



P10: Legal Rules and Regulatory Concepts for the Use of Information Technology in Ecclesiastical Law and the Law of the Relations between State and Church in Switzerland, Austria, and Germany

The project aims to explore the complex interplay between church, state and the digital realm. The main objectives of the project are to identify existing legal frameworks and regulatory approaches to the use of ICT by the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches in these countries.

It examines how the use of ICT in the church context is regulated by laws that define the relationship between church and state, and reviews the legal doctrines that justify these regulations and their development processes.

Furthermore, the project explores the conceptual foundations of "digital church action" and its impact on church identities and doctrines. It also examines societal perceptions of the church's role in the digital age, with the aim of uncovering expectations of church action during this transition.



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Objective of Project

The project investigates legal frameworks of ecclesiastical and secular authorities which regulate the ecclesiastical practices in the digital space such as:

- church service,
- sacramental administration,
- transformation of ecclesiastical organisation.



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Main Findings

The digital transformation of ecclesial order and action has given legal norms a dual function:

- on the one hand, the law appears as a constraint on ecclesial action (such as data protection and copyright),
- but at the same time as an enabling factor for ecclesial digital action, particularly in the area of organisational transformation and the implementation of digital strategies.



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Methodological Approach

The project primarily uses hermeneutic methods of jurisprudence, but it is also informed by the perspective of ecclesiastical legal history and ecclesiological approaches.

Contribution to URPP Objectives

The project provides insights into the use and increasing importance of law in the transformation processes of church authorities and church policies and practices in the age of digital transformation.