

Navigating Institutional Uncertainty: Grounds of Mutual Trust

VWR Wintervergadering/Winter meeting with Emanuela Ceva (University of Geneva)

University of Amsterdam, Faculty of Law, April 11 2025

[Location Roeterseilandcampus - Building gebouw A - University of Amsterdam](#)

11.30-12.00 ALV – REC A3.01

12:00 -13.00 Lunch – REC A3.16

13:00 Opening and introduction – REC A3.01

13:15 Keynote by Emanuela Ceva (University of Geneva) – REC A3.01

Session 1– REC A3.01

14:00 Respondent 1: Eric Boot (University of Amsterdam)

14:20 Respondent 2: Dorota Mokrosinska (Leiden University)

14:40 Reply by Ceva & discussion with audience

15:00 BREAK

Session 2 – REC A3.01

15:15 Respondent 3: Frank Hindriks (University of Groningen)

15:35 Respondent 4: Élise Rouméas (University College Fryslân)

15:55 Respondent 5: Patrick Overeem (VU University)

16:15 Reply by Ceva & discussion with audience

16:50 Closing remarks

17:00 DRINKS – CREA Café

Keynote address by Emanuela Ceva

‘Navigating Institutional Uncertainty: The Cognitive Grounds of Officeholders’ Mutual Trust’

Ceva’s paper examines what kind of trust among officeholders in public institutions should be at work to uphold institutional action under conditions of uncertainty. She builds on an understanding of institutional action as a project in the making. She argues that a key internal element for this project to unfold is that officeholders share the necessary cognitive grounds to trust each other’s action in their institutional capacity. She focuses on the officeholders’ belief in their mutual commitment to acting in ways that can be vindicated with reference to their power mandates (office accountability). In the context of interrelated institutional roles, when an officeholder trusts that others are so committed, this trust gives them reason to act with the same commitment. By expressing trust, officeholders empower each other and set in motion institutional mechanisms that can uphold institutional action. This kind of cognitive trust, when well-grounded, has a special importance over other forms of dispositional or affective trust. It can sustain the internal dynamics of institutional action under conditions of uncertainty.