

Dr. Silvia Corradi wins University of Innsbruck FemCareer PostDoc Fellowship and will join the Department of Legal Theory and Future of Law in June 2026

The University of Innsbruck is pleased to announce the successful appointment of **Silvia Corradi** as a **FemCareer Fellow**. Beginning on **1 June 2026**, she will join the **Department of Legal Theory and Future of Law**, where she will conduct her research under the supervision of **Prof. Dr. Matthias C. Kettemann**.

The University of Innsbruck's **FemCareer Fellowship** is a competitive, three-year programme designed to support outstanding early-career postdoctoral researchers. Within this framework, Silvia Corradi will pursue an ambitious research project examining the *invisible risks associated with the use of AI systems*, with a particular focus on their impact on vulnerable individuals. Recent high-profile public scandals have made clear that uncritical reliance on AI technologies can be profoundly dangerous, at times with life-or-death consequences. Those most at risk are often individuals who lack the capacity, resources, or autonomy to protect themselves or to take meaningful precautions against such harms.

Against this backdrop, the European Union enacted its first comprehensive regulation on artificial intelligence. Article 5(1)(b) of the AI Act prohibits AI practices that exploit individual vulnerabilities and cause harm. Yet the provision raises a fundamental challenge: the concept of "vulnerability" itself remains legally underdefined, making it difficult to determine when the prohibition applies and when it does not.

Current debates typically distinguish between two competing understandings of vulnerability. The first conceives vulnerability as an *ontological condition*: an intrinsic aspect of the human condition that, in principle, affects everyone. The second focuses on *vulnerable groups*, such as children, defined by shared characteristics like age. Each approach has significant limitations. If vulnerability is universal, how can Article 5(1)(b) meaningfully differentiate between lawful and unlawful AI practices? Conversely, if vulnerability is tied exclusively to predefined groups, there is a risk of overlooking individuals who are vulnerable due to situational or contextual factors, thereby unduly narrowing the scope of legal protection.

Silvia Corradi's project advances a third perspective by conceptualizing vulnerability as a *relational* phenomenon – one that emerges from the interaction between individuals and the specific social, technological, and institutional settings in which they find themselves. Precisely because of its relational nature, vulnerability resists simple legal definition and is prone to grey areas and misinterpretation, with potentially serious consequences.

Through a rigorous theoretical and legal analysis, the project aims to clarify how vulnerability can be meaningfully conceptualized and addressed within AI regulation,

contributing both to scholarly debate and to the effective protection of individuals in an increasingly automated society.

The research will be conducted in close cooperation with the Faculty of Law of the University of Innsbruck, the Digital Science Center (DiSC), the InnCubator (the Startup and Innovation Center of the University of Innsbruck), and the Faculty of Law of the University of Trento.