



Prof. dr. Miguel De Jonckheere, Dean of the faculty Law and Criminology, kindly invites you to the public defence to obtain the academic degree of

## DOCTOR OF LAWS

of Ms. Barbara da Rosa Lazarotto

which will take place on

Tuesday 5 May 2026 at 2:30 pm

In the Promotion room D.2.01

At the VUB main campus, Pleinlaan 2 - 1050 Etterbeek.

## REGULATORY COHERENCE OR MISALIGNMENT IN EU DATA LAW?

### Assessing the interactions between the GDPR, Data Governance Act, and the Data Act

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You are warmly invited at the reception afterwards. Please register [here](#) for the reception not later than 29 April 2026.

A map of the campus and directions to reach the VUB can be found [here](#). If you are coming by car, please register your numberplate [here](#) in advance for easy parking access. You can then take entrance 11 and park underneath building C.



## Abstract

The European Union's data governance legal framework is evolving. While the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) established a harmonized regime for the lawful processing of personal data, subsequent instruments adopted under the 2020 European Strategy for Data, notably the Data Governance Act (DGA) and the Data Act, promote broader data access and reuse within the internal market. Although these instruments defer to the GDPR in matters of personal data, their new datasharing mechanisms raise questions about the interaction between data protection and emerging data governance objectives.

This thesis examines how the personal data processing provisions introduced or referenced in the DGA and the Data Act relate to the legal bases set out in Articles 6 and, in particular cases, Article 9 GDPR. Through doctrinal analysis of EU legislation and Court of Justice case law, it explores how the GDPR's normative position shapes the interpretation of newer data-related instruments.

The analysis shows that the GDPR's influence is context-dependent. In some settings, it operates as a framework regulation situated alongside other legislative acts. In contexts involving intensive engagement with fundamental rights, however, it may exert enhanced interpretative weight. Rather than treating these approaches as competing models, the thesis demonstrates that the GDPR's normative authority operates along a spectrum shaped by regulatory context and the degree to which personal data processing implicates fundamental rights.

Using the notion of misalignment as a descriptive tool, the thesis identifies points of tension arising from the interaction between data protection rules and mechanisms designed to facilitate data access and reuse. These tensions do not necessarily indicate incompatibility but may generate interpretative uncertainty or require coordination in practice.

The thesis concludes that the DGA and the Data Act illustrate processes of regulatory adaptation within EU data law, while coherence with the GDPR remains essential where personal data processing is involved. By clarifying the conditions for consistent interpretation, the thesis contributes to scholarship on EU data law and to debates on balancing fundamental rights protection with data-driven innovation.