CALL FOR PAPERS

How does artificial intelligence challenge our traditional understanding of legal reasoning?

August 27-28, 2026, University of St. Gallen

This international conference invites scholars, practitioners, and Natural Language Processing (NLP) researchers to explore how contemporary Language AI Systems—especially large language models (LLMs) and Deep Learning Methods—reshape fundamental assumptions and methods about legal method, interpretation, and decision-making.

Legal practice often presents itself as value-laden, interpretive, and methodologically disciplined. Yet current Language AI predominantly operate through statistical pattern recognition and representation rather than propositional argument. This tension raises pressing questions: *Does Language AI merely automate inessential aspects of legal work, or does it reveal that legal reasoning itself has long contained implicit statistical or probabilistic elements? Do machine-generated legal outputs expose hidden (ir)regularities in judicial and administrative practice? And how should legal theory respond when computational systems appear to "mimic" legal judgment without engaging, for all we know, in human-like, propostional reasoning?*

We especially welcome contributions addressing, but not limited to, the following themes:

- **Statistical Aspects in Legal Reasoning**
  What role do probabilistic or statistical considerations already play—implicitly or explicitly—in legal interpretation and decision-making?
- **AI and the Transformation of Legal Method**
  Does the rise of generative Language AI undermine traditional conceptions of doctrinal reasoning, hermeneutics, or precedent?
- **Values, Normativity, and Language**
  How do values enter legal language, and can AI systems meaningfully represent or operationalize normative commitments?
- **AI as Mirror or Distortion of Legal Practice**
  Does AI reveal the latent patterns of legal discourse, contributing to a more objective practice, or does it impose new biases and structures that distort legal meaning?
- **Epistemic, Democratic, and Ethical Implications**
  What does the integration of (currently largely private and often closed-sourced) AI into legal institutions (public administration or courts) imply for legitimacy, transparency, and the rule of law?

We invite submissions from law, philosophy, NLP, (computational) linguistics, computer science, statistics and related fields. Both theoretical and empirical contributions are welcome.

Confirmed Keynote Speakers

- Prof. Dr. Christoph Engel, Max Planck Institute, Bonn
- Dr. Joel Niklaus, Machine Learning Engineer, Hugging Face

Submission Guidelines

- Abstract
  - Scope: 300–500 words
  - Submission deadline: **February 28, 2026**, to conference-ile@unisg.ch
  - Form: Anonymized PDF. Please indicate your name, affiliation and contact information in the body of your email
  - Notification of acceptance: **April 2, 2026**

- Paper and presentation
    - Paper scope: 3,000 words
    - Submission deadline: August 14, 2025
    - Presentations of 15 minutes, followed by 30 minutes discussion, online presentations are possible

Scientific and Organizing Committee

- Désirée Klingler, University of St. Gallen
- Peter Hongler, University of St. Gallen
- Reto Gubelmann, University of Zurich

For further inquiries, please contact the Organizing Committee at: conference-ile@unisg.ch

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