



About the MELA project

The “MELA” project, that is “Memory Laws in European and Comparative Perspective”, is a four-nation, EU-sponsored consortium gathered to examine memory laws throughout Europe and the world. HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) generously awarded a grant totalling over €1.2 million for a three-year research project which we ran from September 2016 until August 2019. The consortium included four teams, respectively at the Queen Mary University London, Bologna University, Polish Academy of Sciences and at the Asser Institute. The Dutch team is composed of three Asser researchers: Dr Uladzislau Belavusau (Senior Researcher in European Law at the Institute and the Principal Investigator for the MELA project), Dr León Castellanos-Jankiewicz (Postdoctoral Researcher for the MELA project) and Marina Bán (PhD candidate currently completing her dissertation about memory laws and the rule of law).

MELA’s activities in the past three years

Within the project, the Dutch team has been responsible for the social media of the project, supporting the MELA’s [webpage](#) and [social media](#). Amongst other tasks, they have delivered four newsletters covering in detail the research activities and publications of the project. The most recent [newsletter](#) (covering their activities between January and August 2019) is just out. The project has resulted in the array of journal and book publications, including the edited book by the Dutch and Polish Principal Investigators (Ulad Belavusau and Aleksandra Gliszczyńska Grabias) “[Law and Memory](#)” with Cambridge University Press, a number of [blogposts](#) in social media and [newspapers](#), [policy recommendations](#) and even a [MELA Model Declaration](#) carefully deducing various best practices regarding memory regulation. The team presented the Model Declaration at the final MELA conference, which was organised by the Dutch team in Brussels in cooperation with the external partners at the Brussels School of International Studies (University of Kent). The conference has gathered both the leading academics in the field and representatives of civil society and European organisations based in Brussels, to discuss the findings of the project and the Model Declaration recommended for the adoption by states and international organisations. Furthermore, the Dutch team at the Asser Institute has been very active in organising a number of events on memory laws this year not only at the Institute in the Hague, but also disseminating the results of their research on European law and discussing them in a comparative perspective in Asia (South Korea and Japan) and Latin America (Argentina and Chile). The Dutch MELA team are also particularly proud of the fact that their postdoctoral researcher, León Castellanos-Jankiewicz has been awarded a prestigious [David D. Caron Prize](#) by the American Society of International law.

What’s next?

Although the MELA Project is coming to a close in August 2019, the Dutch and Polish teams have been awarded a knowledge exchange grant worth €10,000.00 by HERA to disseminate the MELA Consortium’s Declaration on Law and Historical Memory in 2020. To translate the Model Declaration into binding laws and effective policies, the teams will organise a high-level event within the United Nations human rights framework in 2020. This multilateral venue gathers world-leading experts in the field of transitional justice, therefore providing a high-visibility platform to present their policy initiative.