

CBFL FUTURE OF BANKING & FINANCE SERIES

The Insolvency of Crypto-Exchanges: Risks and Challenges

17 September 2020, 4.00pm – 5.00pm

Webinar



Clockwise from top left: Dr Tycho de Graaf (Associate Professor, Leiden University's Institute of Private Law), Mr Ilya Kokorin (PhD Candidate, Leiden Law School), Prof Dr Matthias Haentjens (Professor of Law, Leiden Law School), Assoc Prof Sandra Booyesen (Deputy Director, CBFL) & Assoc Prof Dora Neo (Director, CBFL)

On 17 September 2020 the Centre for Banking & Finance Law (CBFL) hosted the webinar entitled 'The Insolvency of Crypto-Exchanges: Risks and Challenges' as part of its seminar series on 'The Future of Banking & Finance'. This webinar was presented by Professor Dr Matthias Haentjens, Dr Tycho de Graaf and Mr Ilya Kokorin from the University of Leiden, Netherlands. The live web-event, which was convened by CBFL Deputy-Director, Assoc Prof Sandra Booyesen, was attended by more than 70 participants from Singapore and overseas, and was hosted by CBFL Director, Assoc Prof Dora Neo.

This webinar examined the novel question of which rights crypto-investors can and should be able to assert in case a crypto-custodian falls insolvent. The presenters gave a brief description of cryptocurrencies and their underlying technology, followed by a demonstration of the results of a real-life experiment on the traceability of blockchain transactions. The presenters also explored the problems arising from the insolvency of crypto-custodians, based on three case studies: MtGox (Japan), BitGrail (Italy) and Cryptopia (New Zealand). The presenters then examined some issues of private international law and considered different ways to connect bitcoins (as an example of crypto-currencies) to a certain jurisdiction. In conclusion, the presenters asserted that the risk of crypto-exchange insolvency is real, and offered some valuable alternatives for the protection of crypto-investors both from private international law and private law perspectives.