

Editorial

The present volume of the JELT journal was originally supposed to focus on the current trends in thoughts on interplay between law, ethics and technology, as reflected in Central and Eastern Europe. In the end, however, the broad picture offered in this volume actually proves that the topics treated in the individual papers can not be neatly separated into distinct geographical or cultural areas. Just the opposite is true – the papers prove that the topics covered are indeed supranational, being discussed among scholars with various backgrounds, blurring any traditional categories of East and West, North and South, showing instead a trend towards common and shared views in the European academia. This is an important contribution of this volume on its own – showing that academia in the EU and/or in the Council of Europe countries indeed ponders upon the same or at least very similar problems, using the same or very similar methodological instrumentaria, as well as the same value-laden principles and backgrounds.

Apparently, the time of division-lines known and present in the past are now overcome, and the current scholarly paradigm is shared among the respective countries and scholars in Europe. This on one hand allows for the common language and commensurable findings to be discussed. On the other hand, however, the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine (and the rest of Europe) shows that the ideas and principles accepted currently in Europe with regard to ethical use of technologies may not remain unchallenged and universally accepted. The received argumentation and methodology of researching relationship between law, ethics and technologies will apparently need to be constantly reassessed in the light of potential opposing views on the use of modern technologies in the service of regimes that may be based on values and principles strikingly different from those accepted in the EU or Council of Europe member states. Such a quest for identity - or the return to clash of civilizations - only point to the fact that the end of history was not reached yet and the outcomes accepted by legal scholarship with respect to ethical and legal aspects of use of modern technologies might need an ongoing backing and defence.

That is also the main idea of a research project currently undertaken by the Faculty of Law of the Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic, in which some of the authors as well as the authors of this editorial are involved – the project no. 20-27227S “The Advent, Pitfalls and Limits of Digital Sovereignty of the European Union” funded by the Czech Science Foundation (GAČR). Within the scope of this project, a group of scholars was confronted with the idea to share their thoughts on the digital aspects of ensuring that European values and principles will be respected, protected and shared by the countries and peoples of Europe, when still no one could have imagined the risks that these values and principles would be facing as early as in 2022. Still, the current situation makes these discussions yet more topical, and necessary to be addressed (not only) by the scholars. Establishing of digital sovereignty of and for the European union (as proclaimed by the Commission president Ursula von der Leyen in 2020) starts to serve as the cornerstone security for the European values, understanding of rule of law and general features of the European way of life. New supranational sovereignty in digital space is set not as a concurrency to Member States, but as stabilising and securing point in their favour.

The present volume offers a glimpse on some of the related legal issues that may on one hand become useful in guaranteeing basic human rights and freedoms and in strengthening respective ethical background, but at the same time may be dramatically misused or abused in the hands of regimes professing different values and ethical considerations.

In Olomouc, Czech Republic,

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