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Advanced Research School in Law
and Jurisprudence



Call for Papers – Third Ars Iuris Legal Potentials Conference Constructing Legal Entities: On Persons, Corporations and States

November 3rd, 2025 | Aula am Campus – University of Vienna | Vienna, Austria

The law constructs entities that define our world, and is thereby a powerful force in shaping our reality. While we primarily understand ourselves as human beings, the law rather sees us as subjects of law. And while an extraterrestrial would probably see the USA and Mexico as a connected landmass, we view these as two different legal entities (States) – with a deadly border in between. And who has ever seen a company? Nonetheless, we do not doubt that there *are* companies as legal actors.

The well-known distinction of *personae* and *res* in Roman law is a fundamental part of civil law. While *personae* are subjects with rights and obligations, *res* are mere objects, even if they are enslaved humans. There will be no legal claims if there are no legal subjects claiming them against each other. Civil law construes human beings as legal subjects and constitutes groups of people as corporate bodies. International law relies on the assumption of different States as subjects of the law of nations. International and constitutional law play a crucial role in constructing the State as the single most important political body of modernity.

This conference aims to bring together different perspectives on the construction of legal entities, inviting papers exploring this constructive role from doctrinal, comparative, theoretical, or methodological perspectives. Doctrinal contributions may analyse legal norms of subjectivity in areas such as public, private, corporate, or criminal law. Topics of interest also include the making of the State through constitutional identity, the *pouvoir constituant*, and the reliance on a national “we the people.” Furthermore, subjectivity in international law, including the State as the most important subject, can be discussed.

Possible topics to be addressed at the conference include:

- Legal theoretical, historical, and methodological analyses of legal subjectivity, such as:
 - philosophical foundations of legal subjectivity and contemporary challenges, including ecological and technological shifts
 - historical analyses, e.g. of Roman law and slavery
 - theoretical analyses of legal relevance of subjectivity
- Doctrinal and comparative analyses of legal subjectivity, such as:
 - modelling of associations by the legal order as either private corporations or public law entities
 - case analyses that refer to legal subjectivity
 - comparative analyses, e.g. between the German GbR and the Austrian GesbR
- Legal subjectivity of economic entities
 - the legal subjectivity of the estate as separate from the deceased (e.g. the novel Austrian FlexCo)

- Special subject statuses in labour, consumer, and procedural law
 - work council type entities
 - shareholders as consumers vis-à-vis the corporation or other shareholders
 - the role of associations in representative and class action lawsuits
- The construction of the State and its representatives
 - democracy and the rule of law as justifying and limiting features of the State
 - the legislator as subject
 - the role of constitutional identity
 - the role of territory and its consequences in border policy
 - the special role of some representatives of the state (e.g. notaries, final courts of appeal)
- Constructing political community as the State
 - the theoretical, philosophical and doctrinal approaches employed to construct a group of humans as a unified political body
 - the repercussions of this construction on the relationship between the State and its inhabitants
- Subjects of international law, concerning, e.g.
 - an International Organisation's scope of action
 - the European Union as a subject of international law
 - interaction of international and domestic law

We invite **anonymized abstracts of 500 words** (in PDF file format). Please attach your **academic CV (one page maximum, PDF file format)** and, if available, a sample of academic writing (e.g., a recent **publication**). Please send your submission to ars.iuris@univie.ac.at until **July 4th, 2025**. Notifications of acceptance will be communicated by the beginning of August.

Your **presentation** should be **20-30 minutes**. All conference-speakers will have the opportunity to publish a corresponding **paper (30.000-50.000 characters)** in a special edition of the *University of Vienna Law Review*. The **finished paper** has to be submitted by **October 10th, 2025** via email (ars.iuris@univie.ac.at). Following the conference, you will be able to make **modifications** to your paper until **November 17th, 2025**.

Chosen participants will have the opportunity to apply for travel funding through the Ars Iuris Doctoral School, should their sending institution not be able to cover the cost. To find out more about the Ars Iuris Vienna (<https://arsiuris.univie.ac.at/en/about-us/>) and the *Vienna Law Review* (<https://viennalawreview.com/index.php/vlr/about>), feel free to browse our websites.

If you should have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out. We are looking forward to receiving your abstracts and welcoming you in Vienna!

Mary Barrett, Ellen Hagedorn, Lorenz Handstanger, Celina Saci, and Cornelia Tscheppe on behalf of the Ars Iuris Vienna Doctoral School