

ELFA Thesis Awards

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The ELFA Thesis Award is now an established part of the research furniture in EU Law, and a permanent and very tangible sign of ELFA's interest in research as well as in teaching. The award comes with a prize of 3,000 Euro for the winner, and 1,500 Euro for the *proxime accessit* (i.e. the runner-up). The designation of the latter reflects the Oxonian heritage of a closely involved person.

The competition each year is open to those who have, in the relevant period, submitted a thesis for a doctorate in the area of European Law, broadly conceived. Thus, the scope embraces EU Law, European Human Rights Law, the law of the Council of Europe, and the comparative law of European countries. The theses may be written in English, French, German, and Spanish, which are the working languages of ELFA. An invitation to submit is announced each year on the ELFA website and is widely circulated,

The following is the list of winners and of those who were *proxime accessit* each year. Where we have details of what they are doing now, and of the thesis being published, these are mentioned. The published versions are frequently adapted versions of the thesis, in line with the advice 'Get the book out of the thesis'.

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Year	Name	Winner/ <i>Proxime</i>	Title	University	Comments
2013	Alexandre Saydé	Winner	<i>Abuse of EU Law and Regulation of the Internal Market</i>	EUI	Legal Secretary ECJ. Thesis published by Hart, Oxford, 2014. ¹
2013	Fausto Vecchio	<i>Proxime</i>	<i>Primacia del derecho europeo y salvaguarda de las identidades constitucionales</i>	Catania	Professor of Comparative Law at Kore University of Enna, Sicily. Thesis published by Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial Del Estado, Madrid, 2015. ²
2014	Anzhela Yevgenyeva	Winner	<i>Direct Taxation and the Internal Market: Assessing Possibilities for a More Balanced Integration,</i>	Oxford	Senior Research Fellow, Oxford University Centre for Business Taxation, Saïd Business School and Associate Member, Oxford University Law Faculty.
2014	Vesselin Paskalev	<i>Proxime</i>	<i>The Power of Reason(s): Argumentative Rationality and EU Regulation</i>	EUI	Hon. Senior Lecturer, Brunel University, London.
2015	Damien Gérard	Winner	<i>Managing diversity in the European union: cooperation, convergence and mutual trust</i>	Univ. Cath. Louvain	Prosecutor General, Belgian Competition Authority

¹ Alexandre Saydé, *Abuse of EU Law and Regulation of the Internal Market* (Hart Publishing 2014).

² Fausto Vecchio, *Primacia del derecho europeo y salvaguarda de las identidades constitucionales. Consecuencias asimétricas de la europeización de los contralímites* (Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado 2015).

Year	Name	Winner/ <i>Proxime</i>	Title	University	Comments
2015	Barend van Leeuwen	<i>Proxime</i>	<i>European Standardisation of Services and its Impact on Private Law Paradoxes of Convergence</i>	EUI	Professor of European Union Law and Director, Durham European Law Institute Thesis published by Hart, Oxford, 2017. ³
2016	Alexander Hoogenboom	Winner	<i>Balancing Student Mobility Rights and National Higher Education Autonomy in the European Union</i>	Maastricht	Judge at the Centrale Raad voor Beroep in Utrecht. Thesis published by Brill Nijhoff, 2017. ⁴
2016	Christina Joanna Angelopoulos	<i>Proxime</i>	<i>European Intermediary Liability in Copyright</i>	Cambridge	University Associate Professor University of Cambridge; Fellow and Director of Studies (Newnham College) Thesis published by Kluwer Law International, 2016. ⁵
2017	Francisco Joel Reyes y Ráfales	Joint Winner	<i>Unterschiedslose Beschränkungen des Warenexports in andere Mitgliedstaaten als Eingriffe in</i>	Bonn	Notary in Wissen, Rheinland-Pfalz. Thesis published by Mohr Siebeck,

³ Barend Van Leeuwen, *European Standardisation of Services and Its Impact on Private Law: Paradoxes of Convergence* (Hart Publishing 2017).

⁴ Alexander Hoogenboom, *Balancing Student Mobility Rights and National Higher Education Autonomy in the European Union* (Brill Nijhoff 2017).

⁵ Christina Angelopoulos, *European Intermediary Liability in Copyright* (Kluwer Law International 2016)

Year	Name	Winner/ <i>Proxime</i>	Title	University	Comments
			<i>die EU- Warenverkehrsfreiheit gem. Art. 35 Alt. 2 AEUV?</i>		Tübingen, 2017. ⁶
2017	Zane Rasnača	Joint Winner	<i>First or one among equals? The CJEU and the construction of EU social policy.</i>	EUI	Researcher at the European Trade Union Institute; affiliated to the Institute for European Law at the KU Leuven.
2018	Vestert Borger	Winner	<i>The Transformation of the Euro: Law, Contract, Solidarity.</i>	Leiden	Assistant Professor of European Law, Leiden. Thesis published by Cambridge University Press, 2020. ⁷
2018	Felix M Wilke	<i>Proxime</i>	<i>A Conceptual Analysis of the Private International Law of the European Union and its Member States</i>	Bayreuth	Finished <i>Habilitation</i> at Bayreuth, now doing 'representation' at Chairs. Thesis published by Intersentia, Cambridge, 2019. ⁸
2019	Lola Avril	Winner	<i>Le costume sous la robe. Les avocats en professionnels multi- cartes de l'état régulateur</i>	Université Paris I	Professeure junior (CNRS/Paris 1 Panthéon-

⁶ Francisco Joel Reyes y Ráfales, *Die Warenausfuhrfreiheit: ein Beschränkungsverbot. Eine Synthese unionsverfassungsrechtlicher, rechtsökonomischer und rechtsprechungsbasierter Auslegung zu einem »Wettbewerbsgleichheits-Rechtswahlmechanismus«* (Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Co KG 2017).

⁷ Vestet Borger, *The Currency of Solidarity* (Cambridge University Press 2020).

⁸ Felix M Wilke, *A Conceptual Analysis of European Private International Law: The General Issues in the EU and Its Member States* (Intersentia 2019).

Year	Name	Winner/ <i>Proxime</i>	Title	University	Comments
			<i>européen: genèse, consolidation, contestations (1957—2019)</i>	(Panthéon-Sorbonne)	Sorbonne, CESSP), titulaire de la chaire REGANET.
2019	Andrej Lang	<i>Proxime</i>	<i>Die Verfassungs-gerichtsbarkeit in der vernetzten Weltordnung. Rechtsprechungskoordination in rechtsordnungs-übergreifenden Richternetzwerken</i>	Freie Universität Berlin	Universitätsprofessor an der Technischen Universität Chemnit. Thesis published by Springer, 2020. ⁹
2020	Pierre Auriel	Winner	<i>L'équivalence des protections des droits fondamentaux dans l'Union européenne</i>	Université Paris-II (Panthéon-Assas)	Postdoc Researcher, Université Jean Moulin (Lyon 3) Thesis published by Bruylant, 2020. ¹⁰
2020	Luigi Lonardo	<i>Proxime</i>	<i>Coping with distinctiveness: common foreign and security policy in EU Law</i>	King's College, London	Associate Professor in European Law, University of Luxembourg
2021	Leticia Díez Sánchez	Winner	<i>Integration through Law and its Discontents: Unveiling the</i>	EUI	Assistant Professor, Maastricht

⁹ Andrej Lang, *Die Verfassungsgerichtsbarkeit in der vernetzten Weltordnung: Rechtsprechungskoordination in rechtsordnungsübergreifenden Richternetzwerken*, (Springer 2020)

¹⁰ Pierre Auriel, *L'équivalence des protections des droits fondamentaux dans l'Union européenne*, (Bruylant, 2020).

Year	Name	Winner/ <i>Proxime</i>	Title	University	Comments
			<i>distributive impact of judge-made law in the EU</i>		
2021	Aleksandra Jolkina	<i>Proxime</i>	<i>Till Residence Card Do Us Part? The Concept of Marriages of Convenience and EU Free Movement Law: The Case of the United Kingdom</i>	Queen Mary, University of London	Research Affiliate with the Refugee Law Initiative, University of London, and the Democracy Institute at Central European University.
2022	Sophia Ayada	Winner	<i>From contesting gender stereotypes to questioning anti-stereotyping. A critical analysis of the CJEU gender equality jurisprudence</i>	EUI	Research Fellow, University College London, Faculty of Laws.
2022	Eun Hye Kim	<i>Proxime</i>	<i>The Advocate General as an Actor of Change – or Consolidation – in EU Competition Law</i>	EUI	Assistant Professor, University of Leeds.
2023	Mariza Avgeri	Joint Winner	<i>A transgender studies approach to gender identity and expression- based asylum claims based on a critical doctrinal and discourse analysis of CJEU and ECtHR jurisprudence</i>	Maynooth University	Associate Lecturer in Law, Culture and Society, International Law and Public Law at the Open University, Milton Keynes.
2023	Moritz Schramm	Joint Winner	<i>The Power, Politics, and Performativity of the DSA and the Oversight Board</i>	Humbolt University, Berlin	Research Scholar, Institute for International Law & Justice; Fellow, Institute for International Law and Justice,

Year	Name	Winner/ <i>Proxime</i>	Title	University	Comments
					and Adjunct Professor of Law at New York University School of Law. Thesis to be published by Cambridge University Press in June 2026. ¹¹
2023	Aurélie Villanueva	<i>Proxime</i>	<i>Culture in European Union Law: Between Market and Society</i>	EUI	Assistant Professor, University of Groningen
2024	Jacob van de Beeten	Joint Winner	<i>In the Name of the Law: A Critique of the Systemic Rationality in EU Law</i>	LSE	Emil Noël Fellow, New York University, Marie Curie Fellow-elect, Saxo Institute at the University of Copenhagen
2024	Catharina Ziebritzki	Joint Winner	<i>The EU's Responsibility in the Asylum Administration</i>	EUI	Humboldt University Berlin and Hochschule Rhein Main.
2024	Alberto Nicõtina	<i>Proxime</i>	<i>Constitutional Strategies in the Face of Multi-Level Governance: An Empirical Legal Theory of EU Integration</i>	University of Antwerp	Postdoctoral Researcher and Lecturer, University of Amsterdam
2025	Tine Deschuytere	Winner	<i>EU values in action? Shaping sustainable trade in services mobility</i>	EUI	Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore.

¹¹ Moritz A Schramm, *Governance by Emulation: The Oversight Board, the Digital Services Act, and the Struggle for Platform Accountability* (Cambridge University Press 2026)

Year	Name	Winner/ <i>Proxime</i>	Title	University	Comments
2025	David Garcíandía Igal	Joint <i>Proxime</i>	<i>Unseen influence: the diffusion of human rights law from the European Union to China</i>	Oxford	College lecturer in EU law, University of Oxford (Oriel College).
2025	Benedikt Schmitz	Joint <i>Proxime</i>	<i>Rethinking the Consumer Conflict Rule: Article 6 (2) Rome I Regulation and Party Autonomy in Light of Principles, Efficiency, and Harmonisation</i>	Groningen	Assistant Professor, University of Groningen. Thesis to be published by Edward Elgar, 2026. ¹²

¹² Benedikt Schmitz, *Choice of Law for Consumer Contracts in Theory and Practice: A Guide to Article 6 Rome I Regulation* (Edward Elgar, 2026).

As will be apparent from this list, a good number have become academics, and some are now in senior positions. Various others have ventured into other pastures, having been academics before starting their current positions. Being placed as winner or proxime in the annual competition for the ELFA Thesis Award has been felt by all concerned to be a very positive experience. Indeed, the standard has been so high that also the theses of various participants who were not placed in the award process have been, or are in the process of, being published by renowned publishers.

My sincere thanks to those of my friends and colleagues who have so generously given their time over the years – some on many occasions – to act as members of the independent jury for the award. Both ELFA and I recognise that this takes a lot of time and effort, as well as dedication. It is fitting that I should also pay tribute here to ELFA's Secretary, Milagros Orozco Hermoso, who has been such a tower of strength in the organisation of this award.

I very much hope that readers and their colleagues will continue to recommend their good PhD candidates to submit their theses for consideration for the award in future years.