

## Foreword

The current issue contains various views on contemporary legal topics, most of which were discussed at the 10th International Conference of PhD Students and Young Researchers *The Good, the Bad and the Legal: Balance between Stability and Disruptions of Law*. Both the conference event and the papers in this issue<sup>1</sup> are a result of international cooperation of the International Network of Doctoral Studies in Law, which was founded by Vilnius University Faculty of Law, Frankfurt am Main J.W. Goethe University Faculty of Law, Paris Nanterre University Faculty of Law and Lodz University Faculty of Law and Administration in 2014. The network provides an international platform to concentrate, and develop academic and scientific activities, enhance the quality of doctoral studies in law, help to interchange information, and stimulate discussions and exchanges among PhD students.

In the following papers, an overview of important global and regional legal challenges can be found. They cover questions of legal theory and legal philosophy, law on artificial intelligence, human rights, contemporary private law, legal issues in global affairs, data and information, environmental sustainability, and legal issues related to the duties of internet platforms.

Aristotle famously wrote that all things need to be balanced: too much or too little of everything (even a good thing) might be hazardous. A soldier needs to be brave, otherwise, if a soldier is not brave enough, during the battle he might cowardly hide in the rear lines or even in the bushes. On the other hand, too much bravery could obtain a form of recklessness. Overly brave warrior would single-handedly charge into enemy lines ignoring the prudent tactics and, as a result, sacrifice his life without any substantial contribution for his faction. Aristotle, being a proponent of the golden mean, applied this insight in various contexts. In his theory, he even designated the strong **middle** class of society as one of the keys to a strong state.

One of the overlapping common denominators in this issue of the journal is the pursuit to find the appropriate balance between stability and disruptions of law in different fields. Disrupting the old order is often viewed as a desirable or inevitable phenomenon. Should the law ever encourage it? Should it try to prevent or slow down the disruption?

These questions appear to be simple, but, again, so did the question, of whether a soldier needs to be brave. Aristotle quite convincingly showed that a simple “yes or no” answer is not the best answer. History shows that industrial revolutions of colossal scale are followed by no less colossal ramifications. Some would start naming them with the exploitation of the workforce (e. g. child labor under inhuman conditions), global military conflicts, the rise of totalitarian dictatorships, the destruction of natural

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<sup>1</sup> The paper “Organisational Legal Measures for Preventing Epidemics in Daugavpils and Rēzekne Districts in the 1860s and 1870s” by Tetiana V. Petlina was included in the issue as a valuable addition following ordinary admittance procedure to the journal.

ecosystems, etc. Surely, I would be called overly pessimistic if I stated that contemporary teenager's fondness towards social networks will lead to a global catastrophe, therefore, I will not attempt to prove such a thing (nor do I actually believe it). However, if in the first presentation of a steam engine, someone would have screamed at it, calling this invention a devil's tool that will cause tens of millions of deaths in worldwide wars... That person would have seemed to be insane, although, technically, that prediction would have been quite accurate.

Despite that, a legal ban on steam engines would not have been the best path. Perhaps, instead of thinking in terms, of whether to encourage or prevent disruptions, the better question is how law can help disruptions proceed with the disruption in a manner that could minimize the potential collateral effects. It is impossible to accurately predict the future, thus we can never certainly know which legal path will lead to the best social consequences. However, by looking at the past we can find that some factors correlate with undesirable outcomes, which might help to ascertain future likelihoods and risks. Most of us have a certain understanding of how certain factors can influence future events. For example, the rule of law, respect for human rights, corrupted politicians, extremely polarized society, or widespread mental health issues: although it would be arrogant to think that we know where exactly these factors will lead, it might also be irresponsible to ignore them.

Today researchers have a major advantage compared to great minds of the past, – most of human knowledge can be reached with a couple clicks on a computer mouse or taps on the screen of an electronic device. This privilege provides unprecedented possibilities to explore ongoing and future technological disruptions and their possible threats that could be measured, weighed, and, eventually, nudged into tracks leading to the most morally and economically beneficial destination. I am certain that the following papers will most definitely contribute to it and help to achieve it for the readers who take on this challenge too.

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