Access to Justice in Eastern Europe
ISSN 2663-0575 (Print)
ISSN 2663-0583 (Online)
http://ajee-journal.com

Editor-in-Chief's Note

LAW AND JUSTICE TODAY: HUMAN RIGHTS, CONSTITUTIONAL SUPREMACY, AND EUROPEAN STANDARDS IN THE NEW ISSUE

Iryna Izarova

ABSTRACT

This Editor-in-Chief's Note introduces Issue 4 of the Access to Justice in Eastern Europe journal, providing an overview of the pivotal themes explored in this publication. The editorial highlights the transnational nature of contemporary legal challenges, focusing on the balance between institutional rules and fundamental human rights, the dialogue between national constitutional orders and supranational frameworks, and the protection of economic integrity. Special attention is given to notable scholarly contributions: an analysis of athletes' freedom of expression and Olympic neutrality through the lens of ECtHR jurisprudence; studies on constitutional supremacy and rights-based jurisprudence in Lithuania and Turkey; and evaluations of cartel criminalization and the socio-economic impacts of business closures in the Western Balkans and Kosovo. Furthermore, the Note announces the journal's new

DOI:
https://doi.org/10.33327/AJEE-18-9.4-ed

Disclaimer:
The views and opinions expressed in this Editorial are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Journal, the Editorial Board, the publisher or any affiliated institutions.

Copyright:
© 2026 Iryna Izarova

presence on ResearchGate and welcomes new editorial board members. The editorial concludes by acknowledging the vital contributions of the editorial board and peer reviewers in upholding the journal's commitment to academic excellence.

This issue of our journal covers key topics that are highly relevant to contemporary jurisprudence. Specifically, these include the evolving dynamics of constitutional supremacy, the intersection of digital transformation with fundamental rights—such as digital inheritance, data protection, and surveillance—and the development of economic, medical, and environmental regulations in response to emerging global challenges.

These topics deeply concern scholars and practitioners across many countries and regions, underscoring the increasingly transnational nature of contemporary legal problems. This is perfectly illustrated by the broad geographical scope of the research in this issue. For instance, we examine the impact of European Union law and standards on both Member States and neighboring regions, exploring Lithuania's constitutional jurisprudence, cartel criminalization in the Western Balkans, and the influence of the EU AI Act on Ukrainian medical law. Alongside this, significant attention is given to comparative insights from global legal frameworks, addressing data protection and state-led access to justice models in Vietnam and China, bankruptcy restructuring in Saudi Arabia, and the environmental impacts of fast fashion in Egypt.

What is particularly crucial today is how the law responds to threats to fundamental values and the protection of essential freedoms in times of crisis. The search for effective mechanisms to ensure athletes' freedom of expression and Olympic neutrality amidst the resistance in Ukraine, the legal protection of schools during armed conflicts, and the role of judicial translation in achieving equitable justice all remind us that human rights must remain at the centre of any institutional or technological transformations.

Following the tradition of my editorial notes, I wish to highlight the most notable and landmark works of this issue. Having caught the keen attention of our editorial team and invited experts, these are the studies I want to personally recommend as you begin reading.

The delicate balance between institutional rules and fundamental human rights is masterfully explored **by Csilla Szomolaiová** in her analysis of athletes' freedom of expression and the principle of Olympic neutrality, focusing on the case of Ukrainian athlete Vladyslav Heraskevych. Viewed through the lens of the ECtHR jurisprudence on Article 10 of the Convention, the author evaluates whether restricting political speech in the sporting arena truly pursues a legitimate aim and qualifies as "necessary in a democratic society." The

study emphasizes that any interference with an individual's right to protest against aggression must pass a strict proportionality test, ensuring a fair balance between institutional neutrality and core democratic values.

The complex dialogue between national constitutional orders and supranational frameworks is examined in two complementary studies. **Dovilė Pūraitė-Andrikienė** analyzes how Lithuania's Constitutional Court navigates European Union law, demonstrating that constitutional supremacy can be preserved without triggering normative conflicts. This approach reflects a robust application of harmonious interpretation, closely aligned with the ECtHR's principle of subsidiarity. In a related vein, **Abdullah Eryiğit** investigates the asymmetric shift of the Turkish Constitutional Court toward a rights-based jurisprudence. By comparing this evolution with German constitutional law, the author underscores the principle of proportionality—the cornerstone of the ECtHR's margin of appreciation doctrine—as the essential tool for preventing arbitrary state interference and safeguarding fundamental rights.

Economic integrity and the protection of property rights form another critical pillar of this issue. **Monika Canco** and **Mirela Bogdani** assess the legitimacy of criminalizing cartels in the Western Balkans. Their research invites deeper reflection on the ECtHR standard of legal certainty (nullum crimen sine lege) and the necessity of applying proportionate criminal sanctions to economic behavior. Furthermore, **Fatmire Krasniqi** provides a profound criminological and legal perspective on the socio-economic impacts of business closures in Kosovo. This analysis naturally echoes the protections enshrined in Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the ECHR, serving as a reminder that state administrative measures affecting businesses must ensure the peaceful enjoyment of possessions and avoid imposing an excessive individual burden on entrepreneurs.

Before concluding, I am delighted to share some important updates for our academic community. In our continuous effort to expand the reach and discoverability of our publications, AJEE is now officially available on ResearchGate. We believe this platform will significantly enhance the global visibility of our authors' research and foster wider scholarly collaboration.

We are also exceptionally proud to expand our team with distinguished experts. Please join me in welcoming **Dr. iur. Janis Neimanis**, Judge of the Supreme Court of Latvia and Guest Associate Professor at Rīga Stradiņš University, who joins our Editorial Board for a two-year term. We also warmly welcome **Dr. Monika Canco,** Ph.D. (Law), Lecturer at the Faculty of Law, University of Tirana, Albania, who takes on the vital role of Section Editor for European Union Law and the EU Integration Process. Their profound legal expertise and practical experience will be invaluable to our continued growth.

© 2026 Iryna Izarova. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

In closing, I extend my deepest appreciation to our editorial board and reviewers for their outstanding professionalism and impartial evaluations. As legal scholarship grows increasingly complex, their meticulous peer review remains the bedrock of our journal's quality. I believe our authors value this rigorous process, understanding that every piece of constructive feedback is a collaborative endeavour aimed at refining their research and enriching the broader legal debate. Together, we ensure that the insights shared in this issue provide a robust foundation for both theoretical progress and practical application. Through this mutual dedication to academic excellence, we continue to advance a profound understanding of justice in our interconnected world.

AUTHORS INFORMATION

Iryna Izarova
Full Professor, Dr. Sc., School of Law, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine
irina.izarova@knu.ua
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1909-7020

Editor-in-Chief of Access to Justice in Eastern Europe Journal, Co-chair of the RCPC and Council Member of the European Association of Science Editors, COPE Council Member

Corresponding author, solely responsible for preparing the Editorial.

Competing interests: Prof. Iryna Izarova is the Editor-in-Chief of AJEE and, as such, has no competing interests to declare regarding the content of this Editorial. This Editorial, as is standard for this publication type, was not subject to peer review but aligns fully with the Journal's publication ethics.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this Editorial are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Journal, the Editorial Board, the publisher or any affiliated institutions.

AI DISCLOSURE

To ensure clarity and efficiency, I use Gemini Pro for linguistic support and gathering general information. I am the sole author of the ideas and conclusions expressed in my communications: I read, thoroughly verify, and take full ownership of all content. The use of AI does not replace my judgment, and I accept full responsibility for the final result, including any human errors.

RIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS

Copyright: © 2026 Iryna Izarova. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

Cite this article

Izarova I, 'Law and Justice Today: Human Rights, the Rule of Law, and European Standards in the New Issue' (2026) 9 (4) Access to Justice in Eastern Europe 7-12 <https://doi.org/10.33327/AJEE-18-9.4-ed>

DOI https://doi.org/10.33327/AJEE-18-9.4-ed

Keywords*: Access to Justice, constitutional supremacy, EU law, freedom of expression, ECtHR jurisprudence, economic integrity, property rights.*

АНОТАЦІЯ УКРАЇНСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ

Слово редактора

ПРАВО ТА ПРАВОСУДДЯ СЬОГОДНІ: ПРАВА ЛЮДИНИ, ВЕРХОВЕНСТВО КОНСТИТУЦІЇ ТА ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКІ СТАНДАРТИ У НОВОМУ ВИПУСКУ

Ірина Ізарова

АНОТАЦІЯ

У вступному слові головного редактора представлено четвертий номер журналу Access to Justice in Eastern Europe та здійснено огляд ключових тем випуску. Наголошується на транснаціональному характері сучасних правових викликів, зосереджуючи увагу на балансі між інституційними правилами та правами людини, діалозі національного конституційного правопорядку з наднаціональними системами та захисті економічної цілісності. Окрему увагу приділено знаковим статтям цього номера: щодо аналізу свободи

© 2026 Iryna Izarova. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

вираження поглядів спортсменів крізь призму практики ЄСПЛ; щодо збереження верховенства конституції та розвитку правозахисної юриспруденції у Литві й Туреччині; а також оцінки криміналізації картелів та соціально-економічних наслідків закриття бізнесу на Західних Балканах і в Республіці Косово. Крім того, у вступному слові анонсується співпраця журналу з платформою ResearchGate та представлено нових членів редколегії. На завершення висловлено подяку редакційній колегії та рецензентам за їхній внесок у підтримання високих академічних стандартів видання.

Ключові слова: *доступ до правосуддя, верховенство конституції, право ЄС, свобода вираження поглядів, практика ЄСПЛ, економічна цілісність, права власності.*