

Call for Papers

Fundamental Concepts of Law: Legal Expectations

Date: September 17–18, 2026

Venue: Porto School of Law, Catholic University of Portugal

Conference Presentation

This conference is part of a series dedicated to the analysis of fundamental and cross-cutting concepts of law, seeking to understand them in depth from multiple legal and non-legal perspectives.

The inaugural edition will be dedicated to the theme of legal expectations.

The notion of expectation occupies a central place, albeit often implicit, in legal discourse. It arises in various contexts – such as the protection of trust, management of contractual expectations, or explanation of the systemic origins of law – and raises a complex set of theoretical and practical issues.

First, it is important to ask what constitutes an expectation: is it a purely cognitive phenomenon, an emotional projection, or a normative construct? To what extent can an expectation be considered reasonable or legitimate? What criteria should govern its legal qualification and protection?

Additionally, there is the question of what type of protection the law grants – or should grant – to expectations, as well as which expectations deserve greater protection and why. These questions take on distinct contours depending on the branches of law, inviting a comparative and transversal analysis.

On the other hand, expectation can be thought of as a potential deontic position, or as an underlying element to various legal institutes, raising the issue of its conceptual autonomy and its structuring role in the legal system.

This conference will seek to explore these and other issues associated to the concept of legal expectations, fostering a dialogue among different areas of law, analytical methods, and legal traditions.

With a view to enriching this debate, the program will also include presentations by guests from other fields of knowledge – namely philosophy, linguistics, literature, psychology, and theology – whose perspectives may contribute to a deeper and more integrated understanding of the phenomenon of expectations.

Scope and Themes

Proposals from diverse perspectives and areas of law are welcome, including, among others:

- Legal philosophy
- Public law (constitutional, administrative, EU, international, environmental)
- Private law (civil, commercial, labour)
- Legal history
- Comparative law
- Economic analysis of law

Proposals may adopt a general approach or focus on specific problems, case studies, or concrete doctrines, as long as they contribute to a broader, critical, and in-depth understanding of the concept of legal expectation.

Submissions from early-career researchers – including master's students – as well as experienced academics and professionals are encouraged.

Proposal Submission

Interested parties should submit:

- An abstract, maximum 500 words;
- An updated *curriculum vitae*.

Proposals may be submitted individually or in co-authorship (maximum two authors).

Submissions must be sent **by June 21, 2026**, to the following email addresses: franciscoqlima@ucp.pt and lnaia@ucp.pt.

Selection and Timeline

Notification of selected proposals: by July 21, 2026

Submission of draft paper (5,000 to 10,000 words, including footnotes): by September 4, 2026

Working Languages

The conference will be bilingual (Portuguese and English).

Proposals and presentations may be submitted in either language.

To facilitate participation and discussion, the organizers will strive, as much as possible, to organize the panels by language. In principle, each panel will be conducted entirely in a single language, avoiding the need to switch between Portuguese and English within the same panel.

Additionally, efforts will be made to ensure that each day of the conference is predominantly dedicated to one of the working languages (namely, one day in Portuguese and another in English).

Publication

A collection of papers based on the presentations given at the conference is planned for publication, subject to a peer-review process.

Logistical Information

The organization will not cover travel and accommodation expenses.

Lunch will be provided to speakers.