

ELU-S 2026 (1-3 September Lisbon)

Panel: The temporality of emergencies in EU law and governance

One of the defining yet under explored features of emergency measures is their temporality. Qualifiers pertaining to the sudden, temporary, or otherwise time-bound nature both of an emergency and of the (legal) measures which can be adopted in its respect populate both theoretical understandings of emergency governance and, in principle, the practical implementation of emergency measures. Relying on the diachronic taxonomy of EU crisis management - prevention, preparedness, response, recovery - this panel explores each of these dimensions of temporality in EU emergency law and governance, drawing on concrete examples from the Covid-19 pandemic, EU civil protection, emergency legal basis and the adoption of legal instruments aimed at the protection of critical supply chains across the EU. In doing so, each of the panel's four contributions shows the tension between ad hoc and permanent approaches to real or perceived emergencies in different areas of EU law and at different levels of EU emergency response, calling for a critical reflection on the role of time therein.

Paper 2. Teresa Cabrita (preparedness) – teresa.cabrita@uclouvain.be

A timely turn to preparedness? The role of time in EU civil protection and disaster management

Understood as a set of measures, rules, and practices aimed at protecting persons in the event of disasters, civil protection primarily seeks to anticipate and prepare populations against potential harm. Timing — and a sense of anticipation or urgency — is therefore an inherent feature of this field, both at the EU level and at the national level of its Member States. This paper examines the role that time and (perceived) urgency have played in the timid transfer of civil protection powers from the Member States to the EU. It does so through an analysis of the evolution of EU competence in this field, notably the gradual reforms of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, and the proliferation of 'time markers' therein. It argues that the Union's growing exposure to natural and manmade disasters has justified a recent (and expanding) shift toward preparedness at the EU level, most emblematically embodied in the 2025 Preparedness Union strategy and its offspring. This analysis is part of a broader panel that explores the role of time in EU emergency law and governance and contributes to the discussion by focusing on the preparedness dimension of EU emergency or crisis management.