

“From Foundations to Futures: Bridging Scholarship and Practice in Energy Law”  
10<sup>th</sup> annual Energy Transitions Conference 2026, University of Eastern Finland,  
Joensuu, 19-20 February 2026

On 19 and 20 February 2026, the 10th annual Energy Transitions Conference took place in Joensuu, Finland. Organised by the University of Eastern Finland (UEF) Law School in cooperation with the UEF Centre for Climate Change, Energy and Environmental Law (CCEEL), and supported by the European Research Council and the Research Council of Finland, the conference was held under the theme “From Foundations to Futures: Bridging Scholarship and Practice in Energy Law”. The anniversary edition sought to bring together scholars and practitioners to reflect on the conceptual foundations, current development, and practical operation of energy law in a period of rapid energy transition. At the same time, the conference also served to present the preliminary outcomes of the INTEL project (funded by the European Research Council, 2024-2029) and the FOUNDATIONS project (funded by the Academy of Finland, 2024-2028), which seek to develop the foundations of energy law in Europe. These projects aim to develop further the theoretical discussions initiated by Adrian J. Bradbrook in his seminal paper, published in the *Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law* in 1996.\*

The conference opened on Thursday with welcome remarks by Professor **Seita Vesa**, Head of UEF Law School and **Kaisa Huhta**, Professor of European Law, especially Energy Law at the UEF Law School and the co-Director of the CCEEL. After the welcome remarks, plenary session continued with keynotes by **Wouter Vandorpe**, energy lawyer and partner at Baker McKenzie and free scientific collaborator at the Institute for Energy and Environmental Law at University of Leuven and **Oliver Hailes**, who is Assistant Professor of law, London School of Economics.

The plenary session was followed by a range of thematic panels reflecting the theorizing and conceptualizing energy law, interdisciplinary and international approaches to energy law, new trends and future developments in energy governance, low-carbon energy technologies and law, legal issues arising across different segments of the energy value chain, and conflict resolution in the energy sector. The first set of panels were dedicated to theoretical approaches to the energy law, energy governance in Europe and legal regulation of energy investments. One of the first panels under the theme “Borrowing doctrines: how other legal fields shape energy law” chaired by **Kaisa Huhta** (UEF, Finland) brought some valuable discussions on the energy transition, especially its fiscal impacts and public finance governance.

The second set of panels were dedicated to the energy justice, rights, and marginalised voices, governing electricity and power and governing gases, mainly focusing on the legal regulation and governance of the hydrogen transition. The panel on the governing electricity and power chaired by **Kim Fyhr** (UEF, Finland) brought highly interesting examples from the legal practice, we can name the presentation of **Taner Şahin** (Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, Türkiye) on “Policy Recommendations for the Reform of Türkiye’s Capacity Remuneration Mechanism: A Comparative Analysis” or presentation of **Donia Ayari** (University of Groningen, Netherlands) on “Governance of Multi-Vendor Multi-Terminal HVDC Grid in the North Sea”.

On Friday, a roundtable discussion and two sets of panels were held.

For the roundtable discussion, the participants of the conference were invited to contribute to the discussion on the theorization of energy law and the emergence of energy law as a distinct legal discipline. The discussion followed after four presentations on the topics presented by **Lea di Salvatore** (UEF, Finland), with the theme “What is Energy Law?”, **Marina Dutra Trindade** (UEF, Finland) with her presentation on “How do principles influence the legal system? Path Dependence in EU

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\* BRADBROOK, A. Energy Law as an Academic Discipline. *Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law*. 1996, Vol. 14, Issue 2, pp. 193-213.

Energy Law”, **Kenny Ng** (UEF, Finland) with the theme “Where do principles come from? The principles of sustainability, solidarity and sovereignty in EU energy law” and **Emma Merikanto** (UEF, Finland) with her presentation called “Where do principles come from? The Evolution of Energy Efficiency in EU law and the Emergence of the Energy Efficiency First Principle”.

The panel on European perspectives to energy governance chaired by **Martin Švec** (Masaryk University, Czech Republic) brought some insights from the different European jurisdictions – Spain, Poland, Norway, the Czech republic, UK and Ireland – **Amber Dagnall** (Durham University, United Kingdom) presented the contribution “Legal and Regulatory Challenges for Offshore Transnational Renewable Energy Hubs in the UK and Ireland”, **Lucie Vosečková** (Charles University, Czech Republic) presented “Energy Communities – Czech Experience”, **Alexandru Gociu** (Trinity College Dublin, Ireland) contributed with “Norwegian North Sea Fields Case and the Transition to Renewables”, **Rafał Cieślak** (University of Warsaw, Poland) presented his remarks on not very practically used energy performance contracting in Poland with the contribution called “Transposition of the Energy Efficiency Directive with regard to Energy Performance Contracting – what next?” and **Álvaro Martín Morán** (Rovira i Virgili University, Spain) presented another legal issue from practice with his contribution on “Operationalizing the Circular Economy: Regulatory foundations of Asturias H2 Valle”.

Second set of panels were dedicated to the very distinct topics: African perspectives to energy governance, data and digitalization and nuclear energy law. During the third panel dedicated to the nuclear energy law and chaired by **Jakub Handrlica** (Charles University, Czech Republic), three highly recent topics were discussed – legal regulation of small modular reactors, disposal of radioactive waste and space nuclear law. **Vladimír Sharp** and **Gabriela Blahoudková** (both Charles University, Czech Republic) presented their contribution on “Legislative Approaches to Regulation of Small Modular Reactors: from Improvised to Tailored Solutions”, **Kim Fyhr** (UEF, Finland) introduced current approach of Finland towards nuclear waste disposal with his presentation on “Enabling the Final Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste: The Role of Finnish Nuclear Law” and **Jakub Handrlica** (Charles University, Czech Republic) concluded this panel with his presentation entitled “Per Nuclear ad Astra. Prospective Deployment of Microreactors in Outer Space and the Need for Space Nuclear Law”.

The event gathered around 80 energy law scholars from around the world. The discussions ranged from general questions concerning the identity and methodology of energy law as a distinct field to highly practical issues emerging in the governance of decarbonization.

Based on the conference themes, the presentations and following discussions, it may be observed that contemporary energy law scholarship is expanding well beyond traditional questions of energy markets and infrastructure. The discussions in Joensuu suggest a field increasingly intertwined with international economic law, industrial policy, climate governance, sustainable energy, hydrogen regulation, and the legal design of permitting and transition processes. At the same time, the conference reaffirmed that one of the discipline’s central questions remains how energy law should be conceptualized and how legal scholarship can effectively affect legislators, regulators, courts, and industry actors.

The 2026 conference marked the tenth edition of the Joensuu event series and confirmed its position as an established forum for international debate in energy law and policy. The academic program was complemented by a social program connected with a weekend visit to Koli National Park, creating further opportunities for discussion beyond the formal panels.

The participation of academicians from the Charles University at this event was made possible thanks to support from the Czech Science Foundation and the Cooperation Laws scheme.

Lucie Vosečková\*\*

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\*\* JUDr. Lucie Vosečková, LL.M., Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. Email: Lucie.Voseckova@prf.cuni.cz. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9180-0770>.