ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA
DEPARTMENT
OF LEGAL STUDIES
EUMERGENCIES
JEAN MONNET CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
UCLouvain
SAINT-LOUIS BRUXELLES
CALL FOR PAPERS
THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATURAL DISASTERS:
LEGAL AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES
CONFERENCE & DOCTORAL WORKSHOP
DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACTS
1 JUNE 2026

UCLouvain SAINT-LOUIS BRUXELLES

EUMERGENCIES JEAN MONNET CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

ALMA MATER STUDIORUM UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA | DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL STUDIES

Call for Papers

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATURAL DISASTERS: LEGAL AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES

Conference and Doctoral Workshop

5-6 November 2026 – Brussels

Background

Climate change is increasing the frequency, intensity, and complexity of extreme weather events leading to disasters. In Europe alone, around 87 million people are exposed to multiple natural hazards. Yet, the role of the European Union in this field remains far from clear-cut. On the one hand, the prevention and response to disasters induced by natural hazards (often referred to as natural disasters) remain primary responsibilities of the Member States, notwithstanding the EU's growing competence in this field through subsequent reforms of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and the introduction of rescEU. On the other hand, EU powers in this respect are institutionally and legally fragmented across the multitude of policy areas that the prevention and response to these disasters might criss-cross — from civil protection to humanitarian aid, climate, health or migration policy, security and defence or external relations. Internationally, the EU has been participating actively in efforts towards the adoption of the first binding instrument on the protection of persons in the event of disasters and in forging partnerships with different actors for the delivery of humanitarian aid, raising questions about its influence, cooperation arrangements, and the degree to which the EU's approach to (natural) disaster management shapes and is shaped by events beyond the EU.

Against this background, this conference invites a multidisciplinary dialogue on the law, politics, and governance of disasters induced by natural hazards in the EU and the role of the EU as an international disaster relief actor. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- **Conceptual and contextual issues**: pertaining to the understanding 'natural' disasters as (extra)ordinary events and to the legal and political categorisation of different disasters, the notion of polycrisis and vulnerability with respect to disasters induced by natural hazards, and the role of sovereignty and solidarity in international and EU approaches to such disasters.
- **Institutional and constitutional issues**: pertaining to the distribution of competences between the EU and its Member States, Member States' obligations with respect to disasters induced by natural hazards, and the role of different institutions and actors in the prevention of, and response to, such disasters.
- **Policy-specific issues**: pertaining to developments in the field of civil protection and humanitarian aid, the intersection between natural disasters and EU emergency powers, EU climate, health, and migration policy, environmental security, and its implications for the coherence or fragmentation of EU disaster governance.

- **External action issues**: pertaining to the EU's cooperation with third states and international organisations, the EU's influence on the development of international disaster norms and practices, and third countries and international organisations' influence on EU disaster management rules and practices.

We invite submissions from **scholars at any career stage and practitioners** working on these topics. Co-authorship is permitted, but a maximum of two presenters per paper is preferred. Publication plans will be discussed with interested authors after the conference. The conference will be held in English at the Saint-Louis Brussels campus of UCLouvain.

Doctoral workshop

The conference will be preceded by a doctoral workshop open to candidates at all stages of their PhD trajectory. Selected candidates will be assigned a discussant from among the speakers and organisers of the conference and invited to attend the full event. Subject to peer-review, doctoral candidates may also be invited to contribute to a joint Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence publication resulting from this event.

Submission details

Please send your (1) anonymised abstract (max. 450 words) and (2) a short bio as two separate PDF files to teresa.cabrita@uclouvain.be by **1 June 2026**, indicating which event (doctoral workshop or conference) you are applying to. We aim to communicate selections by the **end of June 2026**. Selected participants are expected to submit their draft papers (up to 8,000 words) by **28 October 2026**.

Funding

Travel and accommodation will be partially covered by the organisers for selected participants. Priority in funding will be accorded to doctoral candidates and early career researchers without external/own funding.

Organisers

Teresa Cabrita (UCLouvain Saint-Louis Bruxelles), Denis Duez (UCLouvain Saint-Louis Bruxelles) and Federico Casolari (University of Bologna).

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