

**Imperial Legal Spaces and Transitions:
Law, Statehood and Administration in Ukraine between Empire, War
and State Formation (~1900-1922)**

18-19 March 2027

Call for Papers

Application Deadline

31 July 2026

Location

University of Regensburg / Institute for East European Law, Germany

Description

The early 20th century marked a period of profound political, social and legal upheaval for the region that is now Ukraine. Within a few decades, the region witnessed the collapse of empires, the First World War, successive occupations and military administrations, competing attempts to establish states, and the transition to Soviet structures of governance. These developments were accompanied not only by political and social transformations, but also by a fundamental reorganisation of legal institutions, norms and practices.

While the political history and history of violence of this transitional period have already been researched to some extent, there is still a lack of legal and administrative historical analysis that focuses not only on breaches of the law or the breakdown of legal systems, but also on how the law and institutions function in transitional situations.

The conference therefore focuses on the question: How do legal spaces function when political orders collapse but institutions (must) continue to operate?

The conference aims to examine the region of present-day Ukraine between approximately 1900 and 1922 as an imperial, or, respectively, post-imperial legal space in which different normative orders, administrative traditions and institutional practices did not disappear abruptly, but continued to operate, overlap, adapt or hybridise.

The conference does not view law merely as a codified norm, but, above all, as a social practice, an instrument of power and legitimacy, and a resource for stabilising everyday life and administration.

Potential Topics Include

- Legal transfer and legal pluralism between Habsburg Galicia and the territories of the Russian Empire
- Military law and extraordinary justice in the First World War
- Competing legal systems in the years 1917–1921
- Administrative and judicial practice in local borderland spaces

The conference adopts a practice- and actor-oriented approach that views law not merely as a normative system, but as a framework for action. Particular attention is paid to institutional continuities, informal practices and the role of local decision-makers. At the same time, the conference adopts a transnational and comparative perspective. The region of present-day Ukraine is not considered in isolation but within its interconnections with Central European, Russian, and later Soviet legal systems. This approach allows for the analysis of regional and local transitions not merely as national anomalies but as part of broader European transformation processes.

The conference seeks to foster an international exchange of perspectives on the region's history. We therefore warmly encourage not only scholars from Ukraine but also scholars from other countries, including Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, to participate.

We welcome contributions from legal history, history, political science, and related disciplines. Applications from researchers at all career stages are strongly encouraged.

The conference languages are **Ukrainian, German and English**.

An application for external funding is currently being prepared. Subject to approval, travel and accommodation costs may be covered.

As an outcome of the conference, an edited volume with an internationally renowned publisher is planned. In addition, selected contributions will be published in an open working paper series.

Application Guidelines:

To participate in the conference, please submit the following application documents by **July 31, 2026**:

1. Detailed academic CV
2. Topic proposal for the presentation and short abstract (max. 2,000 characters including spaces)
3. List of publications, highlighting the five most relevant to the conference

Please send your application (as a single PDF file) and any inquiries to:
office@ostrecht.de

The results of the selection process will be announced by early September 2026.

We look forward to receiving your submissions and to welcoming you in Regensburg in March 2027!

Please note that all documents and materials submitted with the application will be retained for six months and then deleted.