



International Symposium
**The Labour-Environment Nexus:
Legal Perspectives and Beyond**

Call for Papers

Aix-Marseille University and the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) are glad to announce the call for papers for the forthcoming International Symposium “The Labour-Environment Nexus: Legal Perspectives and Beyond”, to be held in Aix-en-Provence (France) next **6-7 October 2022**. The organising committee welcomes abstract submissions consistent with the rationale and goals of the event, which aim to promote an international discussion about the labour-environment nexus in the fields of labour law, environmental law, and adjacent areas of study.

Rationale

Since its early conceptualisation and formal launch in 2013, the field of environmental labour studies has reached maturity and visibility across several disciplines in social sciences. Critical scholars in sociology, political science, economics, history and anthropology have engaged in a vibrant debate about patterns and trajectories to deconstruct the idea of labour as nature’s other, and question apparent conflicts between the interests of labour and the environment.

The contribution of legal scholars to this debate is catching on. As a result of decarbonisation policies to mitigate climate change, and the labour market implications that this major shift of industrial capitalism involves, just transition has emerged as a dominant theoretical framework to develop the legal discourse on the labour-environment nexus. While the focus on just transition has opened novel trajectories of research in both the labour law and

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environmental law domains, the input of other normative frameworks to the debate – including sustainable development and critical approaches to socio-legal analysis – has largely been neglected. This is unfortunate, since many dilemmas regarding the labour-environment nexus and the normative patterns necessary to overcome the current socio-ecological crisis are still uncharted.

Legal institutions regulating labour and natural resources share an ambivalent position in relation to global warming and climate change. They are both part of the problem and part of the solution. While they contribute to decommodification of labour and the environment, they are constitutive elements of the industrial social contract that gave rise to the current ecological disaster. To some extent, this ambivalence reflects the ambivalence of capitalism itself and, arguably, of its legal and institutional foundations. As long as legal rationality assumes growth and capital accumulation as the purpose of economic activity, how might law itself be compatible with environmental sustainability? Once the illusion of infinite growth on a finite planet has vanished, how might labour law and environmental law turn into constitutive elements of a new social contract in which sustainability of working and environmental conditions are pursued simultaneously? What should this new social contract look like in terms of socio-legal categories and institutions?

The international symposium “The Labour-Environment Nexus: Legal Perspectives and Beyond” brings together legal scholars and academics from other relevant disciplines to discuss these dilemmas and to elaborate normative patterns to achieve convergence between labour and environmental sustainability. The symposium is organised along the following thematic tracks and sessions, each of which will involve invited keynote speakers and discussants, as well as respondents to this call for papers.

Sessions and thematic tracks

Session and track 1: Conceptual and theoretical implications of the labour-environment nexus

This session and track for the call for papers focuses on conceptual aspects and general theory implications of the labour-environment nexus. Examples of themes and problems that could be addressed in this session, include the following: regulation of labour and the environment as fictitious commodities (Polanyi); reorientation of labour law and environmental law categories and institutions in the light of the ecological crisis and post-industrial society; the need for a new socio-ecological contract and its legal/institutional foundations; epistemological and methodological aspects.

Session and track 2: Regulation of labour and the environment

This session and track for the call for papers focuses on regulatory aspects that can have reciprocal implications in both labour law and environmental law domains, as well as on how the interests of workers and the environment are represented and protected. Examples of themes and problems that could be addressed in this session include the following: environmental and labour rights; the balance between labour and environmental sustainability; environmental implications of labour regulation; implications of environmental regulation for workers; social protection/social security implications of decarbonisation policies; collective representation of labour and environmental interests; the role of trade unions and collective bargaining in promoting a ‘just transition’; environmental justice and workers’ voice; representation in labour and environmental litigation; industrial relations and environmental democracy in OHSE legislation.

Session and track 3: *Global South and vulnerable groups perspectives*

This session and track for the call for papers focuses on the labour-environment nexus from the perspective of developing countries, recently developed economies and vulnerable groups. Examples of themes and problems that could be addressed in this session include the following: human rights and the environment; non-anthropocentric forms of regulation and case law in Latin America and elsewhere; environmental migrations and their labour market implications; effects of Western decarbonisation policies and environmental regulations on workers and communities in developing countries; the voice of the Global South in international environmental and labour policy setting; the regulation of labour and environmental standards in international trade agreements; natural and environmental disasters and the effects on vulnerable workers and communities.

Paper submission and organisational aspects

Interested researchers in the fields of labour law, environmental law and other close disciplines such as industrial relations, sociology, philosophy, political science etc. are invited to submit an abstract of maximum 800 words to the organising committee by 1 April 2022 (karabadjieva@etui.org; paolo.tomassetti@univ-amu.fr). The abstract should include the following elements: a title; the name(s) of the author(s) and the relevant affiliation and position; a clear presentation of the topic, the relevant research questions and methodological approaches; the expected outcomes and their added value to the existing debate; an essential bibliographic list.

The organising committee will select three abstracts for each thematic track. The decision about the abstract selection will be communicated by 1 May 2022. The selected respondents to the call for papers will be invited to submit a draft version of their articles of around 7000 words to the organising committee by 1 August 2022.

Participants who do not have the support of their own institutions to participate in the symposium will benefit from a solidarity fund to cover travel and accommodation expenses.

The conference proceedings, including the papers presented, the keynote speeches and other contributions, would be considered for publication in an edited book or in a special issue in a peer-review journal. Details about this publication will follow in due course.

Timeline

Deadline for abstracts: 1 April 2022

Announcement of accepted abstracts: 1 May 2022

Deadline for draft papers of accepted abstracts: 1 August 2022

Symposium: 6-7 October 2022

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