

EC2U Forum 2026

18–21 May 2026

University of Turku

Session description**Wednesday 20 May 2026****Time: 9:15–11:45****Place: Calonia 2107****Scientific session: Licence to Think Critically: Research-Based Legal Education for Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions**

This WP7 scientific session—organised by the Faculty of Law, University of Turku—explores how research-based legal education advances SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions) and the EC2U Forum theme, Shaping European Futures through Quality Education. The Faculty of Law, guided by its motto Licence to Think Critically, approaches law as a deeply social, political, and cultural institution. This perspective is crystallised in the Faculty's four focal areas of research—Democratic Digital Futures; Just & Sustainable Economies; Democracy & Constitutionalism; Power & Justice—which together frame its contribution to building resilient, equitable, and democratic futures.

Democratic Digital Futures investigates how digital technologies—from AI and algorithmic governance to platform infrastructures and blockchain technologies—reshape fundamental legal structures, rights, and democratic agency. Just & Sustainable Economies explores how legal frameworks structure markets, ownership, and resource governance in a world facing ecological pressures, technological change, and shifting forms of transnational regulation. Democracy & Constitutionalism addresses the challenges confronting democratic institutions, fundamental rights, and constitutional governance in a context marked by disinformation, populism, transnational power, and global inequality. Power & Justice interrogates law as a site of authority and contestation, analysing criminal justice, marginalisation, migration, corporate and state harms, and broader socio-legal dynamics of inequality and resistance.

Together, these focal areas show how legal research helps us better understand how governance, rights, and democratic institutions are changing across Europe. They also provide the foundation for research-based teaching that equips students—not merely with technical knowledge of legal rules but with analytical, ethical, and critical capacities necessary to act as responsible citizens and socially-conscious future professionals within democratic societies.

The session introduces these focal areas of research and concludes with a panel discussion featuring academic and student perspectives, illustrating how research-grounded learning can strengthen peace, justice, and strong institutions. We close with practical takeaways for course design and collaboration within WP7, including the Virtual Institute, the Joint Master's Programme, and the PhD Network.