

BALTIC JURISPRUDENCE CONFERENCE 2027

NORMATIVITY AND JUDICIAL REASONING

May 20, 2027

Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Law / Kaunas, Daukanto 28

May 21, 2027

Vilnius University, Faculty of Law / Vilnius, Saulėtekio 9

Rationale

Jurisprudence is a spacious and kaleidoscopic discipline. At the very holistic level it denotes two apparently separate worlds – one is the world of legal theory or philosophy; another is the world of legal practice. However, legal theory and practice are not really two separate enterprises. Every judicial decision rests on some idea of what law is and where its authority comes from, every theory of law is ultimately tested against how cases are actually decided. Moreover, the relationship between legal theory and practice looks very different from one country to the next. What counts as legal theory or philosophy, and what role it plays in society, in the profession, and in legal education, varies a great deal from place to place and culture to culture.

The Baltic region is a particularly instructive place from which to observe this variation. Its legal orders draw on the German and Roman doctrinal tradition, sit alongside a distinct Nordic legal culture, and carry the marks of having been rebuilt after the disruptions of the twentieth century. Especially in the Baltic states, the work of the past three decades has forced open questions that older and more settled systems can take for granted: what makes a norm binding, where does legitimacy come from, and how a legal order that has been reconstructed ought to rationalize itself. These are not local concerns. They belong to jurisprudence as such, and recent history has given them a sharpness here that should interest legal theorists well beyond the region.

Objectives

The Baltic Jurisprudence Conference is planned as an annual event, hosted by a different partner institution each year, so that the event moves through the region it studies. Conference follows three main objectives.

Firstly, the conference aims to bring to the forefront the importance of legal theory and philosophy, highlighting their societal, practical, and educational relevance.

Secondly, the conference aims to seek to find common ground between the two worlds – that of legal theory / philosophy and that of legal practice – by connecting legal scholars and practitioners, this way making them share their jurisprudential insights.

Finally, as the fracture of jurisprudence also has a regional dimension – national borders and languages isolate jurisprudence while scholars and legal practitioners often know little about their peers across the borders. Hence, the third aim of the conference is to make separated jurisdictions and their jurisprudences collide and intertwine, with the primary focus on those around the shores of the Baltic Sea.

The 2027 Edition

The first Baltic Jurisprudence Conference will be organized in Spring of 2027 in Vilnius University and Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania. The Conference will be the part of events dedicated to the Lithuanian presidency at the European Council.

The subtopic of the 2027-year conference will be Normativity and Judicial Reasoning. Organizers of the conference welcome contributions on any question that falls within the spirit of the conference, but organizers are especially interested in proposals addressing the following themes and problems:

- Concept of a Legal Norm (meaning, structure, place among other norms);
- Judicial discretion and its limits, especially in hard cases where the norm is unclear;
- Deviations from “following the rule” principle in judicial reasoning (for example, concept of “following the inner conviction”);
- Proportionality and balancing as modes of judicial reasoning;
- The role of precedent in civil-law systems;
- The use of foreign and comparative law in domestic judicial reasoning;
- The problem of legislative inflation;
- Norms/rules v. cases/problems focused legal education;
- Modern problems of the methodology of teaching law.

Two Sessions: Ideas and Cases

Reflecting the conference’s core ambition of connecting theory and practice, contributions are organized into two sessions. The Ideas session is the home of theoretical and philosophical scholarship; the Cases session is devoted to the perspective of legal practice. Each contributor chooses the strand that best fits their work.

How to Submit your Contribution?

We invite conference participants to present topics following the rationale and objectives of the conference. Before submitting, consider whether your contribution belongs more to scholarship or to practice, and direct your proposal and abstract to the Ideas session or the Cases session accordingly. Presentations should be approx. 20 minutes long, each participant may submit one proposal.

To submit your contribution, please fill in the following form:

[Contribution Submission Form – Baltic Jurisprudence Conference 2027](#)

Key dates

Abstract submission deadline: by 30 November 2026

Notification of acceptance: by 22 January 2027

Conference: 20–21 May 2027.

The conference will be held in person in Kaunas (Ideas Session, May 20) and Vilnius (Cases Session, May 21). No participation fee will be charged. Participants are responsible for their own travel, accommodation, and other expenses.



Organizers

Latvia University, Faculty of Law (Latvia)

Vilnius University, Faculty of Law (Lithuania)

Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Law (Lithuania)

Conference Committee

Assist. Prof. Jurgis Bartkus / Vilnius University, Faculty of Law

Assoc. Prof. Tomas Berkmanas / Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Law (Co-Chair)

Assoc. Prof. Edvīns Danovskis / University of Latvia, Faculty of Law

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