks?).
- **Power Relations and IP** (Power as a force shaping IP law; types of relations influencing the design, scope, and enforcement of IP law).
- **The Realpolitik of IP** (Global power dynamics; enforcement of international IP norms by dominant economies; IP as geopolitical leverage in trade wars, sanctions, or strategic alliances; law in the books vs. law in practice).
- **The Political Economy of IP** (Industry influence and lobbying; IP as a tool of capital accumulation; IP, inequality, and power imbalances; public goods vs. private rights).
- **Policy Activism and IP** (“Old” vs. “new” political forces in IP; the “open access” agenda; academic advocacy; stakeholder-driven policymaking).
- **Geopolitics, Diplomacy, and IP** (International negotiations; North–South divides; geopolitical tensions; nationalism; trade and access to knowledge/medicines; case studies such as US–EU, US–China, COVID-19 and vaccines, disputes in WIPO and WTO).
- **Domestic IP Policy and Political Agendas** (National sovereignty vs. international obligations; IP institutions such as IP Offices and IP Courts; IP law reforms as a political instrument; IP enforcement and policing; IP and social change).
- **IP, Ideology, and Legal Philosophy** (Neoliberalism and IP expansion; IP as a mechanism of enclosure and control; alternative models and “new politics” such as open access and traditional knowledge protection; cultural heritage; historical narratives).

- **Techno-politics and IP** (Digital sovereignty; digital platforms and data governance; AI and disruptive politics; the innovation race and market competition).
- **IP Academia and Politics** (National and international politics in IP scholarship; academic freedom at risk; the politics of IP publications).

Submission Guidelines

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I invite you to submit a paper proposal on a topic related to the above call. The 44th ATRIP Congress will be held in a strictly in-person format. Care will be taken in the selection process to ensure global diversity.

Proposals from ATRIP Members with no outstanding membership fees will be given priority.

Doctoral students will not be invited to present at the main Congress and may present only in collaboration with a senior researcher; however, they are encouraged to apply to the specific ATRIP call for Doctoral Student presentations.

Submissions are required to include:

1. **Abstract (maximum 350 words)** clearly outlining:
 - The author's name, academic affiliation, and the title of the presentation.
 - The research question addressed, the methodology used, and the anticipated contribution to the Congress theme, *with a clear focus on the notion of politics*.
 - The intention to submit the paper for publication in the edited volume to be published after the Congress (optional).
2. **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**

Proposals must be submitted **no later than Tuesday, 24 February 2026** via the online form at <https://atrip.org/call-for-papers/>.

Notification of the outcome of the selection process will be sent by **the end of March 2026**.

Prof. Orit Fischman-Afori, ATRIP President (2024-2026)