



NETHERLANDS NETWORK FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS RESEARCH

First Biennial Report
1 September 2017 – 31 August 2019

Connecting for rights

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Foreword



Human rights research in The Netherlands has a long and strong tradition. An important part of its strength lies in the close connections between human rights researchers across different Faculties in The Netherlands, enabling inter-University as well as inter-disciplinary research collaboration. The Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research (NNHRR) has proven to be an excellent platform to foster these connections and collaborations between human rights researchers from all over the country and beyond. The Network facilitates the exchange of information, provides PhD training on human rights research, and actively supports the organization of human rights research activities across The Netherlands. Four Working Groups have thus far been established, bottom-up, gathering researchers around current human rights issues, including business and human rights; human rights in the digital age; migration and borders; and transitional justice and reparations.

I am proud to present, on behalf of the Steering Committee, the first NNHRR report, covering the period of September 2017 to August 2019. As shown in what follows, much has been achieved and sustained in this short time span, including the annual Toogdag, which brings the whole Network together; the PhD trainings on human rights methodology, publication strategies and fundraising; the activities of the Working Groups; the meet and greet sessions with international human rights scholars and practitioners; and the exchange of information and meetings. At the same time, now that the Network has been established, there is room for new initiatives, such as the awarding of the Max van der Stoep Prizes for PhD dissertations and LLM theses; the organization of research workshops and the human rights blog.

The NNHRR and its activities are made possible with the support of its eight member Universities: Erasmus University Rotterdam, Leiden University, Maastricht University, Tilburg University, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut, the University of Amsterdam, the University of Groningen and Utrecht University. Their support, financial as well as in kind, has provided the necessary means to establish the Network and consolidate its activities. I thank the members of the Steering Committee, representing these institutions, for their commitment and dedication to make the NNHRR work and be a truly active network. I also thank the Academic Coordinator and the Secretariat for their efforts in maintaining and sustaining the Network. I finally thank the members of the Advisory Board for their guidance and input. Together with all the members of the Network let us continue our collaboration, in order to inspire each other and to maintain the tradition of excellent human rights research in The Netherlands.

Prof Yvonne Donders

Summary

The Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research connects nearly 300 researchers in the field of human rights in The Netherlands. Since its establishment in 2017, it has become an important meeting point, platform and launching pad for human rights research, activities and researchers. This Report presents the Network and its activities from 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2019. Part 1 presents the activities and events undertaken by the Network during the reporting period. Part 2 offers an overview of the organizational and structural mechanisms developed by the Network to enhance research exchange. Part 3 outlines the Network's outreach & communications strategy and its role in supporting member connections and output. Part 4 provides an overview of the Network's background, governance and membership. Part 5 outlines the Network's financial situation. Finally, Part 6 presents the Network's future initiatives and forthcoming activities.

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Introduction: Connecting for rights

The Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research (hereinafter the Network) was established in 2017 to sustain and further strengthen cooperation in the field of human rights research. Despite its short existence, the Network has become an essential platform for human rights researchers seeking to establish meaningful contacts and durable links in The Netherlands. The Network has fully lived up to the expectation of connecting researchers, academic institutions, innovative ideas and outputs, thus generating relevant societal insights. As such, it maintains and strengthens the institutionalized cooperation among human rights researchers in The Netherlands and facilitates the organization of inter-university research and training for PhD researchers. It also enhances the visibility of human rights work conducted at Dutch universities nationally and internationally and aims at becoming a focal point for non-academic organizations such as ministries, NGOs and international organisations working on applied research questions.

As detailed below, the Network's success largely rests on the successful implementation of the decision to replace the Netherlands School of Human Rights Research from 1 September 2017 with a structure that facilitates overall engagement and builds on the strengths of researchers, whose ranks are rapidly increasing. With nearly three hundred members to date coming from a wide variety of academic backgrounds and subfields, the Network has now created a critical mass of experts that are mutually supportive. The connections underlying the Network's membership are therefore at the heart of this Report. They enable members to learn from each other's work, find new collaborators and harness the knowledge of a powerful collective that continues to grow each day.

Looking ahead, the Network will open new avenues of research for its community by consolidating the opportunities for cooperation among its members. It will do so by coordinating a research workshops programme, developing research clusters and strengthening its communications strategy, including the launching of a new blog hosted by the Network and social media accounts. These initiatives are currently underway, with an in-depth analysis of the membership's research foci and strengths having been conducted in the first half of 2019. These elements will be additional to the Network's successful activities, such as the annual Toogdag, the PhD Trainings and regular research gatherings. The Working Groups, which have been highly active and provide a research environment that facilitates focused discussion and exchange, will continue to be supported. Taken together, these initiatives will continue consolidating the Network's position in accordance with a bottom-up approach that cements its reputation as a point of reference for human rights research in The Netherlands and beyond over the years to come.

1. Connecting People

One of the Network's priorities is the maximization of its member's resources by creating spaces for them to learn from each other through meetings, workshops and exchanges. To this end, the Network developed two flagship activities: the Toogdag and PhD trainings. In addition, the Network organizes PhD Meet & Greets and informal gatherings for PhD researchers. Finally, thematic activities and events are organised by each working group. This section presents the major activities that anchor the Network's position as a reference point in the field of human rights research.

1.1 Launch Event

The Network's launch event took place on 10 November 2017 and was held at the T.M.C. Asser Institute. More than 100 human rights researchers attended the event. The event opened with a PhD meet & greet. Prof. Dr. Yvonne Donders, Chair of the Steering Committee, welcomed the assistants and elaborated upon the history and the aims of the Network. Her speech was followed by the PhD researchers introducing themselves to each other and discussing the main aspects of their work.

The PhD meet & greet was followed by a masterclass lecture delivered by Prof. Dr. Surya Subedi, Professor of International Law at the University of Leeds, former UN Special Rapporteur for human rights in Cambodia and author of the book *The Effectiveness of the UN Human Rights System: Reform and the Judicialisation of Human Rights*. During his talk, Professor Subedi concentrated on the universality of human rights and the role of democracy in human rights discourse. He also addressed the urgent issue of how economic power has an impact on the human rights agenda.

Subsequently, Professor Subedi delivered a lecture on the effectiveness of the UN human rights system. He noted that human rights have been subject to politicization and that states have started applying double standards in this regard. The launch event closed with a reception, where participants were able to continue exchanging ideas.

1.2 Toogdag: Annual Research Day

Two very successful Toodagen were organized during the reporting period. The first was held in June 2018 at Tilburg University, and the second edition was hosted by Maastricht University in June 2019. The next Toogdag will be held in the University of Amsterdam in June 2020.

Toogdag 2018

The 2018 Toogdag took place in Tilburg Law School on 22 June and brought together 75 participants. The theme was 'The Future of Human Rights – Human Rights of the Future'. The talks concentrated on challenges to human dignity as well as the role of human rights law in facing societal change. Various threats posed to the human rights framework were identified.

For instance, technological changes, migration and the conduct of corporate firms were subject to the participants' analyses.

The Toogdag began with a PhD session on the publication of doctoral dissertations, which was provided to researchers by Intersentia, the publisher of the Network's human rights series. This was followed by a keynote address delivered by Prof. Morten Kjaerum, the director of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute in Sweden and the first Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2008-2015).

Subsequently, three panels were held. The first was entitled 'Business and Human Rights: Quo Vadis?' The second panel centered on migration and discussed 'People out of Place: What to Expect from Human Rights Law?', whereas the third panel concentrated on the links between human rights and technological developments under the heading 'Human Rights in the Digital Age: New Frontiers'. The event closed with a debate on the future of human rights with four members of the Network's Advisory Board: Jos Silvis (Procurator General, Supreme Court of The Netherlands); Morten Kjaerum (Director Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Sweden); Eduard Nazarski (Director of Amnesty International, The Netherlands); and Farah Karimi (Director of Oxfam Novib, The Netherlands).

After the Toogdag, the first meeting of the Network's Advisory Board was held, where Prof. Dr. Yvonne Donders presented the aims of the Network. Her speech was followed by a short discussion on the strategic development of human rights law, where challenges posed by human rights activism were also addressed. Lastly, those present briefly addressed the issue of human rights education.

Toogdag 2019

The 2019 Toogdag revolved around the theme of efficiency of human rights, and featured presentations and discussions from various angles. The event was hosted in Maastricht University over the course of two days. On the evening of the 21st of June, PhD researchers participated in a workshop on the cultural aspects of work in different countries and regions led by Candida Snow. Following this, the documentary *The Long Haul*, which focuses on the work of the late Sir Nigel Rodley, was screened to a full room, after which a panel discussion took place.

On June 22nd, all participants gathered in the Statenzaal of Maastricht University and were welcomed by Prof. Fons Coomans, the 2019 Toogdag's host. An interdisciplinary plenary roundtable followed, which addressed effectiveness in the implementation of human rights.

Two panels were arranged during the day: a morning one and another in the afternoon. The first panel focused on the effectiveness of human rights and implementation at the domestic level. This panel unfolded in two parallel sessions, which consisted of two PhD researchers presenting their work, and a representative of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (NIHR). In the first parallel session, PhD researchers Elif Durmus and Bart Kleine Deters presented their work, and the NIHR presentation was delivered by Prof. Nicola Jägers. In the second parallel session, the presenting PhD researchers were Nikolaos Papadopoulos and Renata da Silva Athayde Barbosa, and Dr. Jan-Peter Loof gave the NIHR presentation.

After a lunch break, the afternoon session was opened. The theme of this session was 'human rights at the individual level: individual experiences and key actors'. The first presentation was given by Leiden University Assistant Professors Stephanie Rap and Katrien Klep on the topic of child participation in legal proceedings. Subsequently, Elif Durmus presented the work of the Cities of Refuge project, focusing on the role of individual agency of local government officials in the materialization of human rights at the local level. The day was closed with a keynote speech by Prof. Suzanne Egan, who extensively analysed the notion of effectiveness of human rights throughout the UN System, including the Human Rights Council and treaty bodies.

Toogdag 2019: Prof. Fons Coomans addresses participants in Maastricht University



1.3 PhD Trainings

Every year, the Network organizes two trainings for PhD researchers – one for first- and second-year PhDs focusing on research methods in human rights, and another for third- and fourth-year PhDs, focusing on publication strategies, job applications and funding.

PhD Training 2018

On 7 and 8 June 2018, Leiden Law School hosted the Network's PhD Training. Twenty PhD researchers (mostly in the first and second year of their project) attended the course. Academics from around the Netherlands shared their knowledge and experience with the participants. The event addressed research methods, including doctrinal and critical legal research, empirical and interdisciplinary research and the balance between academic rigor and societal engagement.

There was also a session on marketing one's research, which was divided into two parts: conference training and publishing as well as blogging and tweeting. In addition, there was a practical session on time management, health and potential burnouts, together with balancing teaching obligations with research. Further, the Leiden Law Library offered a practical training on reference managers and human rights databases. The PhD members of the Network who participated in this two-day course provided positive feedback with regard to the activities.

PhD Training 2019

The 2019 annual PhD training was organised in cooperation with Erasmus School of Law and took place on 13-14 May 2019. Ten PhD students from various universities in the Netherlands attended the interactive workshops and lectures. The two days were divided into two themes: the first day comprised substantive lectures and workshops, focusing on different methodologies of law. The second covered practical aspects of writing a PhD such as publishing strategies.

More specifically, the first day revolved around 'methodology of legal research', where a variety of methods were explained by legal scholars. Prof. Bart van Klink gave the first substantive lecture, which touched upon the usefulness of legal methodology and the shift towards a more interdisciplinary approach to law. The next presentation was delivered by Prof. Chantal Mak and focused on the 'Methods of Human Rights Research in European and Comparative Perspective' with special attention given to doctrinal research. For his part, Prof. Peter Mascini offered a lecture on how to apply empirical legal methods to legal research. Finally, Prof. Wibren van der Burg explored the topic of incorporating legal philosophy into research. Finally, a reference manager training as provided by the librarians of the Erasmus University Library. After the lectures, participants took part in social activities and took a historic tram tour in Rotterdam.

The second day included practical themes such as blogging, time management and publishing strategies. It began with a presentation on law in practice: 'Having Impact with Research: Between Political Commitment and Academic Sincerity'. Dr. Eijkman explained the choices she made during her PhD research and why a connection with the 'real world' is so important for the validity and sincerity of your research. Dr. Eijkman's talk was followed by a presentation on blogging and social media by Dr. Antoine Duval, which focused on the visibility of PhD research. The third presentation of the day addressed publishing strategies and was offered by Prof. Jeroen Temperman. In a final presentation, Dr. Rene Repasi and Dr. Menelaos Markakis discussed the importance of time management and offered guidance on how to handle stress and avoid burnouts during the process of writing a dissertation.

Alongside the lectures, social activities were organised where PhD students were able to network among themselves and with the lecturers. The participants evaluated the two-day workshops positively, across the board.

Reflections on the PhD Training Course by Network Member Joelle Trampert

“The two-day NNHRR PhD training in Rotterdam could not have come at a better time for me. Coming to the end of my first year of doctoral research, I had many questions on how to approach my project in an organised and scientifically sound manner. On day 1, four professors shared with us their thoughts and techniques regarding methodology in human rights research: something I had very little experience with previously. I have learned about the different options available in the field of human rights - it turns out there are many more than just 'desk research'! On day 2, the practical side of human rights research and its impact was discussed. The speakers gave helpful and personal insights on a wide range of topics. One speaker in particular said something that really stuck with me: 'Your dissertation is the opportunity to read a lot, to go to the intellectual gym. Based on that, you will participate in the debate.' For me this is a reassuring analogy. Last but not least, the training was fantastically organised and provided a perfect environment to meet other PhD candidates in my field. I can highly recommend other (junior) researchers participating next year”.

Joelle Trampert, PhD Researcher at the University of Amsterdam

Follow-Up Training 2019

The Network Follow-Up PhD Training was aimed at second- and third-year PhD students. The first Follow-Up PhD Training was organised by the University of Groningen on 29 March 2019. The theme of the training day was “Employability during PhD / Career after PhD”.

The training consisted of two parts. The first was a workshop by People in Science, where participants worked with ‘identifying skills and core expertise in vacancies’. This was followed by ‘Communicating your skills and core-expertise’ through Linked-In, mock interviews and other settings.

The second part included a panel discussion with Prof. Panos Merkouris (University of Groningen) and Dr. Marie Elske Gispen (University of Groningen) on various topics, including ‘career paths after the PhD’ and ‘funding and grant writing’.

The Follow-Up PhD Training 2019 was a successful event with interesting discussions, questions, reflections on skill-development during the PhD research, and looking forward to employability and careers post-PhD. The next Follow-Up PhD Training will take place in Utrecht University in 2020.

1.4 Activities for PhD Members

PhD Masterclass with Prof. Surya Subedi, November 2017

The Network was launched in November 2017 with a lecture on the effectiveness of the UN human rights system by Prof. Dr Surya Subedi, Professor of International Law at the University of Leeds and former UN Special Rapporteur for human rights in Cambodia. Prior to the main launch event, a PhD Meet & Greet was organized where PhD researchers got introduced to the history and function of the Network and to each other's work, background, and expectations. The Meet & Greet was followed by a Masterclass by Prof. Dr Surya Subedi, focusing on the following questions: are human rights universal? What is the role between democracy and human rights? How can the shift of economic power from the West to the East impact the human rights agenda? The researchers were given the opportunity to interact with Prof. Subedi on topics related to democracy and the effectiveness of the human rights monitoring system, research methodology, objectivity, and other practical aspects of the work as a human rights researcher.

Session on publishing your PhD with Intersentia at the Toogdag 2018

At the Network's annual research day in 2018, Tom Scheirs, head of marketing at Intersentia, offered a presentation on publishing your PhD. He outlined the different steps of the publication process, including the different deals which Intersentia offers based on the number of prints. The participants had the opportunity to ask questions on the editing process and additional costs that might be included for spell-checks and other services. This was a useful session as many PhDs start thinking too late about publishing. As a result of this session, the Network website now includes a section explaining the basic steps to follow and a timeline of how to deal with publishing your PhD.

PhD Masterclass with Agnes Callamard on 14 September 2018

On the occasion of the Peter Baehr lecture, organized by the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM) of Utrecht University on its 37th anniversary, the Network collaborated with SIM to organize a PhD Masterclass with Agnes Callamard, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. The UN Special Rapporteur gave a Masterclass on "The work and challenges of a UN human rights rapporteur". This gave an opportunity to the PhD members of the Network to interact with the Special Rapporteur during a meeting under Chatham House rules. The PhD members were able to raise questions about her work and the challenges facing UN special rapporteurs in general, and discuss her recent report 'Saving lives is not a crime', focusing on the criminalization and targeting of life-saving and protection services.

PhD session at the 2019 Toogdag: 'Culture and Communication' with Candida Snow

Maastricht University organized a 'Culture and Communication' workshop in which Candida Snow provided interesting insights on how differences in cultures affect work relationships and activities in the academic world. Each participant completed a survey beforehand, which helped them reflect on their own cultural background and how this affects their behavior in

terms of reactions and expectations. The workshop was organized as an interactive session and focused exchanging and understanding different cultural experiences. For most participants, the information presented was very useful and a welcome reflection on regular challenges they face in their work.

What do PhD Members think about the Network?

Claire Loven, PhD candidate at Utrecht University:

“The Network provides PhD’s with excellent opportunities during the course of their research. As a first year PhD candidate, I really appreciated taking part in the PhD annual training as well as the Toogdag. Both events provided the opportunity to come in contact with fellow human rights researchers and share experiences and knowledge as well as taking part in interesting courses and seminars on human rights and research methodology.”

Elif Erken, PhD candidate at Utrecht University:

“I greatly appreciate the opportunities offered by the NNHRR. It has not only given me the chance, as a first year PhD student, to pursue interesting and relevant courses related to human rights research but also to build and expand my own network across the country”.

Everhard Tilstra, PhD candidate at Groningen University

“What I really like and appreciate in the Network is the opportunity as a young researcher to present and discuss my research, as well as developments in international human rights law. Furthermore, the Network provides a useful platform to broaden my contacts, not only with other PhDs, but also with senior researchers and people working outside academia.

1.5 Informal Gatherings

PhD social gathering in Utrecht on 21 February 2018

On February 2018, PhD members of the Network visited Utrecht to discuss the latest developments and activities organized by the Network. These meetings had two aims in particular: first to introduce new junior members to the Network, its aims and activities, and second, to provide an informal setting for PhD members to discuss their expectations and ideas for the Network. On both occasions, alumnas of the former School of Human Rights Research who had recently defended their PhD were invited to share their experience with the Network and more generally regarding their PhD trajectory. In an informal setting, Dr. Julie Frazer discussed with the new PhDs the benefits they experienced from their participation to the Network, the challenges of their PhD journey, and possible career tracks. This provided an opportunity for PhDs to ask questions regarding the challenges of finishing a PhD.

PhD social gathering in Utrecht, 31 January 2019

In January 2019 PhD members of the Network visited Utrecht to introduce new PhD members to the Network, its aims and activities, and to provide an informal setting for them to discuss their expectations and ideas for the Network. On this occasion, alumnas of the former School of Human Rights Research, who had recently defended their PhD were invited to share their experience with the Network and more generally regarding their PhD trajectory. In an informal setting, Dr. Dr. Diana Odier-Contreras Garduno discussed with the new PhDs the benefits they experienced from their participation to the Network, the challenges of their PhD journey, and possible career tracks. This provided an opportunity for PhDs to ask questions regarding the challenges of finishing a PhD. Furthermore, a number of ideas were exchanged on how to make the Network more valuable to PhDs. The idea of a blog was also discussed. In addition, several PhDs supported the idea of organizing a follow-up training for PhDs in the final stages of their trajectory. This idea has been implemented for the first time in April 2019 and will become a regular component of the PhD activities offered by the network.

PhD Meet & Greet with Tineke Strik organized by the Migration & Borders Working Group on 18 October 2019



1.6 Activities organized by the Working Groups

All working groups have been active in the Tilburg Toogdag and they have organized internal exchanges, as outlined below. Two working groups also organized open activities in the reported period.

Business and Human Rights Working Group

1. Workshop on Zero Draft Treaty, 4 October 2018

The Business and Human Rights Working Group held a series of presentations followed by a plenary discussion regarding the first draft of the UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights. Three members and one guest speaker presented during the discussion. Cedric Ryngaert's presentation was on jurisdictional issues, addressing at the role of private international law and public international law concepts, particularly in article 5 of the treaty. Antoine Duval discussed key benefits of the treaty discussions both in terms of the prospect of a treaty but also keeping up the pressure for greater action on business and human rights issues. He focussed on the provisions on civil liability and questioned the reinvention of the UNGPs principles on due diligence for the purposes of the treaty. Dr. Nadia Bernaz discussed the draft optional protocol to the draft treaty. She explained how the treaty draws on existing human rights instruments and institutions such as the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as the Paris Principles on National Human Rights Institutions. Mariëtte van Huijstee, a guest speaker from SOMO, made what was missing from the treaty the core focus of her presentation: direct obligations, a world court, the primacy of human rights over trade and investment agreements, and the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms. Open discussions between members covered various questions including the position of non-ratifying parties, potential negative effects of the treaty, the corporate veil, supply chains, due diligence obligations, and what constitutes transnational activity.

2. Meeting for members to present and discuss their research, 7 February 2019

Network members Annika van Baar, Claire Loven, Phillip Paiement, and guest speaker Sophie Melchers presented on their research. Annika van Baar's presentation on 'Reputational penalties for corporate human rights violations: an event study based on Business and Human Rights Resource Center data' discussed how press given to cases of human rights abuses affects business enterprises' performance amongst investors. Phillip Paiement and Sophie Melchers discussed how and when private standards incorporate public international law standards in their presentation: 'Finding International Law in Private Governance: How Codes of Conduct Refer to International Instruments'. Claire Loven's presentation - 'Fundamental Rights Violations by Private Actors and the Procedure Before the ECtHR' - focussed on the increasingly blurred lines between the vertical and horizontal effect of human rights law. Discussions amongst the members prompted by these presentations focussed on these topics as well as carrying out quantitative research in law.

3. PhD Workshop in Tilburg, 20 March 2019

This event has was aimed at bringing junior members of the Working Group together to give them a chance to present and discuss their PhD projects. Senior members from within and outside of the Working Group provided feedback on each project.

4. FIFA Conference at the Asser Institute, 8 May 2019

Network members Dr Antoine Duval (Senior Researcher at the Asser Institute and member of the Business and Human Rights Working Group) and Daniela Heerdt (chair of the Business and Human Rights Working Group) organized a conference on FIFA and human rights, discussing the impacts, policies and responsibilities FIFA has with regard to human rights. Speakers included FIFA's Human Rights Manager, Andreas Graf and the CEO of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights, Mary Harvey, among others. Participation was free for Network members. The conference contributions were posted in a blog symposium on the *Verfassungsblog* and will subsequently be published.

5. Reading group session in Utrecht, 13 June 2019

Network members discussed an article by Tim Bartley entitled 'Institutional emergence in an era of globalization: The rise of transnational private regulation of labor and environmental conditions' published in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 2007. The article and discussion, focused on the two different perspectives applied towards private regulatory certification schemes: one based on markets and the other based on political contestation.

Migration & Borders Working Group

1. Open feedback session on the project 'Cities of Refuge', 29 October 2018, Utrecht

Sara Miellet and Elif Durmus from the Cities of Refuge Research Project discussed their work on forced migration and the application of human rights at the local level. They shared some of the conceptual and methodological debates that have arisen during the first year of their research. They received extensive feedback from the members of the Working Group.

2. Workshop on responsibility in the context of migration management, Utrecht

On 5 February 2019, the Migration & Borders Working Group held a workshop on responsibility in the context of migration management. The evening was split into two parts with the first focusing on general discussions surrounding responsibility in the context of migration management. Topics covered included defining responsibility, responsibility for asylum protection and responsibility and failure to act. The second part was given over to the topic of shared responsibility in the context of migration management, focusing on issues such as causation and the involvement of state and non-state actors in shared responsibility schemes.

Reflections on the Working Groups by Network PhD Member Daniela Heerdt

“Being a member and chair of one of the NNHRR Working Groups is a great way to connect with junior and senior researchers in the field and learn more about the projects they are working on. It helps to position and categorize your own research in a specific research field and provides you with a research team, whose members you can rely on for certain expertise. Furthermore, as a working group chair you get to be creative and come up with ideas for events, which is from the content but also the organizational aspect a great learning experience.”

Daniela Heerdt, PhD Researcher at Tilburg University and co-chair of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights

1.7 Recent Events (selected)

Beyond the reporting period, the Network has continued to organize and host events, both at the stakeholder universities and at the Asser Institute, which hosts the Network Secretariat and Academic Coordination.

‘Legal Implications of European Trends in the Externalisation of Migration Management’, 19 September 2019, Nijmegen

Members of the Migration & Borders Working Group organized a PhD workshop on ‘Legal Implications of European Trends in the Externalisation of Migration Management’. This workshop was organised in collaboration with the Dutch Association for Migration Research (DAMR), and the financing was shared between the Network and DAMR. The workshop featured three sessions and a keynote by an international speaker.

'The Gender Dimension of Business and Human Rights', 9 October 2019, Asser institute, The Hague

This half-day workshop organized by the Working Group on Business & Human Rights provided an overview of the current debate and state of research on gender in business & human rights. The Working Group brought together experts and interested researchers. Session 1 provided an overview of existing research and studies in the field of business & human rights and gender. The focus was on the work and studies conducted by the speakers. Session 2 addressed the standards and instruments existing in the Business & Human Rights field that promote a gender perspective and analysed the potential of the new draft treaty from a gender lens to understand what shortcomings and good practices are in the field of existing and developing standards.

Workshop on 'The Gender Dimension of Business and Human Rights', held at the Asser Institute on 9 October 2019



Lecture by Tineke Strik, 20 October 2019, Asser Institute, The Hague

Tineke Strik, Associate Professor in Migration Law at Radboud University Nijmegen, and elected Member of the European Parliament (GreenLeft), gave a public lecture on the need for evidence-based policies in migration management at the Asser Institute in The Hague. The Network and the Migration & Borders Working Group organized this high-profile lecture. Participants included academics, researchers, policy makers, and members of civil society organisations. The lecture was preceded by a PhD Meet & Greet.

Public lecture by Tineke Strik on 'The External Dimension of EU Asylum and Migration Policy' held at the Asser Institute on 20 October 2019



2. Connecting Research

The Network offers a variety of platforms for researchers to share their scientific output with relevant academic partners and the broader public. These platforms are also focused on facilitating research valorisation, increasing visibility for researchers and connecting their expertise to policy-oriented stakeholders. The main opportunities for research exchange and dissemination offered by the Network include the working groups, research clusters, the Human Rights Research Series published in cooperation with Intersentia. The coordination of the Max van der Stoep Human Rights Award in cooperation with Tilburg University constitutes another major activity. In 2019-2020, the Network aims at issuing a call for Multidisciplinary Research Workshops to complement these activities.

Aims of the Network

- **Connect researchers in The Netherlands under one organizational umbrella**
- **Enhance PhD training in the field of human rights and their research methods**
- **Disseminate findings and provide institutional outreach for researchers**

2.1 Working groups

Currently, the Network has four working groups. Each working group assists members to establish contact with other researchers across the field of human rights research - connections which would be difficult to establish through bilateral inter-university cooperation. Members are free to join any of the working groups. In line with a bottom-up approach, the working groups are self-managed by the members, address their needs and ensure active participation. A focal point coordinates the group's activities in line with its research agenda. Activities include conferences, lectures, workshops and social meet-and-greets, which are financed by the Network, either partially or in full.

The Network supports the working groups in the following ways:

- Workshop & conference organization through financial and infrastructural assistance
- Dissemination of working group newsletters
- Showcasing output and increasing the visibility of research
- Encouraging new members to join a working group

Working groups are established by members following a formal proposal to and approval by the Steering Committee. All working groups were established in 2018, except for the working group on 'Human rights, transitional justice and reparations', which was constituted in 2019. Thus far, working groups have been created through a bottom-up approach that closely addresses members' needs and ensures their active participation.

Human rights, transitional justice and reparations working group

This working group integrates a group of scholars that conduct research within the field of gross human rights violations, transitional justice, and reparations in the aftermath of mass victimisation. This is an inter-disciplinary group which encourages and facilitates collaboration amongst scholars with various academic backgrounds and fields, including law, political science, sociology, psychology, among others.

Human rights in the digital age working group

This working group comprises two tracks. **Track One** focuses on freedom of expression and public debate. It accounts for the growing range of actors intervening in the public sphere – including journalists, the media, NGOs, academics, bloggers, human rights defenders—and their increased exposure to violence, threats, harassment and arbitrary detention that are specific to the online environment.

Track Two is devoted to privacy and data protection. It engages with the growing multi-perspectival scholarship on privacy and data protection and foregrounds its human rights ramifications. Participating researchers seek to identify key, urgent challenges and examine the potential and limitations of existing regulatory instruments and technological solutions.

Business and human rights working group

This working group brings together junior and senior members of the NNHRR that conduct research within the field of business and human rights, including research on human rights and non-state actors more generally. The aim of this working group is to connect members of the network by regularly facilitating knowledge exchange activities, encourage collaboration between members, and to keep each other updated about the state of research and other developments in the field. As of July 2019, this Working Group has 20 members. It also has an active Twitter account under the handle @NLNBHR.

Migration and borders working group

The focus and goals of this working group are to advance the exchange of knowledge in the field of international human rights standards and their relation to international migration and border practices. The focus of the group is interdisciplinary, combining insights from law and social science, aiming to build a network of migration scholars, and share theoretical, methodological and empirical insights amongst its members, as well as the broader public. The working group consists of 20 members. The Migration & Borders Working Group is active on Twitter since September 2018 under the handle @MigrationBordersWG.

2.2 Research clusters

In the period May-August 2019, the Academic Coordinator and Secretariat, with the support of an intern, undertook an extensive assessment of individual members' competences and expertise. The study identified 70 subfields of specialization across the Network's members that were subsequently grouped into 20 research clusters. Researchers will be linked to one or more clusters in order to be better identified by their peers, and to assist the Academic Coordinator in supporting needs-based activities that are consistent with the Network's bottom-up approach.

Research Clusters

1. Criminal Law
2. Humanitarian Law
3. Law of the Sea, Maritime Law
4. Human Rights Law
5. Public International Law
6. Private International Law
7. ECHR, European Law
8. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
9. Children, Family, Integration, Discrimination
10. Environmental Law
11. International Sports Law
12. Courts, Governance, Rule of Law, Margin of Appreciation
13. History & Philosophy
14. Data Protection, Privacy, Cyber-Security, Intellectual Property Law
15. Law, Technology, Society
16. International Investment Law & International Trade Law
17. Near and Middle Eastern Studies
18. Jewish Studies
19. Anthropology
20. Cities and Citizenship

On the basis of the Research Clusters, the Academic Coordinator and Secretariat aim at developing:

- A refined list of the research clusters and subfields of Network expertise
- A password-protected keyword-based online members database
- An analytical index for members and working group focal points
- A face book for selected journalists and policymakers seeking human rights expertise

2.3 Human Rights Research Series with Intersentia

Since its inception, the Network has maintained the Human Rights Research Series with Intersentia, an English language book series that enables PhD members of the Network to publish their doctoral dissertation. The Steering Committee established a publication procedure and functions as the Editorial Board for the Series. Since 2017, 10 volumes have been published under the Series covering a wide variety of human rights topics and subfields.

The central research themes of the Intersentia Series are the nature and meaning of international standards in the field of human rights, their application and promotion in the national legal order, their interplay with national standards, and the international supervision of such application.

Intersentia Human Rights Research Series Publications 2017-2019

- *Trapped in a Religious Marriage*, Benedicta Deogratias (2019)
- *Process-Based Fundamental Human Rights Review*, Leonie Huibers (2019)
- *Realising the Right to Water and Sanitation in Nigeria*, Kasim Balarabe (2019)
- *Towards a Sustainable Human Right to Water*, Daphina Misiedjan (2019)
- *Advancing the Right to Health Care in China*, Yi Zhang (2019)
- *Collective Reparations*, Diana Odier-Contreras Garduño (2018)
- *Situation Selection Regime at the International Criminal Court*, Mohammad Hadi Zakerhossein (2017)
- *Privacy as Virtue*, Bart van der Sloot (2017)
- *Limits of Fundamental Human Rights Protection by the EU*, Malu Beijer (2017)
- *Human Rights and Drug Control*, Maria Elske Gispén (2017)

2.4 Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award 2019

In 1995, Tilburg University decided to introduce the Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award for academic publications in the area of human rights, with a view to draw more attention to this field of study in Dutch academic education and research. The Award is named after the Dutch Minister of State, first OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and former UN

Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iraq, Mr Max van der Stoel. In 2019, it was decided that Tilburg Law School and the Network will jointly organise the Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award on a bi-annual basis starting in 2019.

Nominations can be submitted by all faculties linked to universities in the Netherlands and the Flemish community in Belgium, as well as by the Asser Institute.

The Award has two separate categories:

- Category 1: doctoral dissertations
- Category 2: non-dissertation academic texts

For the 2019 edition, the Network Secretariat received 24 nominations, a number that almost doubled the 13 nominations received for the 2017 edition. Nominations came from ten Dutch universities (University of Amsterdam, VU Amsterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Utrecht University, Maastricht University, Tilburg University, Leiden University, Wageningen University, Radboud University, University of Groningen) and four Belgian universities (Antwerp, VU Brussels, Gent University, KU Leuven).

All manuscripts were evaluated and the award winners selected by an international jury that was assembled by Tilburg University and the Network's Steering Committee. This year's jury members were:

- Prof. dr. Ernst Hirsch Ballin, Distinguished University Professor at Tilburg University and president of the T.M.C. Asser Instituut (Chairman of the Jury)
- Prof. Jos Dute, Professor of Health Law, Radboud University, Nijmegen; Commissioner at the Netherlands Human Rights Institute (2010-2019)
- Prof. dr. Koen Lemmens, Professor of Human rights Law at KU Leuven
- Dr. Eva Rieter, Assistant Professor of International and European Law at Radboud University, Nijmegen

The Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award 2019 will be presented at Tilburg University on Friday 13 December 2019. The ceremony will include a keynote speech by Prof. Christine van den Wyngaert, member of the Advisory Board of the Network and former Judge of the International Criminal Court.

3. Connecting Ideas

The Network's communications strategy aims at developing relevant and durable linkages among members by increasing their visibility, highlighting their strengths and promoting their main outputs and achievements. These objectives have been attained during the reporting period through the Network website and the regular Newsletters. In 2019-2020, the Network plans to launch *Human Rights Here*, a blog conceived by members based in various stakeholder institutions, and to open a Twitter account under the handle @NNHRRresearch. These initiatives are presented in Section 6 of this document.

3.1 Website

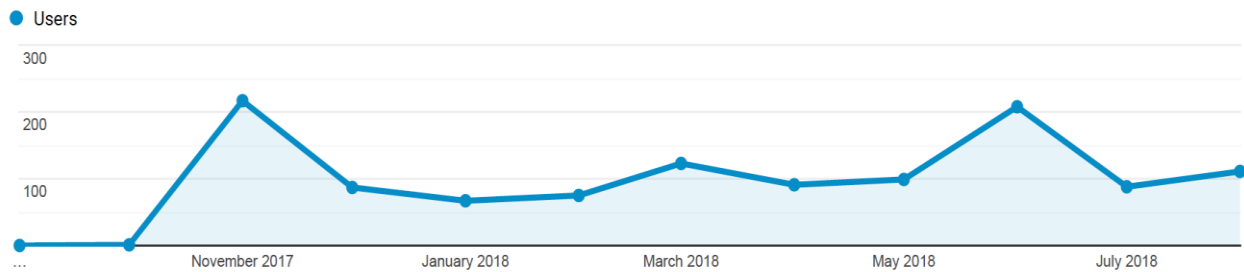
The Network website generated a substantial and constant amount of traffic and page views over the reporting period. With a sustained average of 1,000 page views per month, the total number of views was 20,443. The website also had a total of 2,757 unique visitors during this time.

The website was launched in November 2017, shortly after the official inauguration of the Network. It is currently hosted within the Asser Institute's website: www.asser.nl/nnhrr. The Asser website has since undergone considerable redesign and a similar update of the Network website is planned for 2019-2020. It is envisaged that the technical support for this redesign will be provided by the Asser Institute.

The Network's website is regularly updated and improved by the Secretariat. Its current layout provides a quick and easy-to-access interface presenting the Network's main features: Network news, recent events, information about the working groups, a thesis publication guide in connection to the Intersentia partnership and a dedicated page for the Max van der Stoep Award.

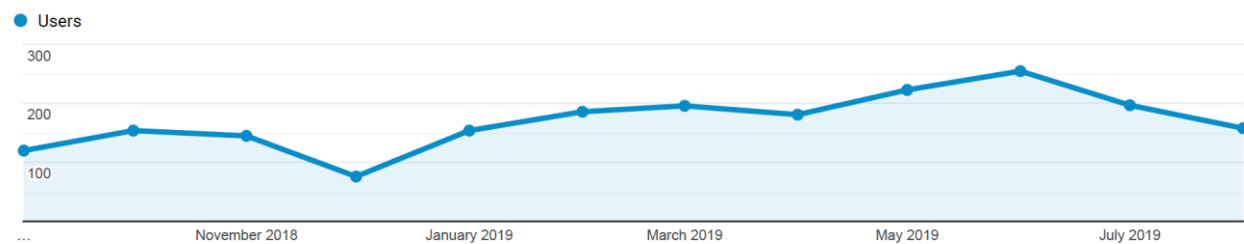
In August 2019, the Secretariat, with the assistance of an intern, identified the website's main areas for improvement. The resulting recommendations are to consolidate information, streamline the visual identity and include timely updates and news items. These will be implemented in the coming months together with the website's redesign.

Website visitors 2017-2018

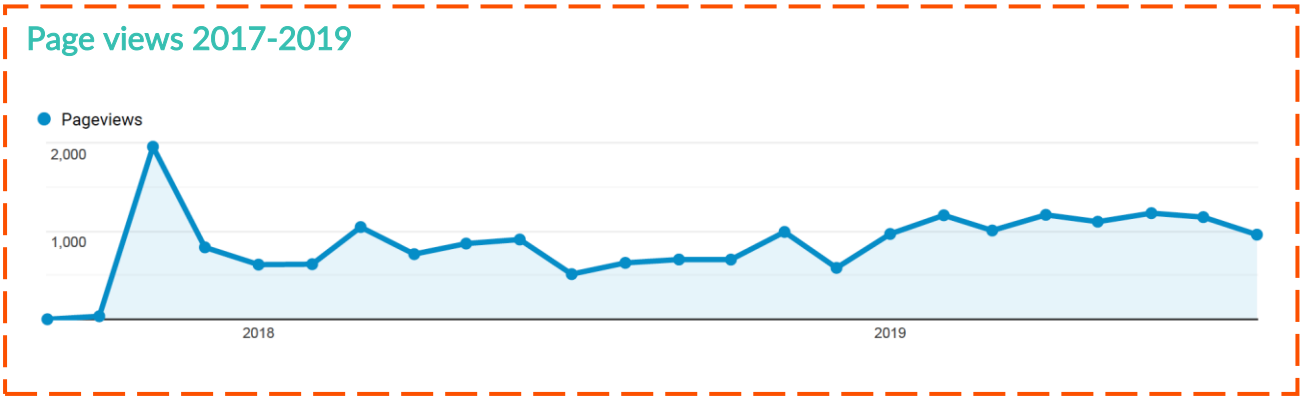


In 2017-2018, the Network website experienced around 100 visits per month. There were 989 unique users and 8,754 page views.

Website visitors 2018-2019



Website use increased markedly in 2018-2019 with 200 monthly visits on average, an 100% improvement over the previous academic year. The number of unique users and page views also soared: 1,801 individual users were reported during this period and 11,699 website pages were viewed.



The website received a noteworthy 1,000 page views per month over the entire reporting period (2017-2019). The total number of views was 20,443.

3.2 Newsletters

The Secretariat regularly creates and sends a Newsletter to Network members with information about conferences, members’ forthcoming activities, courses, members’ events, calls for papers and activities organised within and by the Network. In 2017-2018, 30 Newsletters were sent, whereas 27 were issued in 2018-2019. The Newsletters represent one of the core ways in which the human rights research community disseminates events and other news.

4. Connecting Institutions

4.1 Background

Cooperation has become increasingly essential for the development of cutting-edge academic work. In response to this challenge, the Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research was jointly established in 2016 by Erasmus University Rotterdam, Leiden University, Maastricht University, Tilburg University, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut, the University of Amsterdam, the University of Groningen and Utrecht University. The Network started to function in 2017. It was also agreed that the Network's Coordination and Secretariat would be based in the T.M.C. Asser Instituut because of Asser's longstanding experience as an inter-university research institution.

Upon its establishment, the stakeholder universities committed to contribute towards the Network's finances over a three-year period starting on 1 September 2017 and ending on 31 August 2020. This Report covers activities executed from 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2019.

The Network in brief

- **Established in 2016 by seven Dutch universities alongside the T.M.C. Asser Instituut**
- **A platform for research exchange, cooperation, education & project development**
- **Increases opportunities and maximises resources for its members**

4.2 Governance

The Network's main governing body is a Steering Committee composed of representatives of the participating institutions as well as two representatives of the PhD candidates.

The Network's Secretariat and Academic Coordination are based at the Asser Institute. Their activities are overseen by the Steering Committee and an Advisory Board. The Network has benefited from this governance structure, which enables collective decision-making through relatively quick procedures.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee decides on the Network's agenda, oversees the budget and provides general direction. It is composed of representatives of the stakeholder institutions.

The current members of the Steering Committee are:

- Prof. Dr. Yvonne Donders (University of Amsterdam), Chair of the Steering Committee
- Prof. Dr. Janne Nijman (T.M.C. Asser Instituut)
- Prof. Dr. Antoine Buyse (Utrecht University)
- Prof. Titia Loenen (Leiden University)
- Prof. Dr. Kristin Henrard (Erasmus University Rotterdam)
- Prof. Dr. Brigit Toebe (University of Groningen)
- Prof. Dr. Nicola Jägers (Tilburg University)
- Prof. Dr. Fons Coomans (Maastricht University)

In line with the Network's educational vocation, two PhD candidates sit at the Steering Committee representing the interests of their peers. The PhD Representatives for 2017-2019 were Maria Gkliati (Leiden University) and Daniela Heerdt (Tilburg University). From September 2019, Maria Gkliati will be succeeded by Jackson Oldfield (University of Amsterdam).

The Steering Committee met twice in 2017 and five times in 2018. It has met on four occasions in 2019 and a fifth meeting is scheduled for 13 December 2019.

Academic Coordination

An Academic Coordinator executes the programme of work and oversees the Network's day-to-day functioning. The Academic Coordinator is based at the Asser Institute and works alongside the Secretariat for the Network. The Academic Coordinator for September 2017 to August 2019 was Dr Marta Bo (Asser Institute), who oversaw the launch and establishment of the Network. From September 2019, the Academic Coordinator will be Dr León Castellanos-Jankiewicz (Asser Institute), who will build on the Network's strengths and serve its core aims of connecting researchers, enhancing PhD research and disseminating outputs.

Secretariat

The Secretariat is entrusted with the administrative aspects of the Network, including the preparation of meetings for the Steering Committee, assisting the Academic Coordinator in the Network's management and liaising with the Communications and Financial departments of the Asser Institute which also support the Network. The Secretariat has an essential role in the executing the Network's communications strategy and information management through the website and circulation of a regular Newsletter. Ms Annelies Verkerk is currently the focal point of the Network's Secretariat and will continue supporting its activities in this capacity.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board provides counsel on the Network's research cooperation and new opportunities. It cooperates with the Steering Committee and the Coordinator in developing a forward-thinking vision and networking activities. Given the diversity and profile of its members, the Advisory Board has an important valorization role in linking research outputs to relevant stakeholders and the broader public.

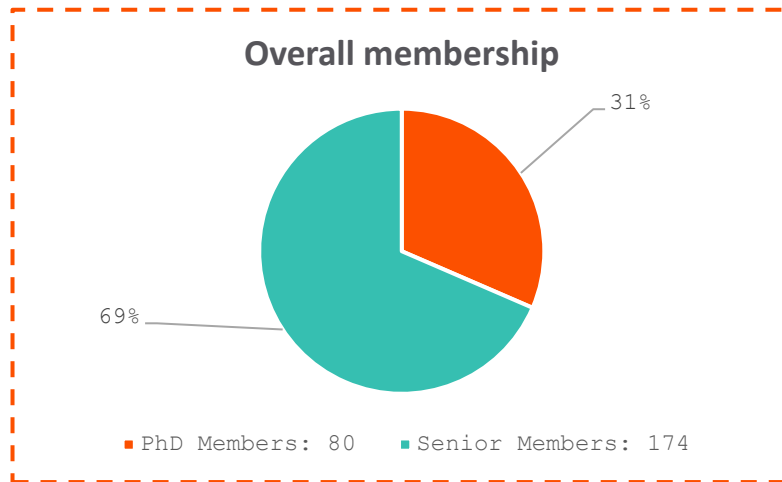
The Advisory Board meets once a year with the Steering Committee.

The current members of the Advisory Board are:

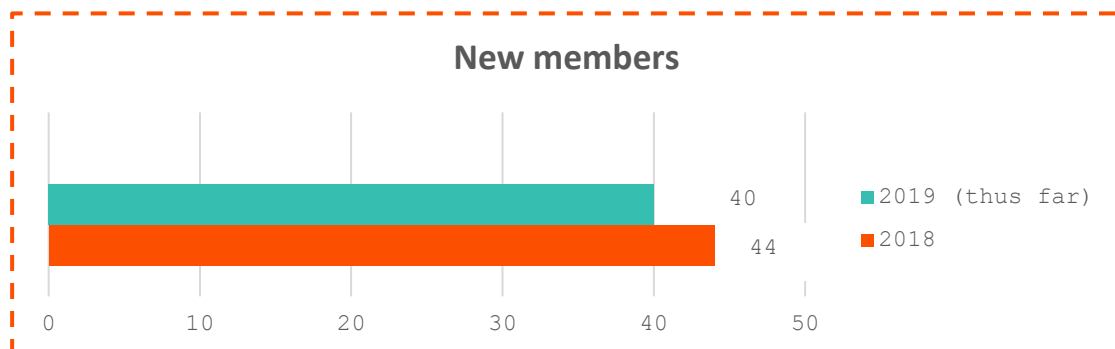
- Prof. Dr. Ernst Hirsch Ballin (President, T.M.C. Asser Instituut, Professor of Human Rights Law, University of Amsterdam, Chair of the Network's Advisory Board)
- Jan-Willem van den Braak (Chair, Stichting SBI)
- Joke Brandt (Secretary-General, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- Adriana van Dooijeweert (Chair, The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights)
- Prof. Morten Kjærum (Director, Raul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law)
- Prof. Liesbeth Lijnzaad (Judge, International Tribunal for the Law for the Sea)
- Eduard Nazarski (Former Director, Amnesty International Nederland)
- Alphons Orië (Judge, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals)
- Michiel Servaes (Director Oxfam Novib)
- Jos Silvis (Procurator General, Supreme Court of the Netherlands)
- Prof. Christine Van den Wyngaert (Judge, Kosovo Specialist Chambers)

4.3 Membership

Membership to the Network has increased steadily over the past two years. The Network distinguishes between its PhD Members, who are currently enrolled in the stakeholder institutions, and Senior Members, who are individuals with considerable experience in the field of human rights and hold a variety of professorial and research positions, or act as policy advisors. The Steering Committee decided in its meeting of 5 July 2019 that researchers in The Netherlands, in particular junior researchers, who are not affiliated to one of the stakeholder institutions are also welcome as members of the Network for an annual fee of €80.



As of September 2019, the Network has a total of 254 Members: 80 PhD Members and 174 Senior Members. The high rate of senior membership constitutes a significant asset that shows the importance and added value of the Network, which is recognized by the Dutch academic community.



In the first half of 2019 alone, 40 members were admitted. This number is high, considering that 44 new members were admitted for the whole of 2018. It is expected that membership will grow as the Network consolidates its activities and increases its visibility.

5. Looking Ahead

The Network is developing new activities and outreach strategies to further enhance the interactions among members. During the 2019-2020 academic year, it is launching three new initiatives: a bi-annual call for Research Workshops in Human Rights, a blog entitled *Human Rights Here* and a Twitter account. Taken together, these activities will strengthen and complement existing structures and platforms, such as the working groups and our website.

5.1 Research Workshops in Human Rights

One of the aims of the Network is to support research exchange among its Members by sponsoring academic workshops and lectures. To date, this goal has mainly been addressed through the working groups. However, these activities are tailored to specific research interests. When similar initiatives have been submitted outside the framework of the working groups, the Network has usually accepted and supported them on a rolling basis. The present initiative therefore seeks to rationalize the existing resources available for academic workshops through a single call that is open to all members regardless of working group membership. This will also streamline the procedural support offered to members by the Secretariat and Academic Coordination.

Network members will have the opportunity to organize one-day or half-day workshops and mini-conferences involving members from other universities, possibly one or two external speakers and members of their own faculty. Ideally, workshops will involve members from more than one sub-discipline, or persons from other disciplines.

Target audience

The annual call for multidisciplinary research workshops will be open to all members with a special orientation towards PhD members. To be eligible, workshops must be co-convened by at least two members of the Network, each of whom should be based in a different stakeholder institution, and at least one co-convenor should be a PhD Member. This will broaden the scope of academic exchange across themes, fields, seniority levels and institutions. This proposal is not intended to replace the activities of the working groups, which serve their purpose well.

Procedure

The Network will issue an annual call for Multidisciplinary Research Workshops in Human Rights Research inviting all members to submit proposals that contribute to the development of innovative ideas and strengthen cooperation. Submitted proposals will be evaluated by the Academic Coordinator in consultation with the Steering Committee.

Format

Conveners will be responsible for the academic formulation, content and organization of the workshop, in accordance with the bottom-up approach that has thus far been implemented with the Working Groups. The workshops will ideally be held in one of the convener's home

institution and the Asser Institute will remain available as a fallback option. The rationale behind this policy is to incentivize the conveners to maximize the resources within their immediate research environment for the benefit of other participating Network members. The Network Academic Coordination and Secretariat will assist in publicizing and disseminating the activity.

Timeline

The first call was issued on 1 October 2019 and proposals were received through 18 November. Results were announced on the week of 2 December and conveners will be able to hold their workshops at any time thereafter, but before the end of the 2019-2020 academic year. The second call will be issued in the Spring of 2020.

5.2 Blog: *Human Rights Here*

In Spring 2019, a group of PhD and Senior members submitted a formal proposal for the creation of *Human Rights Here*, an online blog that would centralize discussion within the Network and effectively function as its flagship online publication. The blog seeks to support the critical exchange of research, analysis and ideas between scholars and practitioners, as well as other relevant stakeholders including students and the media.

The aims of *Human Rights Here* were formulated as follows:

- To highlight the societal relevance of human rights and its research by bringing academic work and the human rights interests of society closer.
- To inform about the Network's connecting functions by acquainting members and their work with each other, thereby strengthening their ownership of the Network.
- To valorize the work of Network members by making cutting-edge research accessible to the wider Dutch and international human rights academia.
- To bridge the gap between academia and other relevant stakeholders, making the Network a point of reference for public officials, journalists, NGOs, practitioners and PhD students.

This blog will serve as a permanent digital environment for discussion, analysis and critical exchange, which will increase the ownership of the members over the Network. It will also create a sense of community among members by bridging differences in geographical location, academic institutions, seniority and specializations.

The blog will attract high-quality and societally-relevant contributions by academics and practitioners. Moreover, it will include a section titled 'Academic Insider', where content on academic skills, work-life balance, and other issues taking a critical look at life in academia will be posted.

Logo proposals for the Human Rights Here blog



5.3 Twitter account: @NNHRRResearch

The Network did not have a Twitter account during the relevant reporting period. Over the years, Twitter has become an important environment for outreach and information exchange. Furthermore, a sizeable number of human rights institutes and organizations maintain active Twitter accounts. This represents an area of opportunity for the Network and its members.

An assessment conducted by the Coordination has revealed that many relevant stakeholders have used the #NNHRR hashtag on Twitter to identify Network members, events and activities. The Coordination has therefore provisionally opened a placeholder Twitter account for the Network under the hashtag @NNHRRResearch. The account is not yet active, pending approval by the Steering Committee. If approved, it is envisaged that the Twitter account will be maintained & managed by the Academic Coordinator.

The Twitter account for the Network would complement existing accounts of the working groups, stakeholder Universities and individual members. The account will offer an up-to-date dissemination environment that can be exploited as the Network's online presence increases through its website improvements and the forthcoming blog. It will also provide social media validation to members' work, which is an essential component of online real-time networking. It is important to note that validation does not imply endorsement in this context.

Maintaining a Twitter account for the Network offers the following opportunities:

- Increased visibility of the Network on social media
- Validation and cross-referencing of members' work & output via retweets
- Real-time online engagement with scholars and stakeholders outside the Network

- Rationalizing the Network’s online presence and identity alongside the website & blog

Twitter account @NNHRRResearch



The Twitter landing page of @NNHRRResearch featuring the Network logo is shown above. The background image is the detail of a painting by American artist Clyfford Still titled PH-972 (1959). This artwork was provisionally chosen because its color palette is similar to that of the Network logo. It also subtly underlines the Network’s Dutch identity through the color orange.