

THE TELDERS INTERNATIONAL LAW MOOT COURT COMPETITION

I. INTRODUCTION

The first ever Telders Competition was organized in 1977 on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Telders International Law Students Debating Society. Student teams from the universities of Bonn, Cologne, Strasbourg, and Leiden participated. It was so successful that the competition has been held annually ever since. Nowadays it is considered to be the most prestigious and important international moot court competition in Europe. Teams from more than 40 universities compete in the national rounds, with up to 25 teams from as many European countries participating in the international rounds held in the Peace Palace in The Hague.

The main objective of the competition is to stimulate students to excel in international law. By taking part they are educated in legal practice and principles such as the rule of law, civil society, and fair play. It is a unique opportunity for many different reasons: a chance to show ability, enhance personal skills, and encourage teamwork and European integration, to name but a few.

In the Telders International Law Moot Court Competition student teams are presented with a fictitious case involving a dispute between two states. This dispute is put before the United Nations' most important legal organ, the International Court of Justice (ICJ). It is the teams' responsibility to present the case in a substantial manner, meaning both in writing and through pleadings before moot courts. Each European country may be represented by one university only. In the event of a national preselection round, only the university winning the national round may participate in the international round in The Hague.

The students' memorials and pleadings are judged by legal experts including judges from the International Court of Justice and the Iran–United States Claims Tribunal. Having such highly qualified professionals presiding over our competition guarantees that a high standard is maintained.

Dr Benjamin Marius Telders, after whom the competition is famously named, became a professor of international law at Leiden University – 'his' university – in 1931. He was respected for his sharp mind and had the honour to represent the Netherlands frequently, including before the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ). His approach to law was a practical one. Problems were meant to be solved, but not in contravention of important legal principles such as the rule of law and civil society. Professor Telders stood and fought for those principles even in the most difficult of times during the Second World War. Even four and a half years' imprisonment did not break him morally or mentally, but made him more determined. He continued to write about international law, using a small pencil and matchsticks. His fellow prisoners had great respect for his ability to put

moral guidance and leadership into practice. Professor Telders died in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in April 1945.

The 29th round of the competition will be held at the Peace Palace, The Hague, on 27–29 April 2006. The Telders Organizing Office is responsible for its organization, and as long as we have teams taking part and continue to organize this brilliant event we can keep Professor Telders's legacy alive.

For additional information please go to www.telders.org.