

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR | TILBURG UNIVERSITY

Decent Work for All?

Future Avenues for Poverty Reduction and GVC Labour Governance

26–27 NOVEMBER 2026

TILBURG UNIVERSITY

**How can labour law and related regulatory frameworks protect
vulnerable workers in an increasingly interconnected economy,
and contribute to decent working and living conditions for all?**

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS | PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Organised by

- Department of Private, Business & Labour Law, Tilburg Law School
- Jean Monnet Chair S.E.E.D. Sustainability, Ethics, ESG and Diligence:
The Implementation of European Directives
- Levenbach Institute / Dutch National Branch of the ISLSSL



Levenbach
instituut



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY LAW



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ABOUT THE SEMINAR

Two connected challenges at the heart of labour law

How can international, European and national regulation contribute to securing decent working and living conditions for all?

The seminar addresses two closely connected and pressing challenges at the heart of labour law and its protective function: **(1) social sustainability in global value chains** and **(2) poverty reduction and decent living wages**. For both topics, the seminar will consider current legal and policy developments, with particular attention to forward-looking approaches to implementation, application, and enforcement.

Labour rights in global value chains

The debate surrounding the protection of labour rights in global value chains is moving towards questions of implementation, due diligence and accountability. International frameworks such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct and the ILO MNE Declaration establish expectations for businesses to identify, prevent, and address adverse impacts on workers throughout their operations and business relationships. Recent ILO work places particular emphasis on translating these principles into decent work in supply chains, including through social dialogue and the involvement of workers and trade unions in due diligence processes. At EU and national levels, these international principles have increasingly found their way into binding corporate sustainability regulation, most notably through the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), alongside sustainability reporting requirements.

At the heart of these efforts lies the protection of workers and other individuals and groups who are vulnerable to social rights violations. These include violations of freedom of association and collective bargaining, discrimination and unequal treatment, unsafe or unhealthy working conditions, and severe forms of labour exploitation including child labour and forced labour/modern slavery. Economic vulnerability and poverty are closely intertwined with many of these challenges.

Adequate wages, decent living standards and poverty reduction

The question of what constitutes an adequate or living wage has gained renewed legal and policy significance. In 2024, the ILO reached tripartite agreement on the concept of a living wage, linking it to the wage level necessary to afford a decent standard of living for workers and their families, wage-setting institutions and social dialogue. Within the Council of Europe, Article 4 of the European Social Charter connects fair remuneration explicitly to a decent standard of living. At EU level, the Adequate Minimum Wages Directive has placed wage adequacy, collective bargaining and in-work poverty firmly on the European social-policy agenda, while the Court of Justice's November 2025 judgment has further defined the legal boundaries of EU action in this field.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Thursday 26 November

13.00–17.00 | Future Directions for Global Value Chain Labour Governance

The first day considers the changing landscape of responsible business conduct and the protection of labour rights in global value chains. The emphasis is on forward-looking contributions that tackle practical questions of implementation.

Topics may include

- Labour standards and decent work in global value chains
- Corporate sustainability, human rights due diligence and reporting
- UN Guiding Principles, OECD Guidelines and ILO frameworks
- Responsible business conduct and multi-stakeholder initiatives
- The relationship between international frameworks and European due diligence legislation

12.00	Welcome & light lunch
13.00–17.00	Afternoon seminar
Evening	Conference dinner

Friday 27 November

10.00–14.30 | Minimum Wages, Living Wages and Poverty Reduction

The second day focuses on the relationship between wage regulation, decent living standards and poverty reduction. The session explores international, regional and EU dimensions of living-wage-related instruments, with a focus on practical questions of implementation.

Topics may include

- The concept of a decent living wage
- Living wages and minimum wages under international, EU and Council of Europe law
- The role of labour law and social policy in ensuring adequate incomes
- Connections between wage standards, corporate responsibility and global value chains

10.00–13.30	Morning seminar
13.30	Lunch

PARTICIPATION

Discussion-oriented and international

The programme combines presentations from invited experts with contributions from researchers working on emerging questions in the field. The seminar is structured to allow substantial time for discussion and exchange between speakers and participants.

The seminar can be attended remotely; however, for the full experience we encourage colleagues to travel to Tilburg. Participation is free of charge and includes lunch and refreshments. More information on registration will be available in due course.

Confirmed speakers

Manuella Appiah

Ane Aranguiz

Miriam Kullmann

Elena Sychenko

Daan van Thiel

Matthijs van Schadewijk

At a glance

WHEN	26–27 November 2026
WHERE	Tilburg University, the Netherlands
FORMAT	In person, with remote participation possible
COST	Free of charge

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

We welcome contributions that help explore how law and regulation can secure decent working and living conditions for all.

Join the conversation

Alongside presentations by invited experts, the organisers welcome contributions from a limited number of researchers working on either of the seminar's two main themes: labour rights and social sustainability in global value chains, and minimum/living wages and poverty reduction. Submissions from PhD candidates and early-career researchers are particularly encouraged.

We invite abstracts for short presentations that engage with current developments in international, European and/or national law and policy. We particularly welcome forward-looking contributions that move beyond identifying regulatory developments and challenges to consider questions of implementation, enforcement and effectiveness. Contributions may examine how existing or emerging frameworks can be made more effective in practice, identify gaps or tensions between levels of regulation, or propose new approaches to securing decent working and living conditions.

ABSTRACT

300–500 words

CV

Maximum 2 pages

PRESENTATION

Approx. 15 minutes

DEADLINE

15 September 2026

NOTIFICATION

1 October 2026

SUPPORT

Travel + accommodation up to €500

Submission

Please submit your abstract together with a short CV to tls.support-staff.pbll@tilburguniversity.edu by September 15. Please indicate to which of the two themes you would like to contribute. Proposals will be selected on the basis of quality, relevance to the seminar themes, and potential to contribute to the seminar's forward-looking discussion on implementation.

For selected speakers responding to the call, the organisers can reimburse travel and accommodation expenses up to a maximum of €500. Lunch and refreshments during the seminar and the conference dinner on Thursday evening will also be provided.

Scientific committee

Bas Rombouts · Marco Mocella · Ane Aranguiz · Martina Basotti