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EDITORIAL

Dear reader,

You are holding a special issue of the Digital Law Journal devoted to the challenges of procedural law in the era of digital transformation. The choice of this theme is far from accidental: today, it is precisely procedural law that has become the domain where the promises and risks of digital transformation are most visible and acute. Digital legal proceedings, remote hearings, electronic evidence, and the potential use of artificial intelligence in judicial proceedings are no longer questions of futurism, but realities requiring careful scholarly analysis and normative reflection.

Procedural law now stands at the center of an active academic and professional debate. With the rapid development of technology, procedural form increasingly becomes the arena where digital solutions collide with the principles of judicial proceedings: equality of arms, judicial independence, openness, and access to justice. The critical question arises: how can the guarantees of the rule of law be preserved when technology so rapidly transforms communication between parties, the nature of evidence, and even our understanding of the role of the judiciary?

The Editorial Board expresses its gratitude to the guest editor of this issue — Professor **Dmitry Tumanov**, Procedural Law Department at the Russian Foreign Trade Academy — whose initiative and thoughtful academic guidance brought together scholars from different countries and regions to engage in dialogue on the future of procedural law in the digital era. Thanks to his efforts, this issue combines both fundamental theoretical reflection and applied research, addressing a wide spectrum of issues raised by the digital transformation of justice.

The *Essays* section opens with Professor Tumanov's own contribution, which poses a direct question: can artificial intelligence ever replace a human judge? As the study demonstrates, any affirmative answer remains premature. Justice is inconceivable without the principles that make its realization possible, some of which are, at the current stage, incompatible with the use of artificial intelligence technologies. Continuing this discussion, **Konstantin Branovitskii** analyzes the risks posed by the expansion of LegalTech: the deprofessionalization of the legal profession, the erosion of responsibility, and the shifting of adjudicatory functions into the technological sphere.

The perspective from Kazakhstan is presented by **Zauresh Baimoldina**, who evaluates the possibilities and limitations of using IT in civil proceedings, emphasizing the need for systemic regulation and codification initiatives.

Alexander Neznamov contributes an essay on enforcement proceedings, examining possible models for the seizure of cryptocurrency. His analysis demonstrates how existing procedural frameworks can be adapted to accommodate new categories of digital assets. Equally thought-provoking is **Pavel Konstantinov**'s essay, which explores the transformation of the prosecutor's role in the

context of remote justice, where new forms of openness and accessibility inevitably alter the balance of procedural functions.

The *Articles* section opens with **Svetlana Kazikhanova**'s study of electronic evidence in the theory of judicial proof. She convincingly argues that the legal nature of such evidence does not justify its recognition as a separate category, but rather requires its evaluation under the already established principles of judicial proceedings. **Irina Lukyanova**'s article examines filing lawsuits under Russian procedural law in the era of electronic legal proceedings. Her analysis focuses on access to justice, the review of electronic claims, and the application of the functional equivalence approach in line with UNCITRAL's recommendations.

The issue concludes with a *Note* by **Dina Ionova** on ensuring access to information in corporate disputes through digital technologies. Her emphasis on the practical aspects of corporate procedure provides a fitting conclusion to the issue and highlights the breadth of procedural challenges posed by digital transformation.

Together, the contributions collected here cover the central domains of procedural law in the digital age: from the theory of evidence and the foundations of judicial form to the regulation of LegalTech and the treatment of cryptoassets. These works will undoubtedly be of interest to both scholars and practitioners engaged in shaping the legal foundations of digital justice.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I sincerely thank the authors, reviewers, and readers for their contribution to the development of our international scholarly project. I am convinced that the research presented in this issue will serve not only as a stimulus for further academic debate, but also as a valuable guide in addressing the challenges of the digital age.

Maxim Inozemtsev
Editor-in-Chief