

Legal Symposium AIIC Netherlands

Ecocide and Ecolinguistics



7 – 8 November, 2026

The Hague, The Netherlands

The **2026 Legal Symposium** organized by the Dutch Region will shed light on relatively new concepts which are not only relevant to us as professional interpreters but also as human beings. It will offer a unique opportunity to hear the experts, academics and activists who have shaped such concepts, as they have been involved in the topic from the very beginning.

Discussions regarding the criminalisation of **Ecocide** have been ongoing for several years now. The 2021 definition of Ecocide (by the Independent Expert Panel convened by the Stop Ecocide Foundation) provided a basis for the 2024 proposal to have ecocide included as the fifth international crime in the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**. In the meantime, the **EU Environmental Crimes Directive** entered into force in May 2024, aiming to protect the environment more effectively through criminal law.

What is Ecocide exactly? Is it already a crime? Should it be prosecuted at a national or international level?

Ecolinguistics is a recent branch of linguistics, which studies the interaction between the language used by a community and the ecosystem in which such community lives. Our understanding of climate change, biodiversity and sustainability is almost completely formed by the language that is used to describe them.

What language do we use to represent the environment? Does it contribute to its degradation or protection? Does the narrative describe nature as a commodity or as a gift? These and other fundamental questions will be addressed by those who know most about this 'hot' topic.

Speakers

Yogi Hale Hendlin, PhD - Ecocide as Semiocide

Environmental philosopher and public health scientist, working at the intersection of complex systems theory, the commercial determinants of health, environmental justice, and biosemiotics. Principal of the Feral Ecologies Lab and Assistant Professor in the Erasmus School of Philosophy, Rotterdam.

Matt Drury - Ecology: Communication and Perception of the Environment

Researcher and lecturer on Sustainability and Academic Communication at the University of Groningen.

Jojo Metha - The Genesis of Ecocide, Definition and Integration into the Rome Statute (Keynote)

Chair of the Stop Ecocide Foundation, co-founded Stop Ecocide in 2017, alongside barrister and legal pioneer the late Polly Higgins, to support the establishment of ecocide as a crime at the International Criminal Court.

Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh - Environmental Crime Litigation

Associate Professor of Sustainability Law, University of Amsterdam, widely recognized for her work in rights-based climate litigation, notably serving as the Lead Counsel for the Republic of Vanuatu in its historic advisory proceedings before the International Court of Justice.

Cedric Ryngaert - Jurisdiction and Extraterritoriality

Professor of Public International Law at Utrecht University (Netherlands), editor-in-chief the Netherlands International Law Review, member of Ecocide Knowledge Hub.

Lammert van Raan - Ecocide Criminalization Act in The Netherlands

Former Member of the Dutch Parliament (Party for the Animals, 2017-2023). Founder and chair of the Working Group on National Criminalization of Ecocide, which led to the publication of a manual on the topic and the documentary From Ecocide to Ecojustice.