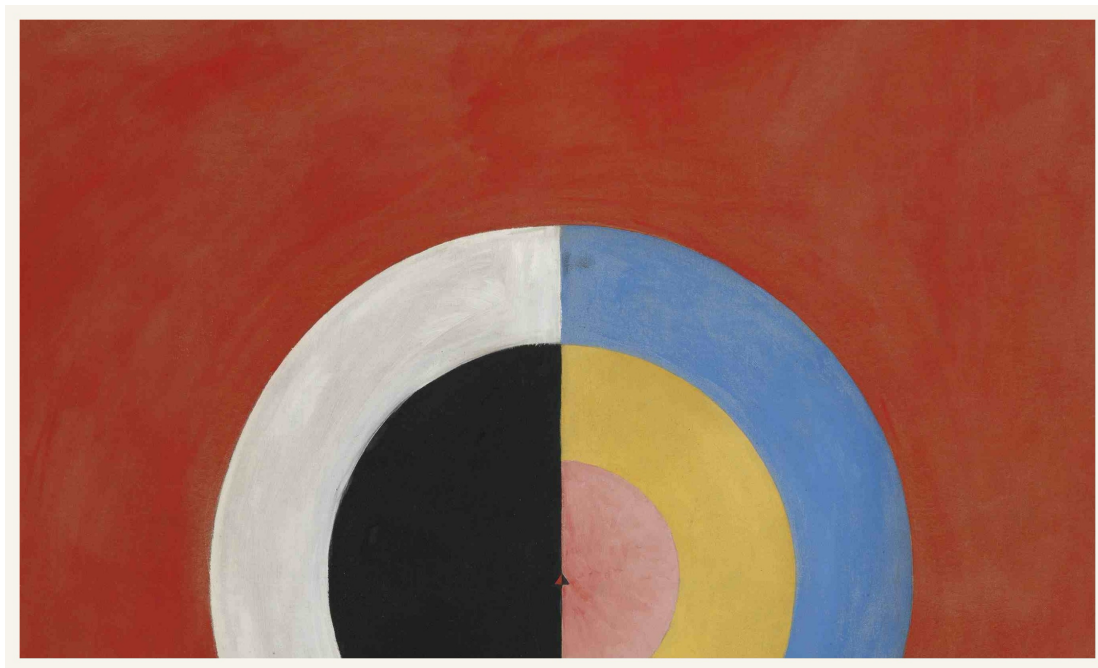




Hilma af Klint, *Svanen, No. 17 / The Swan, No. 17, Group IX/SUW*, 1915.

SEMINAR SERIES ON VULNERABILITIES AND LAW

SEMINAR I

LEGAL CHALLENGES OF VULNERABILITIES IN CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION SCENARIOS

21–22 October 2026 / UCILeR – University of Coimbra, Portugal

CALL FOR PAPERS

Migration is one of the defining features of contemporary societies. In today's complex and heterogeneous social contexts, migratory movements have a profound impact on human life and continuously shape political institutions, legal systems, and models of economic and social development.

Contemporary migratory flows arise from diverse and often overlapping causes, including the search for employment and better living conditions, forced displacement due to persecution, and hardship linked to geographical, climatic, and health-related factors. At the same time, these movements must also be understood in light of broader structural conditions, such as persistent global inequalities, uneven distribution of resources and opportunities, armed conflict, environmental degradation, and asymmetries in economic and geopolitical power. Migration is therefore not only an individual or demographic phenomenon, but also a legal, sociopolitical, and global justice issue, closely tied to the unequal distribution — across and within societies — of the conditions of human survival and development, and of access to material, social, cultural, and symbolic goods, recognition, rights, and institutional protection.

These dynamics may generate multiple forms of vulnerability, especially where legal and institutional responses are insufficient, fragmented, or selectively exclusionary. Yet they may also create important opportunities for host societies, including demographic renewal, economic dynamism, cultural enrichment, and the strengthening of plural and inclusive public institutions. In this context, migration raises legal and policy questions that cannot be adequately addressed from a single disciplinary standpoint. Their analysis calls for an interdisciplinary approach in which legal inquiry is brought into dialogue with economics, sociology, psychology, medicine, visual culture, political theory, critical cultural studies, and other related fields.

Within this framework, the role of law is necessarily multifaceted. It involves a rigorous diagnosis of existing legal and policy arrangements and the development of innovative, normatively grounded and institutionally workable responses that are both rights-oriented and socially sustainable. It also

requires attention to the ways in which legal categories, policy and administrative practices, and cultural and political frameworks may differently frame migratory experiences, rendering some forms of mobility and circulation socially acceptable or even invisible as “migration,” while marking others through suspicion, stigma, and securitised narratives.

A central line of inquiry of the first seminar of the Seminar Series on Vulnerabilities and Law is to assess the effectiveness of current normative regimes, with particular attention to Portuguese law and European Union law, while also engaging broader international, regional, and transregional frameworks, as well as the impact of the corresponding social policies. The seminar also seeks to encourage contributions that combine analytical rigour, metadogmatic reflection, and practical relevance, and that critically examine how vulnerability is experienced, legally framed, distributed, and addressed in migration contexts, while also engaging migration as a field for legal, institutional, and social innovation.

In this sense, the seminar is aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), particularly in its concern with legal and institutional frameworks capable of supporting just, inclusive, and resilient societies in contexts marked by migration, multiculturalism, and interculturality. It also speaks directly to the broader 2030 Agenda, especially SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) — including the challenge of safe, orderly, and regular migration — as well as to related concerns addressed in SDGs 3, 8, 11, and 17.

Against this background, it aims:

1. To critically analyse migration-related juridical regimes, at both national and international levels, with regard to their axiological-normative foundations, regulatory instruments, and practical outcomes;
2. To discuss and propose legal and policy alternatives, both theoretical and practice-oriented, with attention to their legal relevance and to the conditions of their effective implementation, including their capacity to promote rights protection, inclusion, and social cohesion in host societies.

Contributions may address, among other matters:

- The legal regimes governing the entry, stay, departure, and removal of foreign nationals from national territory, and their articulation with European Union law, international human rights and refugee law, and other regional or transregional legal and institutional frameworks, including comparative approaches to migration regulation;
- The structural causes of migration and their legal relevance, including questions of global inequality, the unequal distribution of the conditions of access to goods and protection, and the economic and geopolitical conditions that shape mobility and immobility;
- The ways in which responsibility for migration-related vulnerabilities is distributed across states, institutions, and transnational actors, including questions of legal and political accountability;
- Comparative and transregional perspectives on migration governance, including different legal and institutional models for admission, protection, regularisation, circulation and integration, as well as the allocation of responsibilities across states and institutions;
- The legal and political implications of externalisation strategies, readmission arrangements, and border securitisation in the organisation of migration governance;
- The ways in which migrants are positioned in legal discourse under different legal categories — such as foreign nationals, asylum seekers, refugees, citizens, and, above all, persons — and how these classifications shape status attribution, access to rights, protection, and institutional recognition;
- The strategic differentiation of migratory categories and experiences, including the legal and political processes through which some forms of mobility and circulation are normalised, invisibilised, or framed as suspect, threatening, or socially burdensome;
- The legal politics of visibility and invisibility in migration contexts, including the public framing of migratory experiences, the construction of vulnerability, and the role of cultural, political, institutional and visual mediations in shaping recognition, stigma and protection;
- The practical effectiveness of legal categories and legal mechanisms when translated into concrete administrative and judicial practices;
- The interaction between legal frameworks and public/social policy in migration governance, including the conditions for inclusive and sustainable implementation;

- Migration and global justice, including normative approaches to fairness, responsibility, solidarity, and institutional design in the legal and political ordering of migration.

Particular attention may also be given to legal and policy issues concerning residence permits; access to social services and social protection; family reunification, including its broader social and demographic implications; access to housing and accommodation, including emergency shelter and local integration policies; access to healthcare, including mental health support and language mediation in health services; labour market access and labour rights, including precarious work and exploitation; procedural safeguards and access to justice, including legal aid, interpretation, and due process guarantees; documentation, identification, and status regularisation, including the legal effects of documentary precarity; and children and family-related protections, including unaccompanied minors and best-interests assessments.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Academics, researchers, teachers, professionals, and students are invited to submit abstract proposals for presentations related to the themes addressed in this call.

SUBMIT ABSTRACTS TO

ssvl@ij.uc.pt

Proposals must be **written in English** and include the **title, abstract, 5 keywords, author information**, and a **short biographical note of up to 100 words**.

Deadline for abstract submission: 5 September 2026

Notification of acceptance: 15 September 2026

THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Ana Margarida Gaudêncio, Rosa Cândido Martins, Luís Meneses do Vale, Brisa Paim Duarte, Ana Elisabete Ferreira, Luíza Barbosa.