

“FoRB and Vulnerability”

ISFORB International Conference, 8-9 May 2025

ETF Leuven, Belgium

In 2025, the fifth ISFORB international conference will take place at ETF Leuven. This annual conference brings together scholars from a variety of disciplines and interested practitioners active in the field of Freedom of Religion or Belief in a warm atmosphere.

The 2025 ISFORB conference on “FoRB and Vulnerability” builds on Emmanuel Lévinas’s insight that our shared experience of vulnerability serves as the foundation for inter-human understanding and responsibility. Integrated into a human rights framework, this insight complements the importance of equality among autonomous liberal subjects with a necessity for empathy and attention to difference (Fineman 2015). Concretely, this means that persons and their rights are to be considered carefully with attention to their physicality and socio-economic situatedness, both of which may render some people more susceptible to discrimination and injustices than others. In line with our research focus on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), we seek to explore together how the right to FoRB intersects with vulnerability.

This multi-disciplinary Call for Papers warmly welcomes you to join our conversations, giving attention to discussions and questions at the local, national or European level. Contributions can come from a sociological, legal, historical, theological, or other disciplinary viewpoint. Attention can go to theoretical considerations and to practical implications.

We welcome papers on a variety of subthemes, including but not limited to:

- theological or philosophical explorations of how conscience, religion, or belief engage with the most vulnerable aspects of the human person and may render us vulnerable in social interactions;
- empirical observations and analyses of the impacts of FoRB policies on vulnerable persons or populations, both positively and negatively;
- the experiences of individuals facing multiple vulnerabilities, i.e., those who suffer from intersectional discrimination (e.g., discrimination based on religion or belief combined with marginalization due to socio-economic status, disabilities, SOGI, age).

Paper proposals on other FoRB-related issues, which do not focus on the particular topic of FoRB and vulnerability, can be accepted as well.

Please send your abstract (200-300 words) for a 20min paper to isforb@etf.edu before 1 February 2025. You will be notified of acceptance before 15 February 2025.

We offer several publication options to presenters and aim to publish a selection of papers of the conference together in an appropriate academic volume afterwards.