

Emory Law School's Center for International and Comparative Law, and
the American Society of Comparative Law
Present:

David J. Bederman Symposium 2026
Access to Global Justice:
National Justice Systems as Engines of International Law

Thursday March 26, 2026
8:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., reception following the Symposium

PROGRAM

8:30 A.M. — Breakfast

8:45 A.M. — Welcome

9:00 A.M. — Keynote Address
Advocate General Laila Medina
Court of Justice of the European Union

10:00 A.M. — Panel 1

Re-imagining Access to Justice: Constitutional Foundations and Digital Innovation

Topics include:

Access to justice and due process as constitutional and systemic guarantees

Comparative constitutional perspectives on access to courts, fair procedures, and judicial independence

Domestic courts as primary venues for the enforcement of international and transnational rights

Judicial roles in protecting privacy, environmental rights, family life, and freedom of expression

Procedural design, equality of arms, and effective remedies in civil justice systems

How procedural rules shape substantive outcomes and fairness across legal traditions

Rule of law promotion and access to justice in practice*Institutional capacity-building, court reform, and justice sector development in diverse political and social contexts***Public-interest litigation and the role of lawyers and civil society***Strategic use of domestic courts to vindicate rights and advance accountability***Digitalization and artificial intelligence in civil justice***Online courts, automated decision-making, case management, and their implications for access, efficiency, and fairness***Safeguards for due process in technology-enabled justice systems***Transparency, accountability, bias, and trust in digitally mediated adjudication***Panelists:**

Professor Theo Broodryk (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)

Eric Ini (Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy)

Prof. Xandra Kramer (Erasmus University, Netherlands) - Zoom

Judy Perry Martinez (Simon, Peragine, Smith & Redfearn, New Orleans)

Prof. Alan Uzelac (University of Zagreb, Croatia)

Leanne Webster (Rule of Law Program, Carter Center, Atlanta)

Prof. Tadeusz Zembrzuski (University of Warsaw)

11:30 A.M. — Lunch**1:15 P.M. — Keynote Address**

The Honorable Lee Rosenthal

United States District Judge, Southern District of Texas

2:00 P.M. — Panel 2**Innovations in Rights Enforcement: Strategic Litigation, Group Claims, and ADR**

Exploring how domestic justice systems can be used to advance social good and meaningful reform.

Topics include:**Group litigation and class actions as tools for addressing mass harm***Comparative perspectives on design, scope, and effectiveness of group procedures in common law and civil law systems*

Public and private enforcement in large-scale disputes

The respective roles of regulators, courts, and private litigants in advancing compliance and accountability

Strategic litigation and law reform

Using domestic courts to generate structural change, advance fundamental rights, and influence public policy

Lawyer-driven versus court-centered models of mass claims

Comparisons of representative actions, opt-in and opt-out regimes, and judicial oversight across jurisdictions

The role of ADR in mass and strategic disputes

Arbitration, mediation, and hybrid mechanisms as alternatives or complements to court-based proceedings

Effectiveness, legitimacy, and access in complex litigation

Ensuring procedural fairness, transparency, and meaningful participation for large claimant groups

Transnational and cross-border challenges

Jurisdiction, enforcement, coordination of claims, and the implications of EU and non-EU regulatory frameworks

Panelists:

Prof. Maria José Azar-Baud (Paris-Saclay University)

Prof. Nikki Chamberlain (University of Auckland, New Zealand)

Nick Diamand (Lief Cabraser, New York)

Prof. Chris Hodges (UK government; Oxford University) - Zoom

Prof. Jagna Mucha (University of Warsaw)

Prof. Stefaan Voet (Catholic University of Leuven)

3:30 P.M. — Coffee Break**3:45 P.M. — Panel 3****Financing Access to Justice: Public Funding, Private Capital, and the Future of Rights Enforcement****Topics include:**

Public funding of justice and legal aid models

Comparative perspectives on state responsibility, eligibility, and sustainability in funding access to justice

Public-interest litigation and institutional funding mechanisms

The role of foundations, public bodies, and mission-driven institutions in enabling rights-based claims

Private financing mechanisms in civil justice

Contingency fees, lawyer funding, insurance, third-party funding, and crowdfunding as access-enhancing tools

The ethics and economics of litigation finance

Incentives, conflicts of interest, pricing of risk, and implications for party autonomy and procedural fairness

Regulatory frameworks for litigation funding

Comparative approaches to transparency, disclosure, control, and judicial oversight

Funding, costs, and equality of arms

How financing structures shape procedural balance, access to remedies, and substantive outcomes

The interaction between funding models and collective or strategic litigation

Financing large-scale, high-risk, or socially significant claims in domestic courts

The future of access to justice financing

Hybrid models, impact-oriented funding, and the evolving relationship between public and private enforcement

Panelists:

Peter Cashman (Third Floor Wentworth Chambers, Sydney, Australia)

Adrian Cordina (Erasmus Law School, Rotterdam)

Prof. James Sandman (University of Pennsylvania)

Prof. Anthony Sebok (Cardozo Law School)

Prof. Magdalena Skibińska (University of Zielona Góra, Poland)

Prof. John Sorabji (University College London) – Zoom

Prof. Ianika Tzankova (Rubikon Impact & Litigation; Tilburg University) – Zoom

5:45 P.M. — Conclusion

6:00 P.M. — Reception