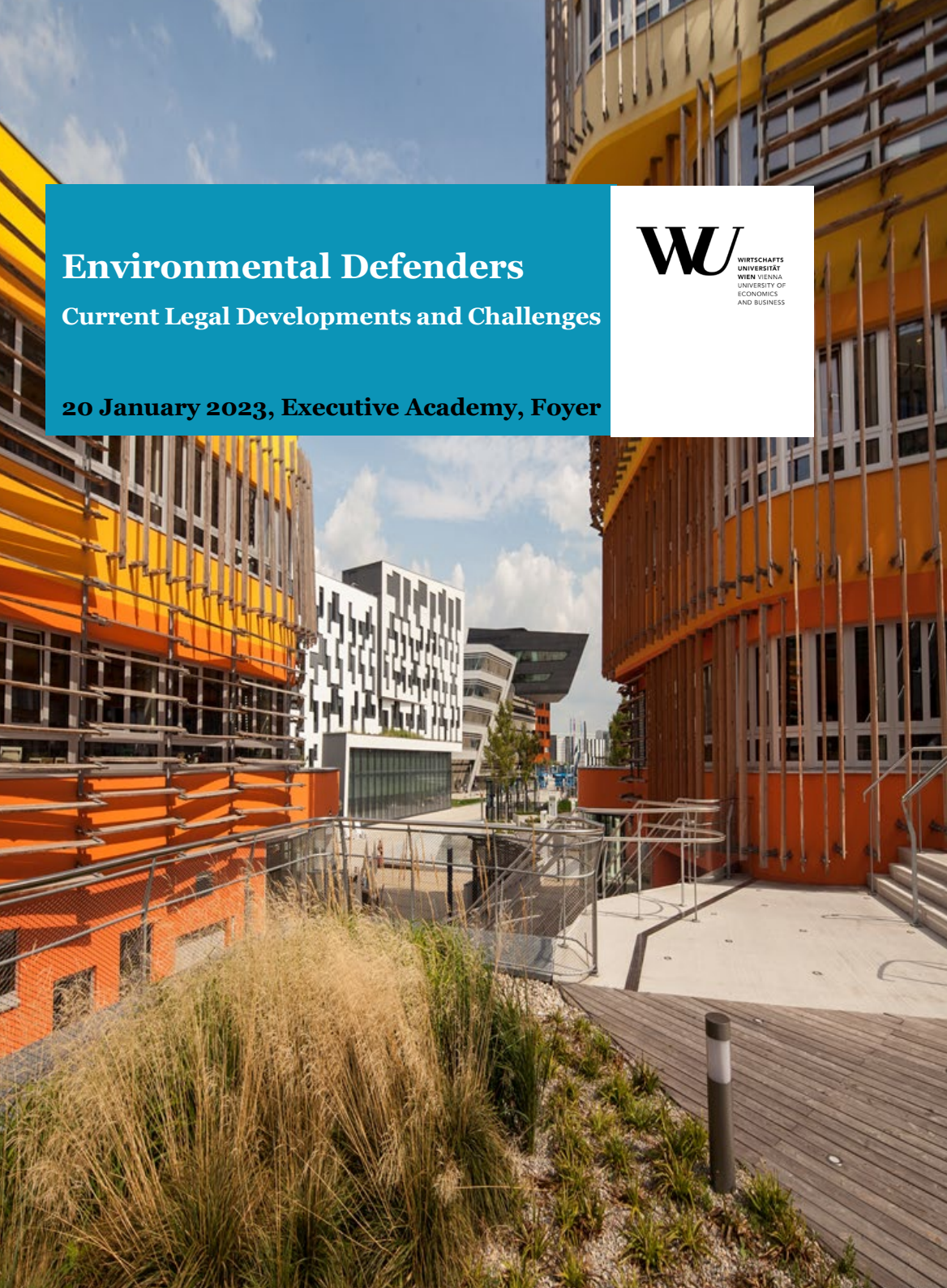


Environmental Defenders

Current Legal Developments and Challenges

20 January 2023, Executive Academy, Foyer



According to the United Nations, environmental defenders are persons “defending environmental rights, including constitutional rights to a clean and healthy environment”. Environmental Defenders play a crucial role in the global fight against the climate and biodiversity crisis. However, harassment and even threats against environmental defenders present an issue of growing concern across the globe. This has led to new regulatory initiatives, such as the European Commission’s proposal for an Anti-SLAPP-Directive or the establishment of a “Rapid Response Mechanism for Environmental Defenders” under the Aarhus Convention. Our conference takes these developments as a point of departure to reflect on the multifaceted role the law plays for defending environmental rights. The panelists will present legal-doctrinal analyses of the relevant legal framework as well as socio-legal perspectives on environmental defenders and their perception of the law. Overall, we aim to contribute to future legal developments in the field and to a better understanding of the impact and social functions of law.

LOCATION

WU Vienna
Executive Academy
Foyer (EA.0.024 Foyer)
Welthandelsplatz 1
1020 Vienna, Austria

To access the conference venue on Campus WU (Executive Academy, Foyer) please use **U2 subway station Messe-Prater**, exit Messe (5-10 walking minutes). Other options: Bus line 82A stop “Welthandelsplatz” (2-4 min); tram line 1 stop “Prater Hauptallee” (10-15 min).

Campus WU is accessible via multiple bike paths and has approximately 1,000 bike racks along its perimeter. City bike (Wien Mobil) sharing stations are located at the south entrance of Campus WU and at the subway stations Messe-Prater and Krieau.



ORGANIZERS

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We aim to be certified as a Green Meeting with the Austrian Ecolabel!

AGENDA

Friday, 20 January 2023

WU, Executive Academy, Foyer

08:30 Registration

09:00 Opening of the Conference

Opening Remarks

Teresa Weber, WU Vienna

Welcome Address

Verena Madner, WU Vienna

09:30 Panel I: Protected or Threatened by the Law? Experiences of Environmental Defenders

The Global Perspective: The Environmental Justice Atlas

Brototi Roy, Autonomous University of Barcelona / Central European University

European Experiences: Justice & Environment

Summer Kern, Justice & Environment

The Local Perspective: Environmental Defenders in Austria

Veronika Marhold, Ökobüro

Discussion

11:00 Coffee Break

11:15 Panel II: International Instruments for the Protection of Environmental Defenders

UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

Marianna Bolshakova, Regional Coordinator, Environmental Law and Governance, United Nations Environment Programme

Aarhus Rapid Response Mechanism for Environmental Defenders and the Special Rapporteur for Environmental Defenders

Michel Forst, Special Rapporteur for Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention

Protection of Environmental Defenders under the Escazú Agreement

Pablo Peña Alegría, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú

Discussion

12:45 Lunch Break

13:45 Panel III: Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPP)

SLAPPs: Recent Examples

Charlie Holt, Greenpeace International / CASE Coalition against SLAPP in Europe

The EU's Anti-SLAPP Package

Zsuzsanna Belenyessy, Legal Officer, Directorate-General for the Environment, European Commission

SLAPPs and Fundamental Rights

Lien Stolle, Human Rights Centre, Ghent University

Discussion

15:15 Coffee Break

15:30 Panel IV: Civil Disobedience – Is it a Legitimate Strategy?

Civil Disobedience: Conceptual Issues

Megan Blomfield, University of Sheffield

Civil Disobedience and Direct Action as Tools of Social Movements

Felix Butzlaff, WU Vienna

The Climate Necessity Defense

Ingeborg Zerbes, University of Vienna

Discussion

17:00 General discussion

17:45 Conclusion

Closing Remarks

Teresa Weber, WU Vienna

Registration:

<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/lawgov/events/environmental-defenders/>