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## DigiRights Project Final Conference

The Digitalisation of Defence Rights: Time for New Perspectives... And Directives?

**30–31 January 2025**

**KU Leuven, Belgium**

The **KU Leuven—Leuven Institute of Criminology (LINC)**, together with Tartu Ülikool, Università degli Studi di Genova, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Université du Luxembourg, Sveučilišta u Zagrebu) and Magyar Helsinki Bizottság are pleased to invite you to join the **DigiRights Conference**.

The Conference represents the concluding event of the **DigiRights Project**, an Action Grant funded by the **Justice Programme (JUST) of the European Union** and will offer a platform for the partners of the DigiRights Project to present their project findings, as well as provide the opportunity for engagement with other scholars and stakeholders in discussions and exchanges on the concept and question of “digital defence rights”.

### About the DigiRights Project

Focussing on the procedural rights which are susceptible to digitalisation—namely the rights to interpretation, translation, access to the case file, legal assistance and legal aid, and to be present at trial—the DigiRights project maps and assesses the existing practices of digitalisation of these rights with a view to proposing a set of European guidelines for their digital application.

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## Conference Programme

### Location

Thursday, 30 January 2025

9.00–9.30: Registration + Coffee

9.30–10.00: Welcome + Introduction

**Michele Panzavolta**

*Professor, KU Leuven and Primary Investigator (PI), DigiRights Project*

**10.00–11.30: PANEL 1**

Findings of the DigiRights Project: (supra)national reflections on the safeguarding of defence rights in digital proceedings—perspectives from Belgium, Croatia, Estonia and Germany

**Moderator:** *Anna Mosna (University of Leiden/KU Leuven)*

- **Michele Panzavolta, Ashlee Beazley, Rani Van de Gaer**  
*KU Leuven*  
Belgium
- **Lili Krámer and András Kádár**  
*Hungarian Helsinki Committee (Magyar Helsinki Bizottság)*  
Hungary
- **Mitja Gialuz, Michela Miraglia, Jacopo Della Torre and Alessandro Malacarne**  
*University of Genova (Università degli Studi di Genova)*  
Italy





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- **Jaan Ginter**  
*Tartu University (Tartu Ülikool)*  
Estonia

### 11.30–12.00: Coffee break

### 12.00–13.15: PANEL 2

Findings of the DigiRights Project: (supra)national reflections on the safeguarding of defence rights in digital proceedings—Hungarian, Italian and European perspectives

**Moderator:** *Mitja Gialuz (University of Genova)*

- **Elizabeta Ivičević Karas, Zoran Burić and Marin Bonačić**  
*University of Zagreb (Sveučilišta u Zagrebu)*  
Croatia
- **Peter Rackow and Lena Ertle**  
*University of Göttingen (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen)*  
Germany
- **Silvia Allegrezza and Lorenzo Bernardini**  
*University of Luxembourg (Université du Luxembourg)*  
DigiRights European study

### 13.15–14.30: Lunch

### 14.30–15.30: PANEL 3

A transversal perspective: The DigiRights Project proposals and recommendations

- **Michele Panzavolta** (*KU Leuven*)
- **Anna Mosna** (*Leiden University/KU Leuven*)





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- **Ashlee Beazley** (*KU Leuven*)
- **Rani Van de Gaer** (*KU Leuven*)

### 15.30–16.00: Coffee break

### 16.00–18.00: PANEL 4

Digitalisation of the right to be present

*Moderator: Silvia Allegrezza (University of Luxembourg)*

- **Adrienn Laczó**  
*Judge and Head of Chamber, Budapest Metropolitan Court, Hungary*  
TBD
- **Ivan Crnčec**  
*State Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Public Administration and Digital Transformation, Croatia*  
Digitalization of the criminal procedure: Croatian experiences and perspectives
- **Lora Briški**  
*University of Ljubljana*  
Remote criminal proceedings in Slovenia: balancing efficiency with the right to presence and effective participation
- **Chara Chioni-Chotouman**  
*University of Thessaloniki*  
Justice at a distance: online participation and the right to be present
- **Emilia Wehlitz**  
*University of Göttingen*  
ECJ's standard for remote participation: is this acceptable?





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## 19.30: Conference Dinner

*For speakers and invited guests.*

Faculty Club

Groot Begijnhof 14, 3000 Leuven





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Friday, 31 January 2025

8.30–9.00: Coffee

9.00–11.00: PANEL 5

Perspectives on the right to legal assistance and legal aid

**Moderator:** Michele Panzavolta (KU Leuven)

- **Dimitrios Giannouloupoulos**  
*Goldsmiths University, London*  
Digital custodial interrogation rights: how to adjust the police station environment to 21st century practice
- **Michalina Marcia**  
*University of Wrocław,*  
Safeguarding the right to legal assistance in digital proceedings for individuals deprived of liberty
- **James Thornton**  
*Nottingham Trent University*  
Limitations on digital rights to legal assistance and legal aid in England & Wales
- **Maciej Fingas, Sławomir Steinborn**  
*University of Gdańsk*  
Effective assistance of a defense attorney during remote proceedings
- **Kamil Sobański**  
*University of Wrocław,*  
Digitalisation of defence rights in the International Criminal Court trials





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## 11.00–11.30: Coffee

## 11.30–13.30: PANEL 6

Individual rights in a digitalised justice

**Moderator:** *Elizabeta Ivičević Karas (University of Zagreb)*

- **Katalin Balogh**  
*KU Leuven*  
**TBC**
  
- **Kathrin Höber**  
*Senior Public Prosecutor, Germany*  
The introduction of the e-file in Germany
  
- **Peter Coussement**  
*Magistrate Adviser (ICT), Belgian Ministry for Justice*  
**TBC**
  
- **Lore Mergaerts**  
*KU Leuven*  
The impact of digitalization and remote justice on the (assessment of) statements provided by suspects, accused persons, victims and witnesses
  
- **Idil Aydinoglu, Olivia Rope and Barclay Wohlstetter**  
*Penal Reform International*  
Perspectives on the safeguarding of children's defence rights in digital proceedings

## 13.30–14.15: Lunch





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## 14.15–14.30: PRESENTATION

### Virtual Criminal Justice Network

Brief introduction to the Virtual Criminal Justice Network by:

- **Dorris de Vocht** (Associate Professor, Tilburg University); and
- **Christina Peristeridou** (Assistant Professor, Maastricht University)

## 14.30–15.45: PANEL 7

### Digitalisation and judicial cooperation

**Moderator:** *Carsten Momsen (Freie Universität Berlin)*

- **Sharon Okunrobo Perez**  
*European Institute of Public Administration*  
Proliferation of digital evidence: a strong call for reliability and accuracy standards
- **Bedirhan Erdem**  
*Berlin Humboldt University*  
Digitalisation in Turkish criminal procedure as an obstacle to extradition from the EU to Turkey: a case study on the decision of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany (2 BvR 1368/23).
- **Anna Mosna**  
*Leiden University/KU Leuven*  
The use of European investigation orders to ensure participation at trial (TBC)

## 15.45–16.00: Concluding Remarks

**Michele Panzavolta**

*Professor, KU Leuven*







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## The DigiRights Project

The COVID-19 pandemic saw the transition to digitalisation occur at startling speed across many domains, including criminal justice proceedings. Here, however, this transition is often without necessary reflection on the legal and practical preconditions required to assure equivalence between offline and online procedural rights.

Digitalisation is going to change the dynamics of criminal justice beyond the pandemic. This is, therefore, the moment to assess how technology can best serve the needs of both the prosecution and the defence. Focussing on the procedural rights which are susceptible to digitalisation—namely the rights to interpretation, translation, access to the case file, legal assistance and legal aid, and to be present at trial—the DigiRights project maps and assesses the existing practices of digitalisation of these rights with a view to proposing a set of European guidelines for their digital application.

The ultimate goal is to promote a digitalisation of procedural rights that ensures a uniform and adequate standard of protection across the EU. Through national legal and empirical research—considering Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary and Italy—and a European and comparative study, the project evaluates the degree to which digitalisation of procedural rights is equivalent to their classic recognition. In directing its guidelines towards national and EU authorities, and law and policy makers, DigiRights aspires to guide current interpretations and future adaptations of EU criminal law on the rights of accused persons, to contribute to the effective and coherent application of such rights, and to aid mutual trust and recognition across Member States.

