

## THE TELDERS INTERNATIONAL LAW MOOT COURT COMPETITION

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The Telders International Law Moot Court Competition passed the milestone of its thirtieth birthday last year, and is still going strong. Since its humble beginnings in 1977, when only four universities took part, the Competition has today become the most prestigious and important moot court competition in Europe. Annually, teams from over forty universities compete in the national rounds, with the successful teams going on to represent their countries in the international rounds traditionally held at the Peace Palace in The Hague.

Through the Competition students are educated in legal practice and such principles as the rule of law, civil society, and fair play. The Competition also stimulates teamwork and European integration. Students and academics consider participation to be important, a great honour, and a wonderful experience of a friendly and international competition never to be forgotten.

Each year student teams are presented with a case involving a fictitious dispute between two states. This dispute is put before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It is up to the student teams to defend the two states to the best of their ability. Each student team has to represent the states substantively both in writing and through pleadings before so-called moot courts. Per European country, only the university winning the national rounds may participate in the international rounds held in The Hague. The students' memorials and pleadings are judged by legal experts. In this respect, the active involvement of judges from the real International Court of Justice, the Iran–United States Claims Tribunal, professors of law, and ambassadors schooled in international law guarantee the high intellectual standards of the Competition and its prestige.

The aim of the Competition is to continue the legacy of Professor Dr Benjamin Marius Telders, who became a professor extraordinarius of international law at Leiden University in 1931 at the age of 28. In 1937 he became professor holding the chairs of international law and jurisprudence. Telders was intensely interested in why and how law operated. Being in many respects still undefined and interwoven with history and politics, international law was an excellent challenge. Professor Telders was respected for his sharp intellect and had the honour of frequently representing his country, including before the Permanent Court of International Justice. Even during the Second World War, Telders stood up for his belief in the rule of law and civil society, and as a result was sent to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where he died nine days before its liberation in April 1945.

Throughout its existence the Telders Competition has enjoyed the support of several prominent members of the ICJ and the international legal world.

The late Judge C.-A. Fleischhauer, Judge Stephen M. Schwebel (ICJ), and Judge Gilbert Guillaume (former president, ICJ) have been chairman of the supervisory board of the Competition. The current chairman is Judge Bengt Broms (Iran–US Claims Tribunal).

The 31st Competition will be held at the Peace Palace on 10–12 April 2008, at the Peace Palace, The Hague. The Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies (Campus The Hague/Leiden University) is responsible for its organization. For more information please visit our website, <http://www.grotiuscentre.org> (click on ‘Telders Moot Court’).