

Annual PhD training for 1st and 2nd year PhD candidates

“Legal Activism in Human Rights PhD Research”

Date: Thursday 22 and Friday 23 May 2025

Venue: Schouwburgstraat 2, Den Haag

This year's 1st and 2nd year PhD training will take place on Thursday 22 and Friday 23 May 2025 at Leiden University.

The training is an exploration of the intersection between legal scholarship and activism within the field of human rights. Through a series of lectures, seminars, and discussions, participants will engage with leading academics and practitioners. The training will provide insights into how legal research can inform and support human rights activism, addressing both the opportunities and challenges that arise when scholars engage with advocacy. Participants will critically examine the role of legal frameworks in advancing human rights, discuss the ethical and methodological implications of activist-oriented research, and explore practical strategies for integrating activism into their academic work.

Beyond the formal sessions, the training offers a valuable opportunity for participants to meet fellow PhD researchers, exchange ideas, and build a network of colleagues working on similar topics.

Network Members are eligible reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs up to €120. Please tick the box in the registration form and you will get an e-mail with further instructions.

First Day – Thursday 22 May 2025

10:00 – 10.30 Mark Klaassen and Elias Tissandier, Leiden University
Welcome and introduction

10:30 – 11.30 Rick Lawson, Leiden University
On being active or being activist: a modest typology

11.30 – 12.30 Ton Liefwaard, Leiden University
The proliferation of children's rights in international human rights law

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch Break

13:30-14:30 Katrien Klep, Leiden University
Of research questions, methodological choices and the position of the researcher: what makes research, advocacy or activist research?

14.30 – 15:30 Yulia Levashova, Nyenrode Business University
International investment law and human rights

15:30-15:45 Tea Break

15:45-16:45 Janneke Gerards, Afdeling advisering van de Raad van State, Universiteit Utrecht
Reconciling academic freedom with judicial and advisory neutrality

18:30 Dinner (tba)

Second Day – Friday 23 May 2025

9.30 – 11.30 Brunch (tbc)

11.30 – 13.00 tbc

13:00 – 14:00 Nelleke Koffeman, Ministry of Justice and Security
Advising the government on human rights

14.00 – 15.00 Steffie van Lokven, Judge at the District Court of Roermond
Safeguarding human rights in court, judicial activism or ...?

15:00 - 15:15 Tea break

15:15 – 16:15 John Morijn, Groningen University
Between scholarship and scholactivism: Polish and Hungarian lessons

16:15-16:45 Reflections and Closing