

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S NOTE

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Editor-in-Chief's Note

ON ISSUE 2 AND SUSTAINABLE ACADEMIC PUBLISHING

Sustainability is no longer a distant goal — it is an urgent necessity that must be integrated into every aspect of human life, particularly academic publishing. At Access to Justice in Eastern Europe, we fully recognize our responsibility as part of the global scholarly ecosystem and are committed to contributing meaningfully to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2025, AJEE and our publishing partner, Academic Insight Press, proudly joined the SDG Publishers Compact. This step marked a conscious shift toward aligning our editorial and publishing practices with the principles of environmental responsibility, equity, and accessibility. Since then, we have undertaken a number of measures — many of which are ongoing — to gradually embed sustainability into our editorial policy, production workflows, and engagement with our academic community.

We are especially proud to prioritize SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, which lies at the heart of our journal's mission. We support and encourage our authors to incorporate sustainability into their research and to reflect on the broader societal impact of their work. However, our commitment to sustainability extends beyond the content we publish. We are actively revising our editorial guidelines to promote inclusive and bias-free language, ensure accessible design, and support diverse authorship.

We encourage submissions that highlight the practical implications of legal research for communities, policymakers, and practitioners. We have always been attentive to the needs of our audience, and we are committed to offering diverse formats — including original research articles, case studies, and “notes from the field” — to ensure the accessibility and relevance of our content. These formats allow us to focus on specific case law, draft legislation, and reforms that matter to both academic and professional readers across the region.

Over the past few years, equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) have become central to our strategy. We are restructuring our Editorial Board with fixed-term memberships to ensure broader representation and topic diversity. We provide flexible support for authors from underrepresented regions and backgrounds, and we actively promote tools and resources — including those developed by EASE — to assist non-native English speakers. We are pleased to expand our reach to include high-quality research from Central Asia, the Arab region, and the Balkans. We also support our authors and reviewers through training and workshops, building stronger bridges between editors and contributors.

During the SDG assessment process, we discovered just how much more we can — and must — do. From digital sustainability and data hygiene to travel practices and public engagement, the journey toward responsible publishing is complex, yet deeply rewarding. Personally, I had never heard of the CONSIDER statement or realized how closely EDI intersects with travel, accessibility, and even decisions like paper sourcing. This journey has been a powerful learning experience.

All of these efforts would not be possible without the dedication and shared vision of our wonderful editorial team — our managing editors, section editors, and technical staff — who work with great care and commitment to advancing our sustainability goals. Together, we are building not just a journal, but a responsible and inclusive scholarly community.

We are proud to be part of the EASE initiative on Sustainable Academic Publishing and are inspired by the collective efforts of editors and publishers worldwide. AJEE will continue to serve not only as a platform for high-quality legal scholarship but also as a space for ethical, inclusive, and forward-thinking academic dialogue.

That is why I want to highlight two key areas of action:

We need training. Editors, reviewers, and publishers should have access to capacity-building programs on sustainability in publishing. This knowledge is vital to make informed, responsible decisions in our daily operations.

We need recognition. National journal rankings and international indexing systems should begin to reflect sustainability criteria. Even small changes can create systemic improvements — especially when they are valued and rewarded.

Let us treat this not as a challenge, but as a shared opportunity — to shape a more responsible, sustainable future for scholarly publishing.

In this spirit of responsibility and forward-looking scholarship, we are pleased to present a selection of articles in this issue that reflect the journal's commitment to meaningful, timely, and impactful research — including topics that resonate with broader sustainability goals, such as transparency, rights protection, and the governance of emerging technologies.

This issue features a timely and thought-provoking article by **Gintarė Makauskaitė-Samuolė**, “*Transparency in the Labyrinths of the EU AI Act: Smart or Disbalanced?*” The study critically explores the EU's approach to AI transparency, offering a unique framework

of “transparency zones” and revealing inconsistencies within the current legislative draft. This insightful analysis is especially relevant as legal scholars and policymakers continue to assess the implications of AI regulation for human rights and public accountability. A must-read for anyone interested in the evolving intersection of law, technology, and governance.

Among the notable contributions in this issue is the article by **Mervete Shala** and **Xhavit Shala**, “*The Establishment of an Administrative Court: A Necessity for Resolving Administrative Disputes in the Republic of Kosovo*.” This important piece offers a well-founded argument for strengthening judicial control over public administration through the creation of a dedicated administrative court system in Kosovo. With a robust comparative approach and empirical grounding, the article provides practical recommendations to support institutional reform and foster greater public trust in governance.

This issue also features an insightful and timely article by **Iryna Soldatenko**, **Olena Chub**, and **Olena Kopina**, “*Journalism and the Right to Information as Tools for Combating Corruption in Ukraine*.” The authors explore the essential role of investigative journalism in promoting transparency and holding anti-corruption authorities accountable, particularly under the constraints of wartime. Their analysis of key Ukrainian institutions highlights the need for stronger communication practices and offers concrete steps to improve access to public information and reinforce trust in state institutions.

Another compelling contribution comes from **Boldizsár Szentgáli-Tóth**, whose article “*Central and Eastern Europe’s Constitutional Review During Public Health Emergencies*” offers a much-needed overview of constitutional jurisprudence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on the ConstCovid database, the study identifies key regional trends and gaps in constitutional responses to public health crises. This comprehensive and comparative analysis sheds light on the evolving relationship between emergency powers, rights limitations, and judicial review in Central and Eastern Europe — a topic of lasting relevance for future governance and legal resilience.

As always, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated editorial team, managing editors, reviewers, and authors — without your commitment, precision, and enthusiasm, none of this would be possible. Each issue is the result of our shared effort to maintain high-quality, relevant, and responsible academic publishing. I encourage our readers to explore the full contents of this issue, engage with the ideas presented, and continue contributing to the growing community around *Access to Justice in Eastern Europe*. Let us move forward with curiosity, courage, and a commitment to justice — together.

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