



## Call for Papers

# “Beyond Development: Mapping Legal Entanglements between Africa and Europe”

4 – 5 December 2025

Juridicum, Faculty of Law, University of Vienna

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The [Department of Legal and Constitutional History](#) and the [African Law Association](#) jointly invite scholars to participate in the interdisciplinary conference on the topic “Beyond Development: Mapping Legal Entanglements between Africa and Europe”, which will take place from 4 to 5 December 2025 at the Faculty of Law of the University of Vienna, Austria.

The event will also be the 49th Annual Conference of the African Law Association.

### Outline of the Conference

The Portuguese colonies in Africa gained their independence 50 years ago. Although colonialism in Africa was by no means over in 1975, this date is regarded in global history as an important turning point for the political and legal independence of the African continent. The conference aims to mark this anniversary by reflecting on the past and considering the future from a legal perspective.

We invite contributions, firstly, about the relationships between the newly independent states and the former colonial empires at the intergovernmental (international law), diplomatic and economic levels, as well as in international organizations. The conference aims to provide a forum for discussing postcolonial criticism directed at outdated romanticization of development, on the one hand, and simplistic narratives of progress on the other. Which conclusions and assessments can be reached when using law as a criterion for analysis?

Secondly, the conference focuses on legal developments since independence and is interested in both grand narratives and micro-studies. The focus is on the topics of constitutional law and reform, regional inner-African legal integration, the regulation of the environment and the economy, human rights, and developments in private law in African countries, also in relation to non-state law.

Thirdly, we explicitly invite conceptual work; conventional descriptions and categories in these areas should be subjected to critical re-reading. The focus here is on interdependencies between Europe and Africa. This also includes the question of the extent to which legal developments on the African continent have triggered reforms in former colonial empires. We are particularly interested in the migration of ideas and people, the African diaspora in the former empires, and non-state networks as actors in the past and present of law.

### Panels

When submitting your contribution, please indicate one or more of the following panels to which your topic should be assigned:

Panel 1: Legal entanglements between Africa and Europe

Panel 2: Postcolonial legal systems and non-state law

Panel 3: Regional integration, international organizations and international law

Panel 4: Constitution-making and constitutional reform

Panel 5: Environmental and economic regulation, human rights

### Submission

Please submit your abstract in PDF format to [lawinafrica.rechtsgeschichte@univie.ac.at](mailto:lawinafrica.rechtsgeschichte@univie.ac.at) and include the following:

- Title of the submitted paper
- Panel to which the paper should be assigned
- Abstract of 250–500 words
- Name(s) of the author(s)
- Affiliation(s) of the author(s)

Please note: The language for submitted contributions and of the conference is English. Manuscripts should be original contributions, and by submitting a paper, you accept that the organizers expect you to contribute a corresponding article to the conference proceedings!

The organizers will apply for funding to help cover travel and accommodation costs, especially for researchers from the Global South. However, we will only be able to confirm the extent of cost coverage at a later stage, so participants should be prepared in principle to cover their own costs.

### Timeline

Abstract submission deadline **28 February 2025**

Notification sent to participants **17 March 2025**

