

COMPANIES, MARKETS AND SUSTAINABILITY

NEWSLETTER 1/2020



Companies, Markets and Sustainability is a newsletter from the Research Group [Companies, Markets and Sustainability](#) (the Company Law Group), at the Faculty of Law, University of Oslo. The Company Law Group is the Faculty of Law’s forum for research on companies and markets, contributing to research and development of law at the national, European and international level. Our research encompasses the law relevant for companies as business entities and as objects of public policy. Our aim is a deeper understanding of the law and its role in shaping markets and companies and their interaction with and contribution to sustainability.

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NEWS FROM OUR PROJECTS

FROM THE SMART PROJECT...

Our flagship project, **Sustainable Market Actors for Responsible Trade (SMART)**, is now concluded. We are happy to share with you some of our main outcomes:

IDENTIFYING OBSTACLES TO SUSTAINABILITY

- B. Sjøfjell, J. Mähönen, A. Johnston and J. Cullen, '**Obstacles to Sustainable Global Business. Towards EU Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development**' (SMART Report 2018). Available at SSRN: ssrn.com/abstract=3354401.

REFORM PROPOSALS TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY

- B. Sjøfjell, J. Mähönen, M.B. Taylor, E. Maitre-Ekern, M. van der Velden, T. Novitz, C. Gammage, J. Cullen, M. Andhov, and R. Caranta, '**Supporting the Transition to Sustainability: SMART Reform Proposals**'. This is our introductory report, updated and available at SSRN: ssrn.com/abstract=3503310.
- The three detailed reports with concrete reform proposals on Business, Finance and Products:
 - B. Sjøfjell, J. Mähönen, T. Novitz, C. Gammage, and H. Ahlström, '**Securing the Future of European Business: SMART Reform Proposals**'. Available at SSRN: ssrn.com/abstract=3595048
 - J. Cullen, J. Mähönen, and H. Rapp Nilsen, '**Financing the Transition to Sustainability: SMART Reform Proposals**'. Available at SSRN: ssrn.com/abstract=3594433
 - E. Maitre-Ekern, M.B. Taylor, and M. van der Velden, '**Towards a Sustainable Circular Economy: SMART reform proposals**'. Available at SSRN: ssrn.com/abstract=3596076.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVED POLICY COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

- C. Gammage, S.E. Stave, H. Ahlström, and B. Sjøfjell, '**SMART Guidelines: Making Policy Coherence for Development Fit for Purpose**'. Available at SSRN: ssrn.com/abstract=3596036

FACILITATING CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH

- B. Sjøfjell and H. Ahlström, '**Facilitating interdisciplinary corporate sustainability research: The SMART Research Guide**'. Available at SSRN: ssrn.com/abstract=3626903

OTHER SMART REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- All public SMART reports are now freely available on [the SMART website](#)
- [The overview of SMART publications](#) will continue to be updated

... TO SMART LEGACY PLANS

As many as possible of our SMART outcomes are freely available and we hope they will inspire academic as well as a broader public debate on how to achieve sustainability. Short videos are available to introduce [SMART's concept of sustainability](#) and outline our reform proposals ([Sustainability is Possible!](#)), with videos available on our [reform proposals website](#) presenting the three main streams of reform proposals.

We continue the research, individually and in new projects, as well as our industry engagement through our [Business and Finance Forums](#), and the broader stakeholder engagement. We will seek to integrate the SMART results and insights into teaching and curricula across our SMART partner universities and beyond, to contribute to shaping the next generation of scholars and practitioners. We welcome your suggestions and questions!

FUTURING SUSTAINABLE NORDIC BUSINESS MODELS

Our new research project, [Futuring Sustainable Nordic Business Models](#) (Futuring Nordics) led by Professor Jukka Mähönen, with Professors Maja van der Velden and Beate Sjøfjell as deputy leaders, takes the SMART research further in a Nordic context. Questioning the sustainability of the 'Nordic model', the project aims to undertake an interdisciplinary analysis of the development and transformation of Nordic business models; inquiring into the possibilities and challenges globalization, digitalization and the sustainability goals create for Nordic business models, and proposing policies for innovating Nordic business models for sustainability.

EVENTS

5-9 October - [PhD seminar on Companies and Markets 2020.](#)


Our annual PhD seminar is held in week 41. It is organized as our contribution to [the Nordic Company Law Network](#), while being open to PhD candidates from all countries, as well as to other interested scholars. The topic of this year's PhD seminar is '**Nordic Company Law: Expanding the Horizon**'. The seminar will be wholly or partly virtual, depending on the situation with Covid19 both in Oslo and in the participants' countries.

15 October - [Daughters of Themis Quinquennial Conference](#)

[Daughters of Themis: International Network of Female Business Scholars](#), celebrates its first five years by organising the conference '**Regulating Business in Times of Turbulence: Thinking out of the Box for a Sustainable Future**'. It will be a virtual conference, open to all interested!

Our [lunch seminars](#) will continue to be held through Zoom during the pandemic, and we will keep this as an option when we can hold the seminars physically in Oslo again. All interested are welcome to join.

PUBLICATIONS

 **Andrew Johnston and Beate Sjøfjell**, The EU's Approach to Environmentally Sustainable Business: Can Disclosure Overcome the Failings of Shareholder Primacy?, in Marjan Peeters and Mariolina Eliantonio (eds), *Research Handbook on EU Environmental Law* (Edward Elgar, forthcoming 2020), Chapter 25. Preprint available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3494197>

- **Beate Sjäffell**, '[How Company Law has Failed Human Rights – And What to Do About It](#)', *Business and Human Rights Journal*, Cambridge University Press (2020). Preprint available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3530956>

- **Jukka Mähönen** (2020), [Integrated Reporting and Sustainable Corporate Governance from European Perspective. Accounting, Economics, and Law: A Convivium](#). ISSN (Online) 2152-2820, ISSN (Print) 2194-6051, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/ael-2018-0048>.

- **Mark B. Taylor**, 'Litigating Sustainability – Towards a Taxonomy of Counter-Corporate Litigation' (3 February 2020). University of Oslo Faculty of Law Research Paper No. 2020-08. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3530768>

BLOGGING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Bloggning for Sustainability presents current research and latest activities from our research group, from our various research projects, and showcases major publications. We welcome guest bloggers!

- [Social Sustainability and Future Regulation of Work](#)
By Franz Christian Ebert and Tonia Novitz, 12 June 2020

- [European Central Banks undermines EU sustainability goals: Pandemic emergency purchase programme analysed](#)
By Jay Cullen, 8 June 2020

- [Landmark Ruling in Canada Strengthens Corporate Accountability for Operations Abroad](#)
By Enrique Boone Barrera, 27 April 2020

- [Is the EU's new Circular Economy Action Plan up to the task?](#)
By Eléonore Maitre-Ekern, 21 April 2020

- [Sustainability through public procurement: the way forward](#)
By Tim Stoffel, 6 April 2020.

OTHER NEWS FROM OUR RESEARCH GROUP

HANNA AHLSTRÖM

After completing her PhD project in the SMART Project ([defence 17 June 2020](#)), [Hanna Ahlström](#) continues her academic career at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences as postdoctoral scholar.

ELEONORE MAITRÈ-EKERN

[Eléonore Maitre-Ekern](#) defended her PhD thesis at the University of Oslo in 2019, contributed actively to the last months of the SMART Project, and has now joined our new project Futuring Nordics as postdoctoral scholar.

TAINA PIHLAJARINNE

[Taina Pihlajarinne](#), Professor at the University of Helsinki, is the newest addition to our Research Group. Professor Pihlajarinne has just been awarded funds for a new project, which she will present at a lunch seminar next term. We will share more information about this in the next newsletter.

MAJA VAN DER VELDEN

[Maja van der Velden](#) has been promoted to Professor at the Department of Informatics, University of Oslo.

Professor van der Velden has also been awarded funds for a new project: *Circular Energy*. This is an UiO:Energy-financed project, focusing on the role of product design, maintenance, and repair in energy conservation, and will start up in 2021.

BEATE SJÅFJELL

[Beate Sjøfjell](#) has been appointed to the European Commission's [Informal Group of Company Law Experts](#), for 2020-2024. As far as we have been able to ascertain, Professor Sjøfjell is the first scholar from outside of the European Union to be appointed to this Expert Group. The task of the Expert Group is to assist the Commission in the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives.

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Professor [Beate Sjøfjell](#) is head of the [Company Law Group](#) and responsible for this newsletter. If you do not wish to continue receiving our newsletter, simply cancel your subscription by sending an [e-mail](#). Please see: [Declaration of privacy for the University of Oslo's newsletters](#).



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