

COMPANIES, MARKETS AND SUSTAINABILITY

NEWSLETTER 2/2020



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.

CONTENTS

News from our projects	2
SMART legacy plans	2
Futuring Sustainable Nordic Business Models.....	2
Special Issue: Circular economy and corporate sustainability.....	2
Event: Sustainability and the future of Nordic business models	2
Events	3
Publications	3
Special Issue: "Corporate Sustainability Reforms: Securing Market Actors’ Contribution to Global Sustainability” ...	4
Blogging for Sustainability.....	5
Other news from our Research Group.....	6

NEWS FROM OUR PROJECTS

SMART LEGACY PLANS

Our flagship project, [Sustainable Market Actors for Responsible Trade \(SMART\)](#), is now concluded. As many as possible of our [SMART outcomes](#) and [publications](#) 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 globalisation, digitalisation and the sustainability goals create for Nordic business models, and proposing policies for innovating Nordic business models for sustainability.

SPECIAL ISSUE: CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

In this Futuring Nordics Special Issue, we seek to combine the two parallel debates on how to achieve a circular economy and how to achieve business that contributes to sustainability (corporate sustainability). While there is some overlap between these two debates, our aim is to integrate them, joined together through the recognition that neither a circular economy nor incremental corporate sustainability initiatives are sufficient if they do not contribute to achieving sustainability.

We are inviting contributions across a range of themes on this [Special Issue: circular economy and corporate sustainability](#). Please follow the link for a more detailed description of the Special Issue, including topic suggestions. Manuscript submissions may be submitted until 31 May 2021, while we encourage early submissions.

EVENT: SUSTAINABILITY AND THE FUTURE OF NORDIC BUSINESS MODELS

This seminar 27 November 2020 will discuss what sustainability means in the Nordics today and what is the future of Nordic business models. Confirmed speakers include [Dr. Jason Hicckel](#), author and creator of the [Sustainable Development Index](#), and [Dr. Sarah Cornell](#), renowned for her work on [planetary boundaries](#) and broader sustainability issues. The seminar is planned as a hybrid physical/virtual event (which may be made totally virtual depending on Covid19 developments). It is open to all interested, including scholars, students, practitioners and journalists.

EVENTS

5-8 October **PhD seminar on Companies and Markets 2020**

Our annual PhD seminar is held in week 41. It is organised 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 for this year's PhD seminar is '**Nordic Company Law: Expanding the Horizon**'. While the registration now is closed, as the seminar is wholly virtual, interested persons wishing to participate, whether for whole days or individual presentations, may contact administrative coordinator [Mona Østvang Ådum](#) for the Zoom link.

15 October **Conference: [Regulating Business in Times of Turbulence: Thinking out of the Box for a Sustainable Future](#)**

[Daughters of Themis: International Network of Female Business Scholars](#), celebrates its first five years by organising this virtual full day conference, with a broad range of topical issues to be presented on and discussed. The conference is open to all, including scholars, students, practitioners and journalists! Check out [the programme](#) – and [register today](#) to receive the Zoom link. It is possible to register for the whole conference or for one or several individual sessions.

30 October **[Preventing greenwashing in the Circular Economy: the role of consumer legislation and ISO standards](#)**


The transition towards a Circular Economy (CE) brings about several challenges, in particular regarding the meaning of 'circularity' and overall contribution to the sustainability agenda. This has led to the profusion of green claims that are both confusing consumers and impeding sustainable businesses from leading the way. In this seminar, postdoctoral researcher [Eléonore Maitre-Ekern](#) and senior researcher [Sigurd Sagen Vildåsen](#) will present ideas and open the discussion on how to address greenwashing in the CE from the perspective, respectively, of European consumer legislation and of international standardization.







27 November **[Sustainability and the future of Nordic business models](#)**

This seminar will discuss what sustainability means in the Nordics today and what is the future of Nordic business models. For more information, please have a look at our designated section for everything related to the Futuring Nordics project or follow the link in the title.

We will continue to hold our [lunch seminars](#) through Zoom during the pandemic, with dates and times more flexible than before. Attending digitally will continue to be an option when we can meet physically in Oslo again. All interested are welcome to join.

PUBLICATIONS






-  **Ferrero-Ferrero, I., León, R., & Muñoz-Torres, M. J.** (2020). Sustainability materiality matrices in doubt: May prioritizations of aspects overestimate environmental performance? *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2020.1766427>

-  **Monciardini, D., Mähönen, J. T., & Tsagas, G.** (2020). Rethinking Non-Financial Reporting: A Blueprint for Structural Regulatory Changes. *Accounting, Economics, and Law: A Convivium*, (ahead-of-print). <https://doi.org/10.1515/ael-2020-0092>
-  **Mähönen, J.** (2020). Comprehensive Approach to Relevant and Reliable Reporting in Europe: A Dream Impossible? *Sustainability*, 12(13), 5277. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12135277>
-  **Pihlajarinne, Taina.** (2019). Repairing and Re-Using From an Exclusive Rights Perspective – Towards Sustainable Lifespan as Part of a New Normal? Rognstad, O-A. & Berg Ørstavik, I. (eds.): IP and Sustainable Markets. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020 Forthcoming. *Helsinki Legal Studies Research Paper*, 61. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3648912>
-  **Sjåfjell, B.** (2020). Sustainable Value Creation Within Planetary Boundaries—Reforming Corporate Purpose and Duties of the Corporate Board. *Sustainability*, 12(15), 6245. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12156245>
-  **Vildåsen, S. S.** (2018). Corporate sustainability in practice: An exploratory study of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). *Business Strategy & Development*, 1(4), 256–264. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bsd2.35>
-  **Villiers, C.** (2020). Corporate Governance, Employee Voice and the Interests of Employees: The Broken Promise of a ‘World Leading Package of Corporate Reforms.’ *Industrial Law Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/indlaw/dwaa017>

SPECIAL ISSUE: "CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY REFORMS: SECURING MARKET ACTORS' CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY"

This special issue of the journal *Sustainability* is based on the contributions at the conference ‘Corporate Sustainability Reforms: Securing Market Actors’ Contribution to Global Sustainability’ in Oslo on 24 October 2019. To achieve sustainability, it is crucial to secure the contribution of all market actors: Business, citizens, investors, and the public sector. The contributions engage from different perspectives with ways forward to support the transition to sustainability. Editors of the special issue are [Professor Beate Sjåfjell](#) and [Professor Maja van der Velden](#).





25 May 2020, Journal of Sustainability.

-  **Ararat, M., & Sayedy, B.** (2019). Gender and Climate Change Disclosure: An Interdimensional Policy Approach. *Sustainability*, 11(24), 7217. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11247217>
-  **Boone Barrera, E.** (2019). Extractive Industries and Investor–State Arbitration: Enforcing Home Standards Abroad. *Sustainability*, 11(24), 6963. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11246963>
-  **Cyndecka, M. A.** (2019). The 2019 ‘Fitness Check’ of State Aid Modernisation Reform of 2012—an Opportunity to Redefine and Reintroduce Sustainability into the EU/EEA State Aid Rules? The Example of the Transport Sector. *Sustainability*, 11(22), 6328. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11226328>
-  **Donia, M. B. L., Carrasco, S. H., Seck, S., McCorquodale, R., & Ronen, S.** (2020). The Theorized Relationship between Organizational (Non)Compliance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Human Rights and Desired Employee Workplace Outcomes. *Sustainability*, 12(5), 2130. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12052130>
-  **Mähönen, J.** (2020). Comprehensive Approach to Relevant and Reliable Reporting in Europe: A Dream Impossible? *Sustainability*, 12(13), 5277. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12135277>

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Mélon, L. (2020). More Than a Nudge? Arguments and Tools for Mandating Green Public Procurement in the EU. *Sustainability*, 12(3), 988. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12030988>
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Mihajlović, B. (2020). The Role of Consumers in the Achievement of Corporate Sustainability through the Reduction of Unfair Commercial Practices. *Sustainability*, 12(3), 1009. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12031009>
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Quinn, J. (2019). The Sustainable Corporate Objective: Rethinking Directors' Duties. *Sustainability*, 11(23), 6734. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11236734>
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Siri, M., & Zhu, S. (2019). Will the EU Commission Successfully Integrate Sustainability Risks and Factors in the Investor Protection Regime? A Research Agenda. *Sustainability*, 11(22), 6292. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11226292>
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Sjåfjell, B. (2020). Sustainable Value Creation Within Planetary Boundaries—Reforming Corporate Purpose and Duties of the Corporate Board. *Sustainability*, 12(15), 6245. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12156245>
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Taylor, M. B., & van der Velden, M. (2019). Resistance to Regulation: Failing Sustainability in Product Lifecycles. *Sustainability*, 11(22), 6526. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11226526>
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Tsagas, G. (2020). A Proposal for Reform of EU Member States' Corporate Governance Codes in Support of Sustainability. *Sustainability*, 12(10), 4328. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12104328>
- 
Yin, W. (2019). Integrating Sustainable Development Goals into the Belt and Road Initiative: Would It Be a New Model for Green and Sustainable Investment? *Sustainability*, 11(24), 6991. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11246991>

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!

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[No sustainability without social justice \(or vice versa!\)](#)
 By Beate Sjåfjell, 10 July 2020
- 
[Nice words in corporate capitalism - business, sustainability, and social justice](#)
 By Charlotte Villiers, 8 July 2020
- 
[Sustainability and Social Justice or Sustainability versus Social Justice? Tracing some of the Contours of the Debate](#)
 By Lorraine Talbot, 6 July 2020
- 
[Apple uses trademark law to strengthen its monopoly on repair](#)
 By Maja van der Velden, 3 July 2020
- 
[Do We Need Stewardship in Norway?](#)
 By Jukka Mähönen, 1 July 2020
- 
[Litigating for Sustainability: Are the courts up to the challenge of the post-COVID reality?](#)
 By Mark B. Taylor, 29 June 2020.

OTHER NEWS FROM OUR RESEARCH GROUP

SOCIAL MEDIA – LINKEDIN

The Company Law Group is now on [LinkedIn](#). We also have a [group](#) dedicated to discussing themes, topics, publications, or news in general that may be of interest to the research group. Feel free to join!

WE HAVE INTERNATIONALISED AND EXPANDED OUR RESEARCH GROUP

These months under the pandemic have emphasised for us that we do not have to be in the same geographic area to work closely together, and as a result, we have internationalised and expanded our Company Law Group. We are happy to present the new members of our active, international and increasingly interdisciplinary Research Group:

Professor Christopher M. Bruner (University of Georgia, USA)

Associate Professor Sarah Cornell (Stockholm Resilience Centre)

Associate Professor Sjur Swensen Ellingsæter (BI Norwegian Business School)

Assistant lecturer Elena Escrig-Olmedo (University Jaume I)

Senior Lecturer Clair Gammage (University of Bristol)

Professor Andrew Johnston (University of Warwick)

Associate Professor Kristina Labba (The Arctic University of Norway)

Associate Professor Carol Liao (University of British Columbia)

Senior Lecturer David Monciardini (University of Exeter)

Dr Anne-Christin Mittwoch (Marburg University)

Professor Tonia Novitz (University of Bristol)

Professor Taina Pihlajarinne (University of Helsinki)

Dr Juana Maria Rivera-Lirio (University Jaume I)

Senior Lecturer Roseanne Russel (University of Bristol)

Senior Research Scientist Sigurd Sagen Vildåsen (SINTEF and NTNU)

Assistant Professor Jaakko Salminen (Copenhagen Business School)

Professor María Jesús Muñoz Torres (University Jaume I)

Professor Charlotte Villiers (University of Bristol)

Associate Professor Basang Wangdui (Tibet University)

TWO POST-DOC OPENINGS AT THE SHARE PROJECT

[Professor Taina Pihlajarinne's](#) project 'Shaping, fixing and making markets via IPR: regulating sustainable innovation ecosystems' (SHARE) project, led by our group member Professor Taina Pihlajarinne from the University of Helsinki is recruiting two 3-year post doc researchers, one in Helsinki (University of Helsinki) and one in Rovaniemi (University of Lapland). [The field of the Helsinki post-doc](#) is intellectual property, finance, innovation and sustainability. [The position at the University of Lapland](#) concerns intellectual property rights, IP management and sustainability.

NEW RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

[Kasper Holter Johns](#) and [Maja Maria Blegen](#) has started their appointment as research assistants. They will be writing a 60 credit master thesis as part of the project *Futuring Sustainable Nordic Business Models (Futuring Nordics)*.

ASTRID IVERSEN

[Astrid Iversen](#) has successfully defended her PhD thesis on 'Intercreditor equity in sovereign debt restructuring', on [22 September 2020](#). Astrid remains in our Research Group in her new position as Assistant Professor at Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences.

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Professor [Beate Sjøfjell](#) is head of the [Company Law Group](#) and responsible for this newsletter.
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