

## **Call for Papers: Compromis à la belge - The Role of Compromise in Legal History, 17-19 September 2025, Ghent**

### **Conference theme**

Belgians often refer to the bric-a-brac solutions that the country's lawmakers come up with as 'compromis à la belge' – Belgian compromises. They are never pretty, often incomprehensible, but somehow work. It is only fitting therefore that the next Annual Forum of the Association of Young Legal Historians, taking place in Ghent, Belgium, should seek to explore the role of compromise in legal history. We want to invite young researchers to come together and reflect on the complex interactions between legal institutions, societal norms, and power dynamics that either foster or reject compromise in legal decision-making.

Compromise is broadly defined as any agreement where parties relinquish part of their demands. Participants are encouraged to examine its applications across different contexts, from individual disputes to institutional negotiations, and from idealized notions to ad hoc resolutions. The conference will also consider frameworks that facilitate compromise, as well as decision-making processes that explicitly reject it.

Panel discussions will be structured around thematic rather than geographical or historical divisions. Possible topics include:

- Ethical dimensions of compromise in law, including its impact on marginalized groups, human rights, and governance.
- The role of stakeholders in legal decision-making, such as social partners and interest groups.
- When and how compromise enhances or undermines legal legitimacy.
- Institutions that mediate compromise, such as arbitrators, mediators, and justices of the peace.

Legal history is inherently interdisciplinary, intersecting with both law and history. The increasing diversity of the field, incorporating extra-European legal traditions alongside traditional Roman and Ancien Régime studies, necessitates new ways of fostering dialogue. By selecting a theme that allows in-depth case studies without cultural bias, the conference seeks to contribute to the emerging field of global legal history.

Rather than organizing panels based on geographic or historical categories, the conference will emphasize thematic connections to stimulate discussion across subfields that seldom engage with one another. This approach is designed to generate fresh insights and new research directions in legal history.

We invite scholars to contribute to this exploration of compromise in legal history, bridging disciplinary gaps and fostering a dynamic exchange of ideas.

**Practical information**

If you would like to present a paper during the conference, please send an application including an abstract of not more than 250 words and your CV to aylhforum2025@gmail.com before 18 April 2025. Acceptance letters will be sent out by the end of May. It is also possible to apply for a full panel. In that case, your proposal should also include, in addition to individual paper proposals, an abstract introducing the theme of the panel. Presentations have to be in English and should not exceed 15 minutes each. Since one of the primary goals of the conference is to allow young researchers to get to know each other personally, we only accept presentations in person. The conference fee will be € 180 and does not include accommodation. Further information about the upcoming forum can be found at the website of the conference. Information about the Association of Young Legal Historians and the past Annual Forums is available at the AYLH-website.

Participants who are interested will also be invited to send in an article after the conference that will be published in a volume of conference proceedings, which will include the individual articles and concluding remarks in which we will highlight commonalities of content and challenges faced.

We look forward to receiving your abstracts and we will uncompromisingly endeavor to provide a conference that is both academically and socially fulfilling.

The organizing committee,

Amber Gardeyn

Pieterjan Schepens

Jasper Van de Woestijne