

Committee of Convention 108

Stefano Rodotà Data Protection Award

2025

Competition rules

Article 1 – Purpose of the competition

The Committee of Convention 108 of the Council of Europe (the Organiser) shall hold a competition biennially whose purpose shall be to highlight ground-breaking and innovative research on data protection with a preferable focus on the legal instruments of the Council of Europe, notably on the [Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data](#) (CETS 108) and its Amending Protocol (CETS 223).

The prize shall be awarded in memory of the leading Italian law Professor and politician, Stefano Rodotà, who worked throughout his life to promote fundamental rights, particularly for the development and implementation of the right to data protection in Europe, leaving an indelible mark on the framing of European policy in this field.

Article 2 – Entry requirements

The competition shall reward original and ground-breaking academic research, studies, research projects and articles on data protection, helping to improve current understanding of a new or emerging question, to stimulate debate in the expert community or possibly to devise new policies in the field of privacy and data protection.

The prize rewards the best studies, research projects, articles or publications, of academic nature (notably written on the basis of a thesis or master thesis produced by the author to obtaining a State recognised diploma) **published or finalised in 2024 and**

2025 by young researchers (less than 40 years old at the date of application) and relating to data protection in two different categories.

In the first category, the prize rewards the best PhD thesis, which is published or finalised in 2024 and 2025.

In the second category, the prize rewards other research projects, articles or publications, of academic nature, (including master thesis produced by the author to obtaining a State recognised diploma) and published in 2024 and 2025.

These students and researchers shall be nationals of the countries/members of institutions participating in the work of the Committee of Convention 108 (members and observers).

Academic studies, research projects, and articles **shall be accessible or be made accessible from the time of the announcement of prize-winners.**

Applications shall be submitted in English or French.

Article 3 – Eligibility criteria

The organiser reserves the right to declare null and void any application that is improper, incomplete, illegible or contains false personal details.

Any text or image that is reproduced, even imperfectly, without the appropriate reference to the original, shall be viewed as a plagiarism. Plagiarism is strictly prohibited and shall result in exclusion from the competition if detected.

Article 4 – Procedure for taking part in the competition

Registration shall be open until midnight (CET) on **28 January 2026**. Applications received after this date shall not be considered.

Applications with all necessary information and documents shall be submitted to the following address: data.protection@coe.int by means of the application form available on the [website](#).

Applications must contain:

- the application form, duly filled;
- as a part of application form, the summary of the work of no more than 750 words, in English or French;
- if necessary, appended documents.

Article 5 – Nature of the prize and conduct of the competition

The project selected by the judging panel shall be awarded the Stefano Rodotà Prize for two different categories mentioned under Article 2. The judging panel reserves the right to award up to three special mentions if it considers that other projects deserve to be put forward.

The prize-winning project(s) shall be granted official recognition by the members of Committee of Convention 108 and benefit from a higher profile.

The participants shall be informed that their form has been duly received as soon as possible.

The prize-winner(s) shall be notified of the judging panel's decision in due time before the June plenary 2026.

The prize-winning project(s) shall be unveiled officially at the Committee's June plenary meeting. The winners, namely the persons receiving the Stefano Rodotà Prize, shall present their work at a dedicated Plenary session of the Committee of Convention 108 in 2026. Travel and accommodation costs shall, where necessary, be covered by the Organiser (according to the applicable rules).

The winner(s) shall be informed that they may be photographed, interviewed or filmed during this event.

The Organiser reserves the right to modify or cancel this competition and may not be held liable in such circumstances.

Article 6 - The judging panel

The judging panel shall be made up of the Chair of the Committee of Convention 108 and the members of its Bureau, except for members in a potential situation of conflict of interest, who shall stand down forthwith.

The organisation of the work and the deliberations of the judging panel shall be determined entirely independently by its members.

The deliberations made by the judging panel shall be always kept confidential.

The judging panel may seek the assistance of an expert if it considers that it does not possess the necessary skills to understand and assess a particular academic study, research project or article. Such experts shall perform their duties confidentially; they shall not be entitled to provide assistance if they have any interest of any nature that is liable to affect their judgment.

Article 7 – Criteria for selecting prize-winner(s)

The Secretariat of the Consultative Committee of Convention 108 will receive the applications and examine the eligibility criteria.

Selected projects shall be forwarded to the judging panel for assessment. The Chair might distribute the even number of the selected projects electronically to each member of the judging panel, who shall base their assessments on the following criteria:

- relevance of the subject and its preferable relation to the CoE legal instruments on data protection;
- originality and ground-breaking nature of the subject;
- contribution to improving the current understanding in the field;
- potential community impact;
- research methods;
- scientific qualities.

Article 8 – Choice of the prize-winner(s) by the judging panel

Based on the assessments, each member will share their evaluations upon which the judging panel will draw up a shortlist of up to 10 candidates.

The members shall select up to four prize-winners for two different categories mentioned under Article 2 by each drawing up an individual order of preference among the 10 shortlisted candidates, which shall then be submitted to a secret ballot based on a points system.

The method shall consist in giving 4 points to the paper the member considers to be the best, 3 points to the second, 2 points to the third and 1 to the fourth.

If a candidate withdraws, the judging panel may conduct another selection process based on the shortlisted candidatures that have not been chosen.

After the ballots have been counted, the projects shall be ranked by order of points. In the event of equal points, a simple majority vote shall be held to separate the projects. Where necessary, the Chair shall have the deciding vote.

The candidates with the most points shall be awarded the Stefano Rodotà Prize in two different categories mentioned under Article 2. The judging panel reserves the right to also award special mentions.

Article 9 – Data protection

The personal data of the candidates are collected by the Organiser for the purpose of processing their participation in the competition.

Candidates shall have a right of access, rectification and deletion for all data concerning them. These rights can be exercised by submitting a request electronically to dpo@coe.int.

Data shall be kept for one year.

Prize-winners accept that their names, first names and photos will be used and disseminated by the Organiser when publicising and promoting the Stefano Rodotà Prize. Any other personal data included on the form shall not be disclosed to the public.

Article 10 – Intellectual property and guarantees

The candidates must be the authors of all the content that they defend in the context of the competition. They declare holding all the rights allowing them to fully enter undertakings under this competition.

The authors of the prize-winning projects shall authorise the Organiser to disseminate the title of the project, and the summary of the main project provided by the candidate via any medium, particularly the Organiser's website or social media.

If applicable, in the case of prize-winning projects published or in the publication process before the announcement of prize, the authors shall guarantee that the summary of the projects can be freely accessible on the Internet and that the Organiser can disseminate them via any medium, particularly the Organiser's website or social media.