



CALL FOR PAPERS

**DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES,
PUBLIC POLICY &
COMPETITION LAW**

1 & 2 JUNE 2023

**Erasmus
School of
Law**



Understanding Society

CALL FOR PAPERS

In recent years we have been witnessing a revived debate, both in policy and academic circles, about the objectives and boundaries of competition law and specifically if competition law can – or should – safeguard goals beyond the well-established economic (efficiency) considerations. Among other things, this is because in light of technological development, major challenges such as inequality, threats to the democratic processes and the rule of law, sustainable development, food and energy security, migration and humanitarian crises, privacy concerns etc. make us wonder whether and how competition law should face these difficulties and adapt to the new realities. Particularly, this discussion appears pertinent in light of digital technology providers, including the so-called big tech corporations, establishing their presence in important domains of public concern like media and public speech, police and law enforcement, education and employment, healthcare and social policy, climate policy, food and agriculture, mobility and public spaces etc. and exerting a growing influence over their nature and functioning.

The increased relevance of such market-driven developments, raising societal and doctrinal challenges, also compels us, as competition law scholars, to re-think the direction that EU competition law is taking, or should take. Against this, we question whether the established dichotomy between economic and non-economic goals and considerations, with their dedicated regulatory instruments, is still tenable in light of the major challenges of today. With ever more complex situations and a growing role for digital and smart technological ‘solutions’, resolving the conflict between the diverse interests and values at hand will arguably require some kind of a balancing exercise and new ways to assess and counter (the new manifestations of) market power.

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Specifically, we are interested in whether and how can EU competition law tackle the growing power of digital technologies in relation to various public policy objectives while balancing public and private interests accordingly. The questions we hope to address with this conference cover, but are not limited to:

- 1 Can – and should – the enforcement of competition law against (big) tech companies integrate considerations beyond efficiency, like fundamental rights, different public policy goals etc.?
- 2 How to effectively regulate digital competitive advantage accumulated by (big) tech companies in a data-driven platform economy?
- 3 With the development of digital technologies being conducive to near monopoly positions, how can competition law be enforced to strike a proper balance between innovation and regulation?
- 4 Are the consumer welfare and ‘more economic’ approach to competition law obsolete in dealing with the challenges of digital markets and other contemporary challenges?

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We invite both junior and senior competition law scholars to submit their contribution, be it conceptual or practical, to be presented and discussed at the conference. An extended abstract of max 1000 words should be submitted via EasyChair by **27 February 2023** at the latest, using this link: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=dpc2023>

There are no specific guidelines as regards the formatting or referencing style. The authors can expect to be notified about acceptance by **27 March 2023**. You will not be required to submit a full paper prior to the conference.

DEADLINE
27 FEBRUARY

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

The organisers of the conference are **María Campo Comba** (Assistant Professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam; Law Sector Plan Rebalancing Public and Private Interests) and **Tjaša Petročnik** (PhD Candidate at Tilburg University; Law Sector Plan Digital Legal Studies).

Erasmus School of Law is part of the cross-disciplinary initiative on **Rebalancing Public & Private Interests** funded by the Dutch Law Sector Plan. We study the interaction between public and private interests and public and private actors in the context of contemporary societal challenges like globalisation, digitisation and privatisation and crises like those of the environment and public health. This research centre is a cooperation between scholars of Erasmus School of Law and the Faculty of Law of the University of Groningen. On our joint website on the Public and Private Challenge you can find information on our future events, the team, and research and impact. We also cooperate with the Erasmus Center of Empirical Legal Studies, funded by the same sector plan.

Tilburg Law School is part of the **Digital Legal Lab**, which is a leading research hub that pioneers the understanding of how digital technologies interact with law and justice. Digital Legal Lab's research is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), in consultation with NWO, through the Dutch Law Sector Plan. The collaboration comprises four partner universities – in addition to Tilburg University also University of Amsterdam, Radboud University Nijmegen, and Maastricht University – and focuses on developing and advancing the theme Digital Legal Studies in the Netherlands and wider.

The conference is planned to take place on **1 and 2 June 2023, in Rotterdam, the Netherlands**. Further information will be provided closer to the date of the conference.

The conference participation is free of charge; we will also be able to cover part of speakers' transport and/or accommodation costs, especially if coming from abroad.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to **María** (campocomba@law.eur.nl) or **Tjaša** (t.petrocnik@tilburguniversity.edu).

LOGISTICAL
INFORMATION
& CONTACT