**Setting the limits of the E.U. Charter’s scope: an essential step towards an Integrated Area of Fundamental Rights**

Since the entry into force of the Lisbon treaty on December 1st 2009, the Charter of Fundamental rights of the European Union (CFR) has become the most recent declaration of human rights applicable within the Union and its member states. It thus completes a unique but still emerging European Area of Fundamental Rights guaranteed by national instruments, international treaties - as notably the ECHR - and the unwritten general principles of EU law. In order to avoid “human rights cacophony” within this area and to build up an “integrated area” of human rights protection, a number of safeguards have to be introduced. One - and not the least - of them is the precise determination of the scope of each instrument. This raises highly disputed questions with regard to the Charter’s field of application. According article 51 the provisions of the Charter are indeed addressed “to the Member States only when they are implementing Union law.” The meaning of this passage will be addressed in five movements: recalling the scope of EU fundamental rights as general principles of law (1), discussing different approaches to the wording of article 51 CFR (2), presenting the conclusive decisions of the Court of Justice (3), analysing the adverse reaction of the German Bundesverfassungsgericht (4) and suggesting further steps towards a truly integrated area of fundamental rights (5).