Call for Applications: PhD Students and Postdocs – Villa Vigoni Gespräch (16-19 June 2025, Lago di Como, Italy)

The **Villa Vigoni Gespräch** on **"Contracts and Characteristic Performance: Between Effect and Value"** will take place from **16 to 19 June 2025 at Villa Vigoni, Lago di Como, Italy**.

The Organizing Committee is composed of Prof. Dr. Dr. Stefan Grundmann (Humbolt University and EUI), Prof. Dr. Valentina Calderai (University of Pisa), and Prof. Dr. Fabrizio Esposito (NOVA School of Law, Lisbon). A pool of internationally renowned scholars will participate in the event.

This event aims to explore a new **taxonomy of contracts** based on two descriptive variables—**legal effect** (exchange vs. organizational contracts) and **the type of value created for the creditor** (self-centered vs. relation-centered)—while pursuing the normative goal of **maximizing contractual value for the creditor of the characteristic performance**. The project challenges conventional contract law frameworks and seeks to refine the role of **characteristic creditor sovereignty** as a guiding principle.[1]

The **methodology** relies on a mix of formal consensus techniques, which are methods used in various contexts and most notably the medical profession and, recently the UK government,[2] aimed at collecting and synthesizing expert opinions. In light of the unique context of a three-day in-person meeting offered by the Gespräch, the organizers have decided to combine elements of a Delphi technique with elements of the nominal group conference.[3]

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[1] This idea is a generalization of the consumer welfare hypothesis. See: Grundmann S and Esposito F, 'Investor-Consumer or Overall Welfare: Searching for the Paradigm of Recent Reforms in Financial Services Contracts' [2017] SSRN Electronic Journal <https://www.ssrn.com/abstract=2925794>; Esposito F, *The Consumer Welfare Hypothesis in Law and Economics: Towards a Synthesis for the 21st Century* (Edward Elgar Publishing 2022); Calderai V, 'The Consumer Welfare Hypothesis in Law and Economics Towards a Synthesis for the 21st Century' (2024) 49 European Law Review 210; Garoupa N, 'Fabrizio Esposito, 2022, The Consumer Welfare Hypothesis in Law and Economics: Towards a Synthesis for the 21st Century, Edward Elgar' (2024) 20 European Review of Contract Law 148; Sibony A-L, 'Fabrizio Esposito, 2022, The Consumer Welfare Hypothesis in Law and Economics: Towards a Synthesis for the 21st Century, Edward Elgar' 2024 Concurrences 275.

[2] Eg, Carter R and Burns A, 'UK 2040 Options. Wealth and Income Inequality: The Choices' (2023), available at https://options2040.co.uk/wealth-and-income-inequality-the-choices/ (last access: 4 March 2025).

[3] See, generally, Arakawa N and Bader LR, 'Consensus Development Methods: Considerations for National and Global Frameworks and Policy Development' (2022) 18 *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy* 2222.

To prepare for the event, we are seeking applications from **PhD students and postdoctoral researchers** who are interested in engaging with these theoretical questions and contributing to the organization of the Gespräch.

We plan to invite five junior researchers to join the event. Accommodation and traveling expenses will be covered by Villa Vigoni (additional information will be provided).

Selected participants will:

- Review key preparatory materials and complete a **questionnaire** before the event (approx. 60-75 minutes)
- Assist in structuring and analyzing responses to the questionnaire
- Support the facilitation of discussions and structured surveys during the event
- Engage in high-level debates on contract law and its broader implications

We welcome applications from **motivated junior researchers** with an interest in **contract law, private international law, legal theory, and related fields**.

To apply, please submit:

1. A **motivation letter** (max. 1 page) explaining how your research relates to the project
2. Your **CV**

Applications should be sent via email to **fabrizio.esposito@novalaw.unl.pt** by **10 April 2025**.

We look forward to your applications!

The Organizing Committee