
The Workshop is organized by:

Prof. Dr. Michael Wrase

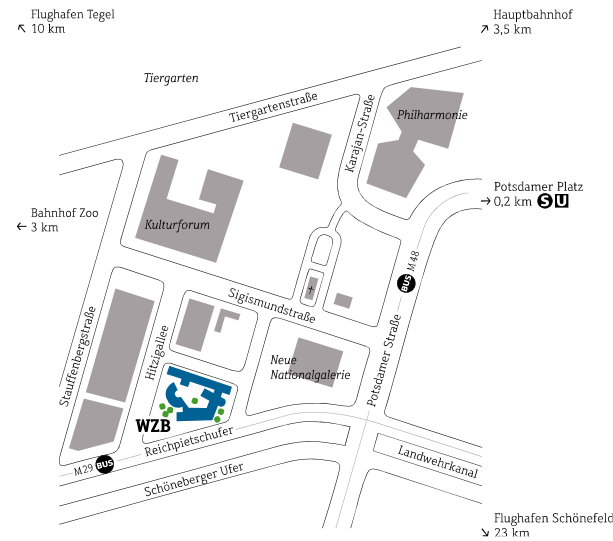
WZB Berlin Social Science Research Center

Registration:

Please respond by July 14, 2025

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WZB

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Un/Equal Access to Justice in the Age of Digitalisation? UK and German Perspectives

International Workshop

July 21, 2025

9 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Room A300

WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Programme

Monday, July 21, 2025, at 9 a.m. in room A300

The provision of equal access to justice is a question of equity and justice and has therefore been named a core element of the rule of law in a democratic society. It is the most basic human right and the procedural equivalent of Hannah Arendt's 'right to have rights'.

However, empirical sociolegal research has produced ample evidence on how unequal access is in reality, particularly for migrants, socially disadvantaged persons and other vulnerable groups in society. The classic instrument for reducing socio-economic inequalities is legal aid. Even though the UK and Germany have different systems, long-term developments seem quite similar. Both systems are currently in crisis due to, among other things, financial cuts and regulatory restrictions.

Against this backdrop, digitisation of legal services through online platforms and digitalised procedures appear to be the 'golden path' to ushering in a new era of access to justice for all. But does that promise hold true? Which opportunities and risks does digitalisation of legal services and justice systems actually bring with it?

In the workshop, we will discuss these topics with socio-legal scholars and practitioners from the UK and Germany in a comparative perspective. England and Wales have undergone a far-reaching shift towards digitalisation in recent years, so we will focus specifically on the lessons that can be drawn from this development and explore the similarities and differences in relation to Germany. We will also discuss ways forward in interactive group discussions with the participants of the workshop.

Structure

9.00-9.15 Welcome and Introductory Remarks
Jan C. Behrends / Martin Kohlrausch

Panel I: Challenges and the Future of Legal Aid in Germany and the UK

9.15-10.45 **Between Crisis and Reform – How Can We Move Towards a More Just and Sustainable System of Legal Aid in the UK?**
Jo Wilding, University of Sussex

Is there a Crisis of Legal Aid and Access to Justice in German Civil Law – and What Needs to Be Done?
Reflections on Findings from Quantitative and Qualitative Empirical Data
Michael Wrase, WZB

Commentary from a Comparative Perspective
Alexander Graser, University of Regensburg

10.45-11.15 Coffee Break

Panel II: Access to Justice for All in the Age of Digitalisation?

11.15-12.30 **Digital Justice Journeys – (How) Can Ordinary People Navigate the Justice System in the Age of Digitalisation?**
Naomi Creutzfeldt, University of Kent

Commentary from a German Migration Law Perspective
Pauline Endres de Oliveira, Humboldt University Berlin

Commentary from a German Legislative Perspective
Philip Scholz, Federal Ministry of Justice

12.30 – 1.30 Lunch Break

1.30 – 2.30 Interactive Group Discussions

2.30 – 3.15 Summing-Up

3.15 – 4.00 Tea and Coffee Networking