



ONLINE

TRADE LAW

WHEN PLATFORMS DECIDE

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND OUT-OF-COURT DISPUTE SETTLEMENT
UNDER THE DIGITAL SERVICES ACT

15 SEPTEMBER 2026

14:00–15:30 (CEST, ROME TIME) 🕒 90 MINUTES

Knowledge-sharing event



International
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Join the conversation on what it takes to protect fundamental rights when platforms decide what stays online.



OVERVIEW

Every day, online platforms take countless decisions that shape what people may say, share, and find. Content is removed, accounts are suspended, and the visibility of posts is restricted, often through automated systems and without a clear explanation. These decisions touch fundamental rights directly: freedom of expression, access to information, non-discrimination, and the right to an effective remedy. For a long time, the users affected by such measures had very little recourse.

Article 21 of the European Union Digital Services Act changes this picture. It establishes a new system of independent, certified out-of-court dispute settlement bodies that review the decisions of platforms against legal standards and fundamental rights, free of charge for the user. A new ecosystem is emerging around this mechanism, made up of certified bodies, independent decision makers, and legal professionals who work at the intersection of platform governance, due process, and access to justice.

This knowledge-sharing event introduces this development to a wider audience. It explains why the topic matters for the protection of rights in the digital public sphere, and it brings together two leading academic voices and the founders of the first two certified bodies to show how the system works in practice and where it is heading.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Explain the fundamental rights that are at stake when platforms moderate content and restrict accounts.
- Introduce Article 21 of the Digital Services Act and the new architecture of out-of-court dispute settlement, including its relationship with the courts and with procedural guarantees.
- Show, through the experience of two certified bodies, how this mechanism protects users in practice.
- Weigh what independence and impartiality require of a decision maker who applies fundamental rights and platform terms of service to a concrete case.
- Identify the professional profiles that this ecosystem is beginning to demand, and the competences needed to take on such a role.

TARGET GROUP

- Legal professionals, arbitrators, and practitioners with a legal background
- Professionals interested in independent decision making within certified bodies
- Attorneys working on platform regulation and online freedom of expression
- Advisers to platforms, users, and regulators
- Early-career dispute resolution specialists and regulatory professionals
- Civil society advocates engaged in platform accountability, content moderation, and access to justice

A GLANCE AT THE EVENT

The knowledge-sharing event consists of one interactive webinar of 90 minutes, held on 15 September 2026 from 14:00 to 15:30 (CEST, Rome time), and structured around the following interventions:

- **Opening and framing — Pietro Ortolani (15 minutes):** why these questions matter for rights and justice in the digital space. The Digital Services Act, Article 21, and the rise of out-of-court dispute settlement as a form of due process for the digital public sphere, in its relationship with the courts and with procedural guarantees.
- **Platform power and the European response — Cristina Poncibò (15 minutes):** the rights of users, the accountability of platforms, and how comparative and European law is responding.
- **Inside a certified body — Niklas Eder, User Rights (15 minutes):** how content moderation disputes are examined and how users are protected in practice.
- **Building the first certified body — Jan Stockhausen, ADROIT (15 minutes):** lessons from setting up and running the first out-of-court settlement body certified in the European Union.
- **Moderated panel and questions from the audience (25 minutes):** all speakers.
- **Closing reflections — Pietro Ortolani (5 minutes):** what is truly at stake and the road ahead for rights-based dispute resolution online.

SPEAKERS

- **Pietro Ortolani**, Full Professor of Digital Conflict Resolution at Radboud University, Nijmegen, and a leading European scholar on Article 21 of the Digital Services Act and the out-of-court dispute settlement ecosystem.
- **Cristina Poncibò**, Full Professor of Comparative Private Law at the University of Turin, whose research addresses comparative platform regulation and the accountability of platforms under the Digital Services Act.
- **Niklas Eder**, Co-Founder and Co-Chief Executive Officer of User Rights, the first European dispute settlement body certified under Article 21 of the Digital Services Act.
- **Jan Stockhausen**, Chief Executive Officer of ADROIT, the first out-of-court settlement body certified in the European Union under Article 21 of the Digital Services Act.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants are kindly asked to complete the online registration form: <https://oarf2.itcilo.org/DSB/E9719934/en>

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

LANGUAGE

The event will be held in English.

FEES

The event is free of charge, with hosting costs fully covered by the ITCILO Development Investment Programme.

CERTIFICATE

After participating in the session, participants will obtain an official ITCILO Certificate of Participation in Digital Credentials format.

CONTACT

For further information, please email devinvest@itcilo.org.

INFO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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