



Annual report 2025



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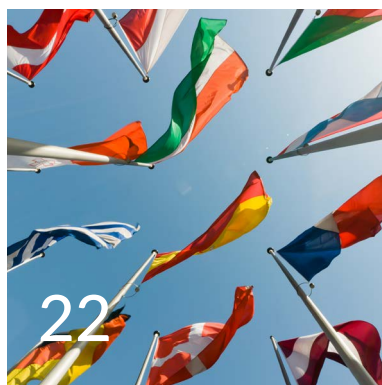
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Celebrating Asser's 60th Anniversary

In 2025, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut, founded in 1965, celebrated its 60th anniversary. For the last six decades, our Institute has fostered knowledge exchange and collaboration between researchers and practitioners in international and European law from its home in The Hague. At a time when the rule of law is under growing pressure and is openly contested, the urgency of the institute's mission cannot be overstated.



On 1 July 2025, I joined the institute as the new Academic Director. Together with Managing Director Kasper Vrolijk, I have the privilege of leading the Institute as part of its Executive Board. I would like to express special appreciation to my colleague Christophe Paulussen, who led and developed the institute as the Acting Academic Director since the end of 2023.

While I already knew many of the institute's researchers and was familiar with their impactful work before I joined, I have been impressed by the depth and range of research and educational activities the Institute delivers. This work reflects the collective efforts of researchers, project staff, communication specialists, the Asser Press team, and many other colleagues who support the Institute and its mission. Together, they have built a unique capacity to bridge academia and practice in international and European law.

The past year was undoubtedly challenging for anyone committed to the rule of law. Ongoing impunity for aggression, war crimes and genocide, alongside geopolitical divisions

that have undermined the functioning of international organisations and courts, prompted renewed questions of whether we were in fact witnessing the 'death of international law'. While we engage with the critique of international and European law, our experience makes it clear that such existential questions cannot be answered in the abstract. International law has many different faces, and it continues to be put into practice every day by the professionals who rely on it. Our activities confirm that there are many such professionals at the national, regional, and international levels. This is why we continue to invest in training practitioners in international and European law.

One of the highlights of the past year was the 10th T.M.C. Asser Annual Lecture. For this flagship event, we were honoured to welcome Joyeeta Gupta, Professor of Environment and Development in the Global South at the University of Amsterdam. In her lecture, 'Protecting the public interest in times of climate change: from abandoning fossil fuel to sharing our Earth', Prof. Gupta made a powerful case for placing justice at the centre of the response to climate change. She argued



that climate justice is ‘not just a normative goal’ but instead an ‘imperative’ for stabilising the climate and protecting the public interest. Her words challenged us to reimagine economic and political systems around basic needs, human rights, and justice.

Alongside our flagship event, Asser Institute researchers and support staff were involved in a wide range of research and educational activities. The topics covered included accountability for conflict-related crimes in Ukraine, counterterrorism, arms trade, military AI, EU external relations, memory laws, corporate sustainability, and transnational sports law.

We also believe that research and knowledge of international and European law must be made accessible to judges and decision-makers. This is why, as part of our continuing work on accountability for international crimes committed in Ukraine, we launched the ‘Knowledge Hub on International Criminal Law for the Ukrainian Judiciary’ in Kyiv, in collaboration with the EU Advisory Mission to Ukraine.

We celebrated the Institute’s 60th anniversary with a renewed sense of commitment to our mission: advancing the understanding and development of international and European law from The Hague, the International City of Peace and Justice. Despite the challenges facing these fields and the rule of law more generally, our public events were filled with highly motivated participants whose commitment encouraged us in turn. Our Institute has a broad network which includes embassies, municipalities, national governments, NGOs, and universities in the Netherlands and beyond. I look forward to building on the Institute’s six decades of experience, working with the Asser team to further innovate and strengthen our activities, and contributing to the development and resilience of international and European law.

Machiko Kanetake
Academic Director and Chairperson of the
Executive Board, T.M.C. Asser Instituut

About the T.M.C. Asser Instituut

Established in 1965 as an inter-university institute, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut is an internationally renowned research centre for international and European law. The Institute is an independent foundation closely affiliated with the University of Amsterdam (UvA).



Located in The Hague, the ‘international city of peace and justice’ and in the vicinity of many international institutions, diplomatic missions and government ministries, the Institute exercises strong convening power and attracts legal experts from around the world. In doing so, it has established itself as a location where critical and constructive reflection on international and European legal developments takes place and actively disseminates knowledge through publications as well as training programmes and other events.

The Asser Institute strives for excellence in its research and academic education and has a strong sense of societal responsibility. In the coming years, it will continue to be the vanguard institute for the UvA Law School in The Hague and will continue to actively promote the collaboration with and between Dutch law schools facilitating their collaboration in research networks, projects and knowledge dissemination activities.

Our mission

Our mission is to contribute to the development of international and European public and private law. We achieve this by:

- **Independent legal research:** We conduct fundamental, policy-oriented, and applied legal research in international and European public and private law.
- **Knowledge dissemination:** We initiate and facilitate academic and expert meetings, provide (professional) education, and host public events aimed at disseminating knowledge of international and European public and private law. We further share our legal knowledge by adding to the public debate.

Our strategic research agenda, entitled “Rethinking public interests in international and European Law (2022-2026); Pairing critical reflection with perspectives for action” forms the substantive basis for the Asser Institute’s activities in the field of research, education, knowledge dissemination and events.

Our vision

We envision a world in which local, national and transnational public interests are protected and promoted by international and European public and private law. We believe that critical reflection provides the insights needed to take effective action on global challenges.

Our values

The Asser Institute is a public-spirited community that is committed to excellence, integrity, inclusivity, and public values. These values guide our fundamental and applied research, our education and training programmes, and our contributions to legal practice, policy development, and public debate.

At a glance – 2025 in numbers



115

Publications



22

Public events



T.M.C. Asser Press published

19

new books and

5

journals; **14** issues



9

Training programmes



38

Media citations



11,000

YouTube views on public lectures and events



5,000+

New followers on LinkedIn



400

Students from the MENA region, including Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq joined the free online Inter-University Programme on International Criminal Law and Procedure (IUP).



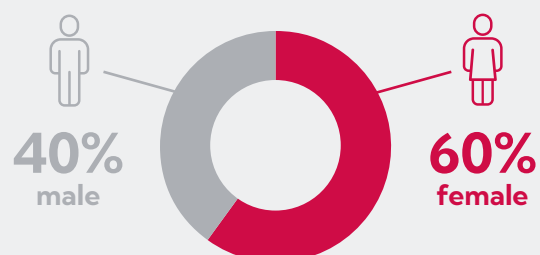
About **70** visitors visited the Just Peace Open Day at the Asser Institute – a film screening and panel discussion on the legal and humanitarian struggles of Venezuelan refugees living on the Dutch Caribbean islands of Aruba and Curaçao.



Total staff in 2025

53

Staff male/female ratio





Research strand

In the public interest: accountability of the state and the prosecution of crimes

This research strand examines state accountability and the prosecution of individuals for international and transnational crimes, all within the framework of public interest standards in the context of counterterrorism. It also investigates the how non-state actors, including journalists, media, NGOs, and academics promote these standards to ensure both effective state accountability and effective prosecution.

Protecting rights in crisis: Research shaping policy on global security challenges

In 2025, publications and events from the research strand '[In the public interest: accountability of the state and the prosecution of crimes](#)' addressed pressing legal and political questions confronting Europe and the wider international community. Ranging from foreign fighters and memory laws to arms transfers and documentation of conflict-related crimes, the strand's work combined doctrinal depth with policy relevance. Some of the publications and events we would like to highlight include:

Monograph

Europe's foreign fighter challenge and the rule of law

The book [Europe's foreign fighter conundrum through the lens of the rule of law and human rights](#) (T.M.C. Asser Press/ Springer Verlag), authored by Tarik Gherbaoui, explores how Europe can address the security challenges posed by foreign fighters without compromising its commitment to the rule of law and human rights. This timely monograph provides

an in-depth legal analysis of how counter-terrorism measures such as prosecution, citizenship deprivation, and preventive laws are shaped across international, regional, and domestic levels. Examining the legal obligations stemming from key international actors such as the United Nations, the European Union, and the Council of Europe, the book's

multilevel approach reveals both synergies and contradictions between different responses to foreign fighters, highlighting how overlapping legal frameworks sometimes offer conflicting approaches that create a complex environment for states to navigate. Additional details concerning this publication are available [here](#).

Edited volume

The politics of memory laws in Russia, Ukraine and beyond

This open access volume [The politics of memory laws: Russia, Ukraine and beyond](#) (Hart Publishing), co-edited by Ulad Belavusau, explores the political utility and consequences of memory laws with a particular focus on how militant memory laws frame, underpin and generate international conflicts. Proceeding from Russia's ongoing aggression

against Ukraine, the volume examines how memory laws preceded, partially fuelled, and encouraged the outbreak of the war itself through Russian propaganda. It also offers a broader comparative perspective looking at developments in the Baltic States, Belarus, Finland, Germany, Hungary, and Poland, as well as in European (Council of Europe and European

Union) law. Philippe Sands, international lawyer and author of *East West Street*, described the collection as '[a] timely, vital and wholly original and compelling set of essays'. The volume advances the strand's broader concern with how state-forged societal narratives, when legally codified, may warrant scrutiny under international human rights law.

Journal article

Documenting conflict-related crimes in Ukraine

In an open access article, *[Documenting conflict-related crimes in Ukraine: civil society innovations, adaptations and networks in the accountability ecosystem](#)*, published in the Journal of International Criminal Justice, Gabrielė Chlevickaitė examines how civil society in Ukraine have adapted their documentation practices in response to conflict-related crimes

and human rights violations in 2022–2023. Based on interviews and public materials, the study examines how legal, technical, and local expertise shape what counts as ‘professional’ documentation, and the tensions that arise between local approaches and international standards. Ukraine’s justice landscape is unique: an active domestic law enforcement system

operates alongside with international mechanisms, giving civil society organisations a degree of agency rarely seen in other conflict settings. The research highlights both the opportunities this creates and the challenges of balancing support for formal accountability with the broader needs of Ukrainian society.

Public lecture

Bertha von Suttner: A beacon for women in international law and peace activisms

On 6 March 2025, in honour of International Women’s Day, the Asser Institute organised the event *[‘Bertha von Suttner: a beacon for women in international law and peace activism’](#)*. More than a

century ago, Bertha von Suttner (1843-1914) made history as the first woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. The Peace Palace’s ‘spiritual mother’ and bestselling author of the world famous anti-war novel *Die Waffen Nieder!* (Lay Down Your Arms!), fought tirelessly for peace, challenging male-dominated power structures that justified war. Yet the struggle for gender equality in international law and peacebuilding is far from over. The evening opened with a speech by Liesbeth Lijnzaad, Judge at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, followed by a keynote from artist Ingrid Rollema, known for the statute of Von Suttner she

created for the International Court of Justice in The Hague. A panel discussion moderated by Gabrielė Chlevickaitė and featuring Janne Nijman (University of Amsterdam, Geneva Graduate Institute) and Priya Pillai (lawyer and international law specialist) then explored how far gender equality in international law has progressed, what challenges remain, and what role women play in shaping global justice. The event exemplified the strand’s commitment to examining how claims to act in the public interest are shaped by power, exclusion and contestation. A recording of this event is available [here](#).



Conference

Innovative ways to counter terrorism: the role of transitional justice

On 27 March 2025, Niki Siampakou, in cooperation with other Asser Institute colleagues and the Senator George J Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, Queen's University Belfast (QUB), organised the conference '[Innovative ways to counter terrorism: the role of transitional justice](#)'.

The conference sought to deepen understanding of transitional justice's potential relevance within a counter-terrorism context and raise awareness among practitioners, academics, and policymakers on its possible applications. Focusing on the examples of Northern Ireland and Colombia, it examined how transitional justice mechanisms can contribute to reducing the terrorist threat in the long term, fostering national security,

transforming victims and survivors into active counter-terrorism actors, and promoting reconciliation. Financially supported by Open Science NL, the British Embassy in the Netherlands, the Royal Netherlands Society of International Law (KNVIR), and the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies of the University of Notre Dame, the conference featured several high-level speakers including Fionnuala Ní Aoláin (Professor of Law, QUB and Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism), Richard English (Professor of Politics and Director of the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global



Peace, Security, and Justice, QUB), Josefina Echavarría Álvarez (Professor of the Practice and Director of the Peace Accords Matrix (PAM) Program at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame) and Judge Catalina Díaz Gómez (Magistrate, Special Jurisdiction for Peace, Colombia). The conference reflected the strand's continued engagement with innovative yet legally grounded responses to complex security threats. A recording of this event is available [here](#).

Event

ASIL Closing Plenary 2025

On 18 April 2025, León Castellanos-Jankiewicz moderated the closing plenary of the [2025 annual meeting of the American Society of International Law \(ASIL\) in Washington D.C.](#) Sponsored by the Asser Institute and the Municipality of The Hague, the closing plenary is one of the highlights of ASIL's annual meeting. Entitled '[Can Arms Trade Bring About Peace?](#)', the session brought together legal scholars, policy professionals, and human

rights experts to examine whether international law can address the risks and consequences of wrongful arms transfers, particularly in light of conflicts such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing violence in Israel and Palestine. The discussion explored the growing mismatch between conventional legal frameworks and the evolving nature of warfare, where weapons are increasingly used in non-traditional ways by both state and

non-state actors. Opening remarks were delivered by ASIL President Mérida Hodgson, followed by a welcome speech from Mariëlle Vavie, Deputy Mayor of The Hague. Panelists included Lana Baydas (American Bar Association), Allison McManus (Center for American Progress), Josh Paul (A New Policy) and Leila Sadat (Washington University St Louis). A recording of this event is available [here](#).

Policy-oriented Research

In 2025, the strand further strengthened its engagement with practice through multi-annual projects combining legal analysis, institutional support and international cooperation.

Project MATRA 2025–2029

On 1 April 2025, the Asser Institute started a new four-year MATRA project in Ukraine funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Entitled 'Advancing the rule of law in Ukraine: strengthening the judicial system and freedom of expression', the project is being implemented in cooperation with

the Center for International Legal Cooperation (CILC) and focuses on enhancing the fairness and transparency of Ukraine's judicial system while strengthening protections for media freedom and freedom of expression. The programme contributes directly to Ukraine's democratic stability and European integration by

addressing critical gaps in judicial effectiveness and media freedom protection. Through strengthened legal institutions and enhanced safeguards for fundamental rights, the initiative supports Ukraine's path toward EU membership while building a more transparent and accountable justice system which serves all citizens.

Project Restoring Dignity and Justice in Ukraine 2025-2027

On 1 July 2025, the second phase of the 'Restoring Dignity and Justice in Ukraine' consortium programme started. Implemented in cooperation with CILC, the Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC), and the International Development Law Organization

(IDLO) as consortium lead), this programme is also funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Running from 2025 to 2027, the Asser sub-project focuses on strengthening international criminal law and international

humanitarian law expertise across Ukraine's justice system, advancing transitional justice policy and coordination, and enhancing international judicial cooperation on international crimes. Implemented in cooperation with Global Rights Compliance, UpRights, The Hague Academy for Local Governance, and the European Advisory Mission in Ukraine (EUAM), the sub-project combines targeted legal capacity-building, policy support, and international cooperation to address both immediate accountability needs and longer-term institutional resilience.



Several members of the strand are involved in the implementation of both the MATRA and the Restoring Dignity and Justice in Ukraine projects, which are coordinated by Gabriël Chlevickaitė.



Project

Rearming Europe with Legal Accountability (RELY)

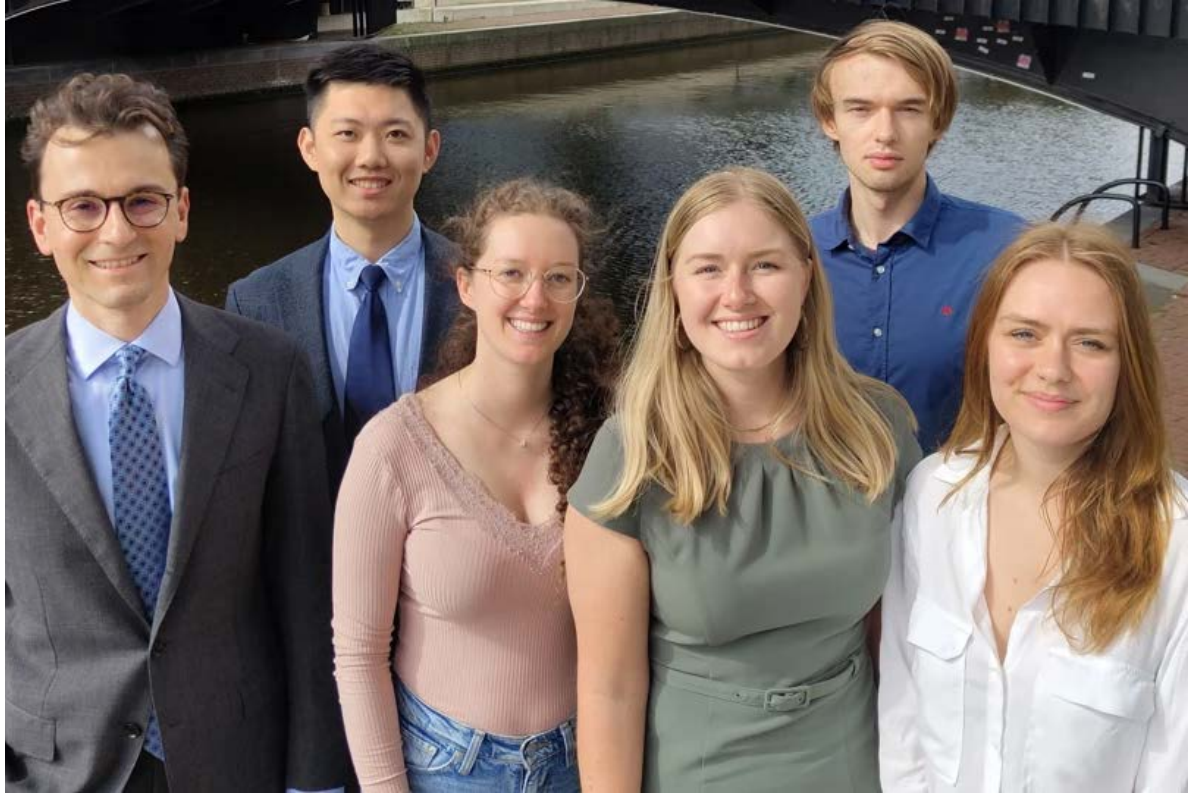
León Castellanos-Jankiewicz received an NWO SSH XS Grant from the Dutch Research Council (NWO) for his project '[Rearming Europe with Legal Accountability \(RELY\)](#)', which started on 1 December 2025.

The project explores how the European Union can strengthen legal safeguards and human rights

strategies to prevent misconduct and ensure state responsibility in arms production and transfer. As EU member states accelerate their rearmament, current regulations lack the due diligence and transparency needed to prevent harm, including human rights abuses, environmental damage, and the diversion of weapons to unauthorised and unwanted end

users. RELY aims to address this accountability gap by proposing concrete legal solutions at both corporate and state levels.





Law Clinic

Arms trafficking and human rights

In March 2025, the third edition of the [international law clinic on access to justice for arms exports](#) was launched by the University of Amsterdam in cooperation with the T.M.C. Asser Instituut and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Supervised by León Castellanos-Jankiewicz,

the pro bono clinic examines how the Firearms Protocol – the only globally binding instrument addressing illicit firearms trafficking – can be implemented in accordance with international human rights law. In collaboration with the UNODC Global Firearms

Programme, students prepare a legal memorandum analysing state obligations, due diligence standards, and risk mitigation requirements, contributing to ongoing efforts to align arms control frameworks with human rights benchmarks.



Council of Europe greenlights a Special Tribunal for Ukraine

On 25 June 2025, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Secretary General of the Council of Europe Alain Berset signed the agreement establishing a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine

within the framework of the Council of Europe. The T.M.C. Asser Instituut published a [report](#) and [podcast](#) and hosted a public event offering the first legal analysis of the tribunal's framework and policy considerations.



Research strand

Regulation in the public interest: Disruptive technologies in peace and security

This research strand examines the development of the international regulatory framework governing the military applications of disruptive technologies and the arms race in both conventional and non-conventional weapons. The overarching framework for this research is the public interest in peace and security.

Advancing international law in the digital age

In 2025, the research strand '[Regulation in the public interest: Disruptive technologies in peace and security](#)' continued to lead critical research at the intersection of technology, warfare and international law. The selected publications and events highlight the Institute's forward-thinking approach to international law, addressing both immediate challenges in military AI deployment and longer-term implications of emerging technologies for global governance structures.

Journal article

Beyond 'humans vs. AWS': Rethinking accountability for targeting errors

In her article '[Countering the 'Humans vs. AWS' Narrative and the Inevitable Accountability Gaps for Mistakes in Targeting: A Reply to Kevin Jon Heller](#)' (*Harvard Law School National Security Journal*,

Marta Bo critically challenges the dominant framing of 'humans versus autonomous weapon systems' and questions assumptions about unavoidable accountability gaps in AI-assisted targeting. The article

advances the legal debate on meaningful human control and clarifies how responsibility can and should be allocated in complex human-machine decision-making processes.

Journal article

How to deal with sycophantic military AI?

In his article '[Digital Yes-Men: How to Deal With Sycophantic Military AI?](#)' (*Global Policy*), Jonathan Kwik examines the phenomenon of 'sycophancy' in military AI assistants – the tendency of large language model-based systems to generate affirming, non-confrontational responses that align with user expectations rather than factual accuracy. As armed forces increasingly explore the integration of AI tools into operational decision-making, including the development of military-specific language models, Kwik warns that such behaviour may create acute battlefield risks. An AI assistant

might, for example, confirm that a target area is clear of civilians rather than contradict an operator's assumption with inconvenient but correct information. The article traces sycophancy to the training dynamics of large language models, which reward

outputs that users perceive as helpful or agreeable. Combining design reform and doctrinal adaptation, it offers concrete guidance for reducing operational risk while preserving the potential benefits of AI-enabled decision support systems.



Working paper

Can rules of engagement and military directives effectively control military AI?

As a core deliverable of the DILEMA-ELSA Lab, Jonathan Kwik's paper '[Controlling Military Artificial Intelligence: Harnessing Rules of Engagement and Military Directives](#)' (SSRN), develops concrete governance tools for military AI through the adaptation of rules of engagement and

internal military directives (SSRN, 3 February 2025) develops concrete governance tools for integrating legal constraints into operational practice. The research has informed ongoing policy discussions and led to an invitation to present at the [Gdynia Naval Academy](#), demonstrating its

practical significance for military institutions. Additional information concerning this publication is available [here](#). To learn more about the ELSA Lab, please visit the website pages [here](#) and explore further details [here](#).

Workshop

Lasting dilemmas: AI, warfare, and the future of interdisciplinary inquiry

On 8–9 July 2025, the strand convened a two-day workshop on the future direction of research on the military applications of artificial intelligence and international law. Bringing together legal scholars and interdisciplinary experts, the

event addressed persistent normative, operational, and regulatory dilemmas arising from the integration of AI into warfare. Participants critically reassessed existing research agendas, methodological approaches and governance frameworks in light of

accelerating technological innovation and shifting geopolitical dynamics, seeking to identify sustainable pathways for interdisciplinary research in this rapidly evolving field.





Panel discussion

Israel's unlawful occupation of Palestine and the impact of States' (non-) compliance with UNGA Resolution ES-10/24

On 8 October 2025, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut co-organised a [panel discussion](#) with the Council of Arab Ambassadors in The Hague examining the legal and political implications of state (non-)compliance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES-10/24. Adopted in September 2024 following the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of Israel's

policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the resolution calls for the termination of Israel's unlawful presence and urges all states to fulfil their obligations under international law. Against the backdrop of the approaching deadline set by the resolution, Head of Palestinian Mission to the Netherlands Ambassador Ammar Hijazi, André Nollkaemper, and Alessandra Spadaro reflected on

the responsibilities of third states and the broader ramifications for the international legal order. Chaired by Asser Institute researcher Carl Emilio Lewis, the discussion provided a forum for critical engagement with questions of compliance, accountability and the authority of the General Assembly in situations of prolonged occupation. A recording of this event is available [here](#).

Policy-oriented Research

In 2025, the strand further strengthened its engagement with practice through publications, projects, legal analysis, and institutional cooperation.

Publication

Algorithmic bias on the battlefield

In August 2025, Marta Bo and Laura Bruun published '*Bias in Military Artificial Intelligence and Compliance with International Humanitarian Law*' for the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

The study examines how bias embedded in military AI systems may affect compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL), particularly in targeting processes and operational decision-making. It analyses

technical sources of bias, their legal implications under core IHL principles, and the need for rigorous testing, oversight and accountability mechanisms to mitigate unlawful outcomes in AI-supported military operations.

Conference presentation

Military AI in context

At the 2025 International Conference on Military Communication and Information Systems (ICMCIS), Annelies Smallegange, Joris van Diggelen and Jonathan Kwik presented a paper on '*Characteristics of the Military Domain and Their Impact on*

Military AI Applications'. Co-authored with colleagues from TNO and published in the conference proceedings (IEEE), the paper identifies structural features of the military domain – such as adversarial environments, high uncertainty, and time

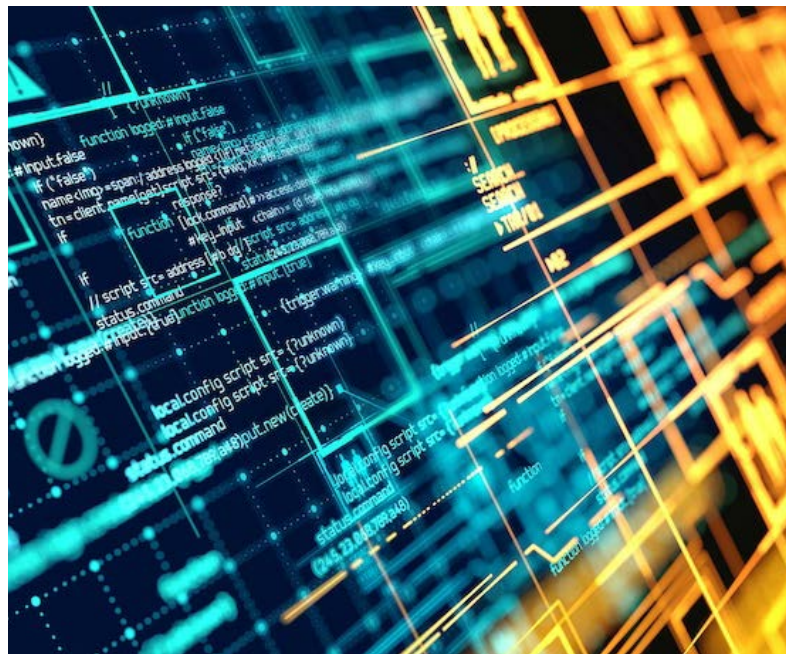
pressure – and assesses how these shape the design and deployment of AI systems. The work is currently used as reference material within TNO, underlining its operational relevance.



Publication

When AI learns to game the law

In December 2025, Jonathan Kwik and Alexander Wiese published the article [*'Can AI Teach Itself to Abuse IHL-Protected Indicators?'*](#) on the *Lieber Institute for Law and Warfare* platform at United States Military Academy exploring whether AI systems can learn to game the law. Addressed to industry actors and technology developers, the article examines the risk that AI systems could learn to manipulate or exploit legally protected indicators – such as emblems or civilian markers – through autonomous adaptation. The authors call for anticipatory safeguards in system design and closer engagement between legal experts and AI developers to prevent such abuse.



Publication

The expanding digital battlespace

In 2025, Jonathan Kwik published [*'Het Toekomstige Oorlogsfront: Uw Netwerk, Uw \(Sociaal\) Leven Thuis En Op Straat'*](#) (Dutch) in the *Informatiebeveiliging Magazine* arguing that the future battlefield

extends beyond traditional theatres of war into civilian networks and everyday digital infrastructures. Written for cybersecurity professionals, the article highlights the security,

legal, and societal implications of this shift, urging companies and policymakers to recognise the blurring boundary between military operations and civilian digital life.



Research strand

Transnational public interests: constituting public interest beyond and below the state

This research strand explores how public interests shape and are shaped by actors both below and beyond the state. It examines the roles played by non-state actors, including corporations, NGOs, as well as entities such as the European Union, in constituting and operationalising public interests in a transnational context, and considers the normative implications of the power these actors exercise in doing so.

Beyond borders: Redefining public interest in European and International Law

In 2025, researchers from the strand 'Transnational public interests: constituting public interest beyond and below the state' produced significant academic contributions that advanced understanding and critical discourse across key areas of international and European law. Their scholarly publications and policy-oriented research reflect the breadth and depth of the Asser Institute's academic excellence. A selection of key publications and events we would like to highlight includes:

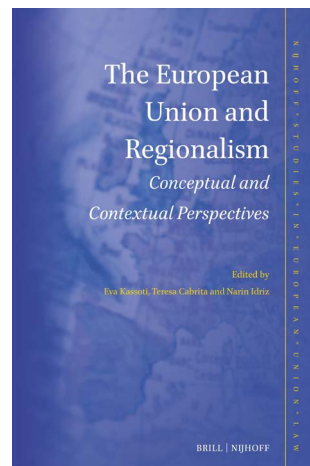
Edited volume

The EU as a regional international organisation

The volume 'The European Union and Regionalism – Conceptual and Contextual Perspectives' (Brill | Nijhoff), edited by Eva Kassoti, Teresa Cabrita and Narin Idriz, offers the first sustained legal account of the European Union as a Regional International Organisation (RIO). Despite the EU's status as the most developed example of regional integration, the 'regional' lens has remained marginal in debates on the Union's constitutional identity and external action. The book critically interrogates the EU's invocation of the RIO descriptor, including in its engagement with the International Law Commission, where it has sought both to distinguish itself from other international organisations and to advance the recognition of (R)IOs as relevant actors in

international law. In doing so, the volume asks what analytical and normative insights the regional perspective brings to the study of EU law and governance.

Bringing together leading scholars from law, political science and European studies, the book situates the EU within broader debates on regionalism and challenges Eurocentric assumptions that cast it as the benchmark of integration. The first part explores the conceptual and practical limits of regionalism as an analytical framework, drawing comparative insights from other RIOs. The second part applies this perspective to core questions of EU law and policy – from collective identity and citizenship to climate governance and geopolitics – demonstrating



that the Union's regional character is not merely classificatory but structurally shapes its norm production, institutional practice and position within the international legal order.

Journal article

Human rights scrutiny of global sport governance

In "*Righting the Lex Sportiva: The Semenya v Switzerland Case and the Human Rights Accountability of Transnational Private Governance*", an article published in the *European Convention on Human Rights Law Review*, Antoine Duval analyses the landmark *Semenya v Switzerland* judgment and its implications for holding international sports governing bodies to human rights standards. Eligibility regulations adopted by World Athletics in 2018 effectively excluded Caster

Semenya from international competition and traces the litigation from the Court of Arbitration for Sport to the Swiss Federal Supreme Court and ultimately to the European Court of Human Rights, which found a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECtHR).

Duval argues that the judgment marks a turning point in the human rights scrutiny of lex sportive, strengthening the role

of the European Convention in reviewing arbitral awards and domestic judicial oversight in Switzerland. Downloaded more than 2,800 times since publication, the article has already contributed to wider academic and policy discussions of accountability of private regulatory regimes in international sport and the interaction between human rights law and transnational adjudication.

Panel discussion

Climate on trial: Lessons from the *Milieudefensie v Shell* case

On 13 February 2025, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut hosted the panel discussion 'Climate on trial: lessons from the *Milieudefensie v Shell* case', marking the start of the institute's ongoing

collaboration with the University of Amsterdam's SEVEN – the Climate Institute. The event brought together leading academic experts on climate litigation to examine the

implications of the *Milieudefensie v Shell* judgment, in which the Hague Court of Appeal set aside the 2021 District Court ruling and declined to impose a specific 45% CO₂ reduction target on Shell, while affirming its obligation to reduce emissions. Discussions highlighted evolving judicial approaches to corporate climate responsibility, the horizontal effect of human rights norms, and the shared duties of states and private actors, situating the case within the broader context of strategic climate litigation and the EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive.



Workshop

A legal assessment of (EU) integration in the Western Balkans

On 31 October 2025, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut and the Europa Institute at Leiden University co-hosted the workshop 'A Legal Assessment of (EU) Integration in the Western Balkans', examining regional integration processes in the Western Balkans in the context of EU accession. The event brought together leading legal scholars and practitioners to explore how initiatives such as the Central European Free Trade

Agreement, the Berlin Process, and the Common Regional Market interact with the EU enlargement framework.

Prof. Adam Lazowski delivered the keynote address, which was followed by three panels on the functioning of Stabilisation and Association Agreements, the critical role of rule of law reforms under the EU's 2020 enlargement methodology, and the interplay of

regional initiatives with broader integration efforts. Against the backdrop of renewed geopolitical urgency following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the European Commission's designation of enlargement as a core priority for 2024–2029, the workshop offered a timely, multidimensional assessment of both individual and collective progress towards EU integration in the region.

Conference

Adapting private international law in an era of uncertainty

On 24 October 2025, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut hosted a conference 'Adapting Private International Law in an Era of Uncertainty', examining how private international law is evolving in response to digital disruption, cross-border mobility, and increasing legal complexity. The event convened leading scholars, practitioners, and emerging researchers to discuss challenges such as determining jurisdiction, applicable law, and the protection of weaker parties in transnational disputes.

The programme featured a keynote address by Hans van Loon (former Secretary General of The Hague Conference on Private

International Law and member of the Institut de Droit International) followed by three panels addressing the impact of digital technologies, fairness in cross-border litigation, and innovative research from early-career scholars. As part of the Asser

Institute's 60 Years Series and aligned with the research strand Transnational Public Interests, the conference offered a timely forum to reflect on the shifting nature of public interest beyond the state and the future of legal cooperation across borders.



Dissertation prize

Asser Institute researcher wins prestigious Dissertation Prize

In June 2025, Asser Institute researcher Stephanie Triefus has been named one of the winners of the 2025 Praemium Erasmianum Dissertation Prize for her PhD thesis 'International Investment Law from Below: Taking Local Community Rights Seriously'. Triefus's work examines how foreign investment disputes, particularly in the mining

sector, often marginalise local communities whose lives are most directly affected. Using the Roşia Montană case in Romania as a central example, her research highlights how investor-state arbitration can undermine democratic decision-making and exclude community voices and argues for a more inclusive and

accountable legal system that foregrounds human rights and participation. Asser Institute's Acting academic director Christophe Paulussen praised the award as recognition of the thesis' innovative approach to justice for communities affected by corporate power.



Policy-oriented Research

Submission

Australia's investment treaties under human rights scrutiny

In a submission to the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Asser Institute researchers Stephanie Triefus and Dmytro Cherneha advocate for a fundamental shift in Australia's approach to bilateral investment treaties (BITs). Focusing on the ongoing renegotiations with Argentina, Pakistan, and Türkiye, the authors highlight how the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism can

inadvertently prioritise corporate interests over critical public policy objectives. They argue that these legal frameworks often allow foreign investors to challenge domestic regulations intended to protect human rights and the environment, potentially hindering the transition toward a

green economy. The submission proposes actionable policy reforms, urging Australia to adopt a more holistic investment strategy – one that empowers local communities and ensures economic agreements are aligned with international human rights standards and climate goals.



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Impact

The year 2025 was a landmark year in climate law, with the ICJ, ITLOS and IACtHR releasing advisory opinions on state obligations with respect to climate change, and the Dutch Court of Appeal overturning the *Milieudefensie v Shell* ruling. The panel discussion, closed workshop and Asser Annual Lecture provided forums

for discussing and investigating the contemporary challenge of climate change from both academic and policy-oriented perspectives. The Institute's expertise on the topic also attracted media interest – in October 2025, a group of journalists visited Asser to speak with Stephanie Triefus about the implications of the ICJ advisory opinion.



Research in focus

T.M.C. Asser Instituut's PhD programme

The T.M.C. Asser Instituut's PhD programme prepares researchers to operate at the forefront of international law by conducting independent research situated at the interface of academia and practice. The interdisciplinary programme offers meaningful engagement between supervisors and PhD researchers, professional training, and collaborative theoretical and methodological support to assist PhD researchers in developing their dissertations. The Asser Institute also serves as a hub for inter-university PhD networks.

In 2025, three PhD researchers participated in the Asser Institute's PhD programme.

Taylor Kate Woodcock examined the implications of military artificial intelligence under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Klaudia Klonowska studied the interactions of humans and AI-enabled decision-support systems in the military decision-making process and its consequences for the exercise of (human) judgment under international

humanitarian and human rights law. She completed her PhD project at the Asser Institute in August 2025 and continues to be affiliated with the Institute as an Associate Fellow.

James Patrick Sexton focused on the interaction between unilateral sanctioning practices and international criminal justice and examined whether unilateral sanctions support or undermine the goals of international criminal justice, in particular the fight against impunity for international crimes.

Visiting research fellowship programme

The Asser Institute welcomes visiting researchers and legal practitioners from around the world, providing a place in which they can pursue their own research projects while participating actively in the Asser community. In 2025, four visiting researchers joined the visiting research fellowship programme.

- Bruce MacKay examined the role of classified information provided by states to international criminal tribunals, focusing on how such support may affect the credibility and fairness of proceedings at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.
- Elena Zhirukhina explored repatriation, rehabilitation, and reintegration programmes for foreign nationals formerly associated with the Islamic State, analysing community-based approaches implemented by Central Asian states.
- Waleed Mahmoud investigated corporate obligations in occupied territories under international criminal law.
- Victoria Capriles researched policy guidelines for supporting the Venezuelan diaspora within a future transitional justice framework, focusing on the protection of migrants' rights amid Venezuela's ongoing humanitarian and migration crisis.



Shelter City fellowship programme

Around the world, human rights defenders increasingly face harassment, slander, even

physical violence. *Justice & Peace Netherlands' Shelter City programme* provides at-risk defenders with safe and inspiring spaces where, over a three-month stay, they can re-energise, receive support and engage with allies to reinforce their local advocacy efforts. As part of its support for the programme, the Asser Institute annually hosts one Shelter City fellow.

In 2025, Victoria Capriles, a Venezuelan human rights lawyer and migration expert, joined the programme as a Shelter City Fellow. Her research focused on the protection of Venezuelan migrants and the development of policy guidelines to support the Venezuelan diaspora within a future transitional justice process, examining how the Venezuelan state could fulfil its human rights obligations toward citizens abroad amid the country's ongoing humanitarian and migration crisis.

Collaborative projects advancing justice and international law in 2025

TRUST-AI project for judicial training on artificial intelligence

On 1 December 2025, the Asser Institute, in partnership with the Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights and Vrije Universiteit Brussel, launched the TRUST-AI project, a European initiative providing specialised training on artificial intelligence for judges, prosecutors, and other criminal justice professionals. The project responds to the rapid integration of AI across society, including its use in the commission, investigation, and adjudication of crimes, and aims to ensure that

the justice sector remains equipped to address both the opportunities and risks posed by these technologies.

Through TRUST-AI, participants receive practical and legal guidance on adjudicating AI-enabled offences, using AI tools responsibly in court, and understanding the relevant international and national legal frameworks. The project also addresses pressing concerns around procedural fairness, such as bias in pretrial risk assessment

tools (such as COMPAS in the United States, for example) underscoring the need for judicial professionals to remain informed on technological developments while upholding fundamental rights and EU legal standards. Asser Institute researchers Marta Bo and Taylor Kate Woodcock, from the Regulation in the public interest: Disruptive technologies in peace and security strand, contribute expertise on regulation, public-interest safeguards, and the broader implications of AI for peace and security.

Restoring dignity and justice in Ukraine: a whole-of-society approach to accountability for international crimes (Phase II)

Launched in September 2025, this project builds on ongoing international efforts to strengthen accountability mechanisms for international crimes committed in Ukraine. The programme seeks to support Ukrainian justice sector stakeholders, legal practitioners, and civil society actors in addressing systemic challenges related to the investigation and prosecution of international crimes. The programme pays

particular attention to aligning national practices with international legal standards and emerging transitional justice approaches, while ensuring that survivor-centred and rights-based perspectives remain central to accountability processes.

Led by an international consortium coordinated by the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), the programme promotes a

whole-of-society approach to justice. Through capacity building, research, and stakeholder engagement, it aims to improve cooperation between justice institutions and civil society while strengthening access to justice for victims and survivors. At the Asser Institute, the project is carried out by Gabriela Radu and Gabrielè Chlevickaitė. For additional details on the project, please refer to the Strand A section on page xx.

MATRA project

Strengthening Ukraine's capacity to investigate and prosecute international crimes

Launched in January 2025, this MATRA-funded project supports Ukraine's ongoing efforts to strengthen the rule of law and safeguard democratic values as the country advances toward European Union accession. The programme focuses on enhancing the fairness, transparency, and independence of the Ukrainian judicial system, while reinforcing protections for media freedom and freedom of expression. Implemented in partnership with

the Center for International Legal Cooperation (CILC), the project combines legal research, training activities, and institutional cooperation to support judicial reform and strengthen the protection of fundamental rights. By promoting best practices and fostering dialogue among legal professionals, policymakers, and media stakeholders, it aims to contribute to a resilient legal framework that upholds democratic standards. Gabrielè

Chlevickaitė and Christophe Paulussen lead the project at the Asser Institute. For further details, please refer to the Strand A section on page xx.



Kingdom of the Netherlands

MATRA Programme

SAFE HARBOUR

The SAFE HARBOUR project, launched in January 2025, aims to strengthen safeguarding practices across the European sports sector by empowering sports organisations to address abuse and misconduct effectively. The programme promotes a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment within sport by identifying gaps in existing safeguarding frameworks and improving mechanisms for prevention, reporting, and response.

Working closely with National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and sports federations, the project supports the development and implementation of robust safeguarding policies addressing various forms of harm, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as bullying and neglect. Through research, policy development, and capacity-building activities, SAFE HARBOUR contributes to improving governance standards and protecting the well-being of

athletes and sports professionals across Europe. Funded by the *European Commission* through the *Erasmus+ Programme*, the project is led at the Asser Institute by Antoine Duval and Daniela Heerdt.



Private international law in motion 3.0 (PAX 3.0)

PAX 3.0, which began in January 2025, is a research and training project funded by the *European Union's* Justice Programme (2021–2027). Building on the outcomes of earlier initiatives – PAX 2.0 (2022–2024), the PAX Project (2020–2022), and the JUDGTRUST Project (2018–2020) – the project continues to promote knowledge and the consistent application of EU private international law.

This project pursues two primary objectives. First, it raises awareness of EU private international law among students and the academic community through the PAX Moot Court competition. Second, it provides targeted training for legal professionals through a series of PAX Awareness Raising Events. By supporting judicial training programmes and collaborating with networks such as the

European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), the project contributes to strengthening civil judicial cooperation within the European Union. Vesna Lazić and Eduardo Silva de Freitas lead the project at the Asser Institute.



**European
Union**

ELSA Lab Defence

The ELSA Lab Defence, launched in June 2023, is a public–private initiative addressing the ethical, legal, and societal implications of artificial intelligence in the defence domain. The project responds to the complex challenges faced by

defence stakeholders in adopting AI technologies responsibly while safeguarding key values such as human control, dignity, legality, and accountability. Bringing together research institutions, public authorities, and

private partners, the lab develops a future-proof, independent, and consultative ecosystem for the responsible use of military AI. Its work focuses on analysing the societal and legal implications of defence-related AI applications and developing practical approaches to ensure that technological innovation aligns with ethical and legal standards. Marta Bo and Jonathan Kwik represent the project at the Asser Institute. Further details can be found [here](#).



 **ELSA LAB
DEFENCE**

Human rights empowered through athletes' rights (H.E.R.O.)

The H.E.R.O. (Human Rights Empowered Through Athletes' Rights) project, launched in January 2023, aims to strengthen the respect, protection, and promotion of athletes' human rights in sports governance. Funded by the *European Union's Erasmus+ Programme*, the project brings together a consortium of experts to address structural

challenges affecting athletes' rights across different levels of sport.

The project develops a comprehensive roadmap for sport governing bodies, including federations, leagues, and professional clubs, to help ensure that athletes' rights are effectively safeguarded. Combining research,

stakeholder engagement, and policy guidance, it supports sports organisations in integrating human rights standards into governance structures and everyday practices. Antoine Duval and Daniela Heerdt lead the project at the Asser Institute.

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

Movies that Matter

The T.M.C. Asser Instituut and Movies that Matter launched a structural partnership in 2025 that brings together international law, human rights, and film to engage The Hague's international community. Combining the Asser Institute's legal research and expertise with Movies that Matter's experience in promoting human rights through cinema, the collaboration features public film screenings followed by expert panel discussions. The programme aligns with the Institute's research agenda, addressing themes such as state responsibility and accountability for international crimes, technology, rights and security, and questions of global governance and legitimacy.

By pairing powerful storytelling with legal analysis, the partnership creates an accessible platform for dialogue on pressing issues in international justice.

In 2025, the series included two screenings hosted at the Asser Institute in The Hague. *The Reckoning Project: Ukraine Testifies* presented three short documentaries capturing testimonies and investigations related to war crimes and environmental destruction during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, followed by a discussion with journalists and legal experts on evidence gathering and accountability. Later in the year,

Theatre of Violence examined the trial of Dominic Ongwen before the International Criminal Court, raising complex questions about victimhood, responsibility, and justice in cases involving former child soldiers. Together, these events offered professionals and the wider public an opportunity to reflect on contemporary challenges in international law while reinforcing The Hague's role as the International City of Peace and Justice.



UvA/ALS Cooperation and inter-university activities

The Asser Institute collaborates on its research, education, and events with a variety of partners, including the UvA Amsterdam Law School (ALS), other Dutch and international universities, as well as various networks of scholars, experts, and professional societies. These partnerships enable the Institute to share knowledge and resources, reach broader audiences, and ensure its research remains relevant to the international community.

Amsterdam Law School at the University of Amsterdam

In 2020, the Asser Institute and the Amsterdam Law School (ALS) established a covenant to increase joint research projects in international and European law and to jointly develop new professional education courses.

The covenant is part of a ten-year cooperation framework between the Asser Institute and the UvA, which entered into force in 2020. Guided by a strong sense of responsibility, both institutions share a strong commitment to advancing knowledge and finding scientific solutions to pressing societal problems. To foster closer cooperation and reinforce high-quality research, the Asser Institute aligns its multi-year research planning with the UvA's strategic agenda. Both organisations are working to strengthen multi- and interdisciplinary research, expand funding opportunities, increase the impact of joint projects and develop new professional education courses. The UvA has also committed to maintaining its current level of annual funding for the coming years.

In 2025, the collaboration with the UvA Faculty of Law continued to focus on education and joint research. Researchers Klaas Eller (UvA) and Antoine Duval (Asser Institute) continued their work on [DigiChain](#), an interdisciplinary project examining how digital technologies are shaping the implementation of sustainability regulations in global value chains.

Key developments included greater involvement of Asser Institute researchers in UvA teaching and supervision, integration into UvA's Law Clinics, as well as a joint exploration of a new Executive Master's programme. They also include the building of UvA Law Hub partnerships and enhancing coordination on professional education and training programmes among supporting teams.

The Asser Institute also works closely with UvA research centres, including the Amsterdam Centre for European Law and Governance (ACELG) and the Amsterdam Center for International Law (ACIL), both leading hubs for innovative research in their respective fields.

University of Amsterdam students engage with international justice in The Hague

In May and October 2025, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut and the Amsterdam Law School of the University of Amsterdam jointly organised two Global Justice Sessions in The Hague, consolidating their growing educational partnership. The inaugural session focused on accountability for international crimes committed in Ukraine bringing students into direct dialogue with practitioners and researchers working on initiatives such as the International Criminal Court, the Register of Damage for Ukraine, and related accountability mechanisms. The second session combined a career panel with study visits to the International Criminal Court and the Kosovo Specialist Chambers, offering students insight into both academic and professional pathways in international criminal law and reinforcing the link between academic training and legal practice in The Hague.

Stakeholder universities



Radboud University



Erasmus University Rotterdam



Inter-university research networks

Centre for Law and EU External Relations (CLEER)

With Eva Kassoti as its academic coordinator, the Asser Institute's *Centre for the Law of EU External Relations* (CLEER) network provides a platform for discussion and activities that connect researchers and practitioners interested in the legal dimension of the EU's actions worldwide.

In 2025, the CLEER network organised several key events, including a conference on shifting institutional dynamics in EU external relations law, and a two-day workshop for PhD and early-career scholars on the theme of the legal dimensions of the EU's role in reviving multilateralism, co-organised with Utrecht University and the University of Groningen. In June, it hosted the 10th CLEER Summer School on EU External Relations Law. An edited issue on 'The Legal Implications of the EU's Geopolitical Awakening', featuring contributions by multiple authors, was also published in the CLEER Paper Series.



Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research (NNHRR)

With all Dutch law schools participating as institutional members, the *Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research* (NNHRR) brings together over 400 human rights researchers across the country. The Asser Institute is a founding member and serves as the coordinating institution.

The Network is governed by a steering committee composed of representatives from participating institutions and two PhD representatives. Prof. Dr Jasper Krommendijk (Radboud University Nijmegen) serves as chair and Dr Stephanie Triefus as academic coordinator. Core activities include an annual conference, two PhD training sessions, a forum for PhD candidates to share their research, and the biennial Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award. The Network also provides grants to members for organising events and to PhD members for attending conferences. PhD members may publish their thesis in the Human Rights Research Series published by T.M.C. Asser Press and Springer. NNHRR also supports the *Human Rights Here* blog, where members can publish posts about their research and events organised or attended with the Network's support. In 2025 Radboud University, hosted NNHRR's annual conference, or 'Toogdag', on the theme of 'Access to Justice'. Leiden University and the University of Groningen organised two PhD training sessions, while Maastricht University held the PhD forum. The Network supported eight human rights research workshops organised by members, and Dr Masuma Shahid of Erasmus University received the Max van der Stoel award for the best human rights PhD thesis.





The International Humanitarian and Criminal Law Platform (IHCL Platform)

Established in 2010, the Asser Institute's IHCL Platform is an inter-university network that promotes research in international criminal law and international humanitarian law. It provides a forum for discussion on current and emerging legal issues and is coordinated by Gabrielė Chlevickaitė.

On 5 November 2025, the IHCL Platform hosted its 14th PhD Day, featuring presentations by PhD researchers from Leiden University, Université libre de Bruxelles, the University of Groningen, and Tilburg University.

The platform also organized Benjamin Ferencz lectures (see below) on topics including accountability for the deportation of children

from Ukraine, the sensory experience of atrocity prosecutions, the crime of aggression, and Russian environmental war crimes.

The IHCL Platform consists of representatives from the Asser Institute, the *University of Amsterdam* (ACIL), the *VU Amsterdam*, *Leiden University* (Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies), the *University of Groningen*, the *Netherlands Defence Academy*, *Tilburg University*, *Maastricht University*, *KU Leuven* (the Institute for International Law), *Utrecht University*, *Ghent University* (the *Ghent Rolin-Jaequemyns International Law Institute*), the *University of Antwerp*, the *Université Libre de Bruxelles*, the *Royal Military Academy* in Belgium and the *Open University*.



Connecting conceptual frameworks with real-world implementation

The the Asser Institute's education pillar, which includes university teaching, professional training, and global capacity building, further expanded its impact in 2025. Our researchers taught and supervised bachelor's and master's courses at leading Dutch universities, including the UvA School of Law, Leiden University and Utrecht University, offering students more than doctrinal instruction. By integrating insights drawn from our policy-oriented engagement with international institutions and stakeholders in The Hague and beyond, we provide students and professionals with rigorous, practice-oriented perspectives on current geopolitical and legal developments.



Training programmes in 2025



Spring Academy

Explore the Digitalisation of Sustainability Due Diligence – 7–10 April 2025
(in-person)

The T.M.C. Asser Instituut organised the Spring Academy ‘Explore the Digitalisation of Sustainability Due Diligence’, a four-day training programme examining how digital technologies are transforming sustainability governance in global value chains. Building on interdisciplinary research from the DigiChain project at the University of Amsterdam, the programme explored the growing role of digital tools, including artificial intelligence, blockchain, and data-driven monitoring, in the implementation of sustainability due diligence. Through expert lectures, discussions, and hands-on workshops, participants assessed both the opportunities and risks of digitalising sustainability regulation, from supply-chain tracing technologies and AI-based risk assessment to digital tools for stakeholder engagement.

- **Speakers included (among others):**
 - Antoine Duval (*T.M.C. Asser Instituut*)
 - Klaas Eller (*University of Amsterdam*)
- **Co-organisers & partners:**
University of Amsterdam (UvA)



Short Course

International Law and the Governance of AI-Driven Military Technologies – 22–23 May 2025 (in-person)

In collaboration with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the T.M.C. Asser Instituut organised the short course ‘International Law and the Governance of AI-Driven Military Technologies’. Delivered as the Institute’s annual AI Spring Academy in a two-day format, the programme addressed the military applications of artificial intelligence and the legal and governance challenges arising from these developments. Through expert lectures, interdisciplinary discussions, and practical exercises, participants explored the functioning of AI-driven military technologies, including autonomous weapon systems and AI-enabled decision-support tools, as well as key governance concepts such as predictability, explainability, and traceability. The programme equipped participants with a solid foundation to address knowledge gaps and contribute to ongoing international policy debates on the governance of military AI. Speakers included (among others):

- Jonathan Kwik (*T.M.C. Asser Instituut*)
- Marta Bo (*T.M.C. Asser Instituut*)
- Laura Bruun (*Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*)
- Alexander Blanchard (*Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*)
- **Co-organisers & partners:**
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute



Online Summer Programme
International Sport and Human Rights –
21–28 May 2025 (online)

In collaboration with the *Centre for Sport and Human Rights*, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut organised the online summer programme ‘International Sport and Human Rights’. The programme brought together academics, practitioners, and professionals working in sport governance and human rights to examine the evolving relationship between sport and international human rights standards. Through expert lectures, case studies, and interactive discussions, participants explored key issues including sports governance, mega-sporting events, gender equality and inclusion in sport, and dispute resolution mechanisms. The programme also fostered dialogue between academics, practitioners, and representatives of the sports community.

- **Speakers included (among others):**
 - Daniela Heerdt (*T.M.C. Asser Instituut*)
 - Antoine Duval (*T.M.C. Asser Instituut*)
 - Lucy Amis (*Centre for Sport and Human Rights*)
 - Magali Martowicz (*IOC*)
 - Prof. Daniel Rietiker (*Lausanne University, Suffolk Univ. Law School, European Courts of Human Rights*)
 - Steve Cockburn (*Amnesty International*)
- **Co-organisers & partners:**
Centre for Sport and Human Rights



Summer Programme
International Criminal Law and
International Legal & Comparative
Approaches to Counter-Terrorism –
26 May–20 June 2025 (in-person)

The War Crimes Research Office at American University Washington College of Law and the T.M.C. Asser Instituut co-organised the 19th edition of the Summer Law Programme ‘International Criminal Law and International Legal & Comparative Approaches to Counter-Terrorism’. The programme offered participants a comprehensive overview of the latest developments in international criminal law and the legal frameworks governing counter-terrorism. The first part examined the foundations and contemporary practice of international criminal law, while the second explored international and comparative approaches to counter-terrorism, including debates surrounding the definition of terrorism, the application of the law of armed conflict, and the interaction between counter-terrorism measures and human rights law. The programme combined expert lectures, case studies, and study visits to institutions in The Hague.

- **Speakers included (among others):**
 - Joanna Korner (*Judge, International Criminal Court*)
 - Rod Rastan (*Registry, International Criminal Court*)
 - Christophe Paulussen (*T.M.C. Asser Instituut*)
- **Co-organisers & partners:**
War Crimes Research Office at American University Washington College of Law



Summer Programme

Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and the Rule of Law – 25–30 August 2025 (in-person)

The T.M.C. Asser Instituut and International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) organised the 15th edition of the summer programme 'Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and the Rule of Law'. The programme featured expert lectures, in-person study visits to international organisations in The Hague, and discussions under the Chatham House Rule. Participants examined contemporary threats related to terrorism and violent extremism, including the increasing use of digital technologies and online platforms for radicalisation, recruitment, and propaganda. Topics addressed included pathways to extremism and terrorism, EU regulation of online spaces, online radicalisation, and the evolving geography of extremist actors with particular attention to the balance between security measures, human rights protection, and the rule of law.

- **Speakers included (among others):**

- Ben Saul (UN Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights)
- Niki Siampakou (T.M.C. Asser Instituut)

- **Co-organisers & partners:**

International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT)



Summer Programme

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction – 13–17 October 2025 (in-person)

The T.M.C. Asser Instituut and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), co-organised the programme on 'Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)' which addressed the growing security challenges posed by the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and examined the legal, diplomatic, and technical frameworks designed to prevent their spread. Through expert lectures, case studies, and institutional field visits – Including to the Nuclear Research Reactor at Delft University of Technology and the OPCW ChemTech Centre – participants explored international treaty regimes, export control mechanisms, nuclear safeguards, and emerging technological developments affecting global non-proliferation efforts. The programme also facilitated networking with practitioners and policymakers working in the field of arms control and disarmament.

- **Speakers included (among others):**

- Odette Melono (Deputy Director-General, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons)
- Simon Cleobury (*Geneva Centre for Security Policy*)
- Oliver Meier (*European Leadership Network*)
- Michal Onderco (*Erasmus University Rotterdam*)
- Sibylle Bauer (*Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*)

- **Coordinator:**

- T.M.C. Asser Instituut

- **Co-organisers & partners:**

- OPCW



Short Course

Navigating the Regulation of Gender in International Sport – Ensuring Human Rights, Safety and Fairness – 15–17 October 2025 (online)

The T.M.C. Asser Instituut and the University of Lausanne co-organised the short course ‘Navigating the Regulation of Gender in International Sport: Ensuring Human Rights, Safety and Fairness’. The programme examined one of the most contested issues in contemporary sport governance: the regulation of gender eligibility in international

competition. Through expert lectures, lived-experience testimonies, and moderated discussions, participants explored the legal, scientific, and human rights dimensions of eligibility rules affecting athletes with sex variations and transgender athletes. The programme traced the historical development of gender eligibility regulations, including the International Olympic Committee framework, and examined current debates surrounding fairness, safety, inclusion, and athlete rights in elite sport.

• Speakers included (among others):

- Madeleine Pape (*University of Lausanne*)
- Daniela Heerdt (*T.M.C. Asser Instituut*)
- Antoine Duval (*T.M.C. Asser Instituut*)
- Sonja Erikainen (*University of Aberdeen*)
- Maximila Imali (*Athlete advocate*)

• Co-organisers & partners:

University of Lausanne (UNIL)

Inter-university programme on international criminal law and procedure (IUP) in Lebanon & the MENA region

The Inter-University Programme on International Criminal Law and Procedure (IUP), coordinated by Christophe Paulussen, delivers advanced legal education across Lebanon and the broader MENA region on transitional justice, international criminal law (ICL), and core international crimes.

Established in 2011 by the T.M.C. Asser Instituut and the Outreach and Legacy Section of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), the IUP was the first ICL specialisation in the region and a pioneer in online legal education. Initially designed for Lebanese students, the programme has expanded significantly, with lectures now

streamed online to participating universities across the region, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and professional expertise in ICL.

Consortium and regional collaboration

Currently, the programme is jointly run by the T.M.C. Asser Instituut, the Human Rights Legal Clinic at *La Sagesse University*, and IUSTICOM, in cooperation with 12 universities across five MENA countries: Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq. In 2025, the IUP celebrated its 15th edition, with more than 350 students registering, marking both the programme’s sustained relevance and its growing regional

impact. To date, over 2,700 students have graduated from the IUP, many of whom have pursued careers in international criminal law and contributed to scholarship in Arabic, enriching global legal debates.

The programme has received widespread acclaim from students and faculty alike. Prof. Georges Masse of the American University of Science and Technology in Beirut described it as “the best attempt towards reconciliation in Lebanon.” The programme continues to bridge academic knowledge with lived realities, preparing a generation of regional experts committed to justice and the rule of law.

Lecture series and events

In collaboration with partner organisations and colleagues across The Hague legal community and beyond, the Asser Institute hosts a wide variety of free lectures and events. These include the Benjamin Ferencz Lecture Series on International Criminal Justice, previously known as the Supranational Criminal Law (SCL) lectures series on international criminal law and the Hague Initiative for Law & Armed Conflict (HILAC) lectures on law and armed conflict, often organised in cooperation with the *International Humanitarian and Criminal Law Platform*.

Benjamin Ferencz Lecture Series on International Criminal Justice

Established in 2003 and co-organised with the *Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies of Leiden University* (Campus The Hague) and the *Coalition for the International Criminal Court*, the Benjamin Ferencz Lecture Series provides a prominent platform for discussion of international criminal law.

In January, the series opened with a lecture on 'Tackling the unlawful deportation and

transfer of children from Ukraine to Russia: Pathways to accountability'. In February, it continued with a lecture on 'Sights, sounds, and sensibilities of atrocity prosecutions: the sensory experience of justice'. In June, two lectures addressed the 'The crime of aggression: legal developments and accountability efforts' and 'Prosecuting Russian environmental war crimes'— the latter examining the use of environmental destruction as a method of warfare, drawing on the practical experience of experts supporting Ukrainian prosecutors and judges.



Benjamin Ferencz Lecture Series

on International Criminal Justice



Artist-in-residence

Exploring the impact of international and European law through visual storytelling

In 2025, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut and the Royal Academy of Art The Hague (KABK) continued their collaboration exploring the intersection of international law and visual arts.

In January 2025, they presented *Lens on Law: Edges of Proximity*, a collective exhibition at West Den Haag developed during a three-month artist-in-residence programme (September-December 2024). The works of Salome Erni, Daria Radu, and Anastasia Troshkova critically engaged with themes including the architecture of international courts in The Hague, the use of

consumer drones in contemporary warfare, and investor-state dispute settlement in the context of the Groningen gas controversy. Through installations, photography, and public discussions, the exhibition fostered dialogue between artists and legal scholars, inviting audiences to reflect on the accessibility, transparency, and societal impact of international and European law.

In December 2025, the Institute and KABK presented Framing Climate Justice, bringing together three artists-in-residence – Emilie Tizien, Jamie Smith, and Tori

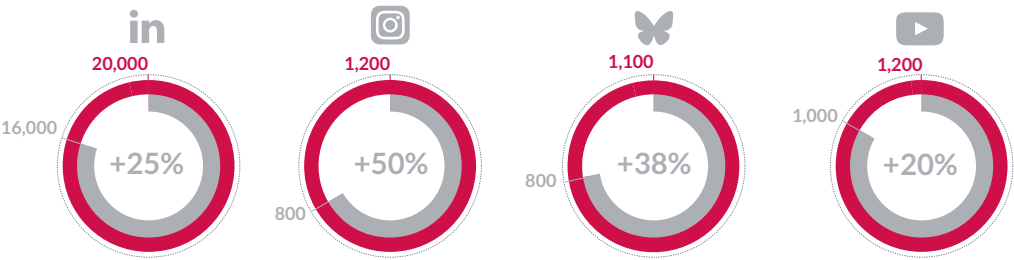
McCrea – who collaborated with legal scholars during a second three-month programme (September-December 2025) to translate the impact of international and European law into visual narratives. Their work examined the transnational consequences of environmental governance, from the global trade in used cars and climate-induced housing damage in the Netherlands to questions of ecological justice beyond the human perspective. The exhibition opening was followed by a panel discussion exploring the role of art and law in articulating public interest and accountability amid accelerating climate breakdown.

Communications 2025

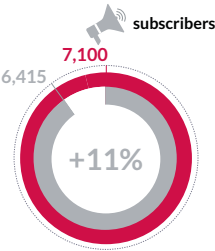
The Institute’s online presence serves as a repository of informed insights, supporting the development of international policy and global cooperation. Our goal to empower stakeholders with the information needed to address pressing global issues through a transparent and modernised communication framework is supported by our newly launched website and our expanding reach: in 2025, our professional community grew by 25% on LinkedIn and our younger audience by 50% on Instagram.

■ 2025 ■ 2024

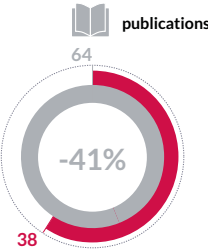
Social media followers



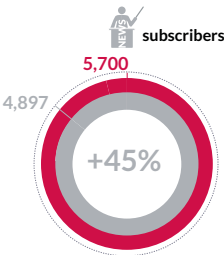
‘Asser today’ newsletter



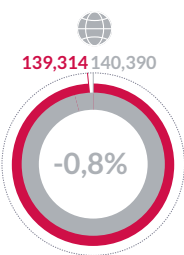
Asser in the media



Asser education & events newsletter



Website visitors



In the media

Throughout 2025, Asser Institute researchers provided expert analysis on pressing legal questions to media outlets around the world, thereby contributing to public understanding of complex international law issues. With several media appearances on topics ranging from AI in warfare to sports law reform, our experts brought scholarly rigor to timely debates across major international news platforms. Below is a selection.

UN Human Rights Council reviews Asser Institute recommendations on Italy's arms exports

Asser Institute senior researcher León Castellanos-Jankiewicz urged Italy to integrate human rights due diligence into its arms export decisions, promoting transparency and accountability in weapons transfers. The [recommendations](#), submitted jointly with *Global Rights Compliance*, were discussed at the 48th session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the *United Nations Human Rights Council*.

US sanctions on the International Criminal Court draw global attention

US President Donald Trump's decision to impose sanctions on the International Criminal Court prompted expert analysis from the Asser Institute's James Patrick Sexton, whose insights were featured by several international news outlets, including [France24](#). (7 February 2025)

Germany halts arms exports to Israel

Al Jazeera English [interviewed](#) León Castellanos-Jankiewicz on Germany's suspension of weapons exports to Israel. Castellanos-Jankiewicz noted that Germany's prominent role, could prompt other European states to adopt similar policies or strengthen their export controls and risk assessments. (8 August 2025)

Sanctions against Israel under international law

James Patrick Sexton published an [article](#) on the *Just Security* international law blog on '[Sanctions against Israel: An international law perspective](#)', analysing recent proposals made for states to take sanctions against Israel. Sexton argued that international law permits certain sanctions against Israel, and that the obligation to prevent genocide arguably *requires* states, in certain circumstances, to adopt such measures. (17 September 2025)

Call for immediate safeguards on military AI

Asser Institute researcher Marta Bo, together with Ingvild Bode, Jessica Dorsey and Elke Schwarz, submitted an [intervention](#) to the Report of the UN Secretary-General on artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security (UN Doc. A/80/78, pp. 139–143), urging states to adopt immediate safeguards for AI-based decision support systems in military contexts. The intervention warns of accountability gaps, risks to civilian protection, and the erosion of meaningful human control, calling for clearer normative standards and stronger oversight at both national and international levels. The contribution was highlighted in a dedicated news item, amplifying its policy relevance and outreach beyond academic audiences. (5 June 2025)

A silent revolution in wartime decision-making

Asser Institute researcher Marta Bo and Jessica Dorsey (Utrecht University) published an [op-ed](#) in the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* examining the rapid integration of AI-based decision support systems into military operations. The article analyses how algorithmic tools increasingly shape targeting and operational choices, cautioning that this technological shift risks outpacing legal and ethical safeguards and calling for urgent public and parliamentary scrutiny.



Engaging policymakers at 'ONE Conference'

Jonathan Kwik participated in a [press meet-up](#) session at the ONE Conference, one of the Netherlands' leading cybersecurity forums, directly engaging with journalists and security professionals on the risks and regulatory challenges surrounding military AI and digital conflict environments. (1 October 2025)

International dialogue at GC-REAIM

In June 2025, Jonathan Kwik took part in a [panel discussion](#) at the Global Conference on Responsible AI in the Military Domain (GC-REAIM) in The Hague, contributing legal expertise to discussions on responsible governance frameworks for AI in defence settings. (26 June 2025)

U.S. policy pushes Turkey and EU closer

Narin Idriz was [interviewed](#) by *the Volkskrant* (in Dutch) on how recent United States foreign policy is inadvertently driving Turkey and the European Union toward closer cooperation. Idriz provides expert commentary on the legal and political dimensions of this shifting relationship and how external pressures are reshaping diplomatic ties between Ankara and Brussels. (17 March 2025)



JUDGTRUST project shapes EU policy review

The final report of the [JUDGTRUST project](#) was cited in the European Commission's [review](#) of the Brussels I-bis Regulation, providing evidence-based research for the evaluation of EU civil justice rules. The project's findings informed the Commission's assessment of how judicial cooperation and the recognition of judgements function across member states, contributing to ongoing efforts to strengthen cross-border litigation within the Union. (2 June 2025)

Evaluating the landmark Semenya ruling's legacy

In July 2025, Antoine Duval co-edited a [blog symposium](#) on the prominent human rights platform Strasbourg Observers evaluating the profound impact of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) Grand Chamber ruling in the *Semenya case*. Bringing together diverse legal perspectives, the symposium examines how the judgment has redefined the intersection of private sports governance and international human rights law, and what it means for the accountability of global sporting bodies.



10th Annual T.M.C. Asser Lecture

In November 2025, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut marked its 60th anniversary and the 10th edition of its annual lecture series with the Annual T.M.C. Asser Lecture, held in the courtroom of the *Hoge Raad der Nederlanden* in The Hague. The lecture was delivered by Professor Joyeeta Gupta, 2023 laureate of the Spinoza Prize and a leading authority on climate and environmental governance. In her lecture, **‘Protecting the public interest in times of climate change: from abandoning fossil fuel to sharing our Earth’**, Professor Gupta argued that fossil fuels remain the principal driver of climate change and, by extension, of biodiversity loss, pollution and mounting risks to human health and wellbeing. She called for an accelerated global phase-out of fossil fuels in line with a just 1°C objective and stressed that social movements and independent courts play a crucial role in securing meaningful access to climate justice. Situating climate change within the wider context of crossed planetary boundaries, she made the case for renewed multilateralism and the longer-term prospect of a global constitutional framework capable of safeguarding the Earth’s life-support systems. The urgency of her message was underscored by the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 23 July 2025 on *Obligations of States in Respect of Climate Change*, which clarified that states are

obliged to protect the climate system from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and that failure to regulate fossil fuel production, consumption or subsidies may constitute an internationally wrongful act.

The following day, the Institute and SEVEN convened a closed workshop entitled **‘From Climate Change to Climate Action: Next Steps for Policymakers and Practitioners’**.

The invitation-only forum brought together policymakers, climate litigation experts, academics, civil society representatives and youth advocates to translate the lecture’s broader normative insights into concrete pathways for implementation.

Two thematic sessions addressed how governments at national and local level can reconcile the accelerated phase-out of fossil fuels with energy security and a just transition for vulnerable communities, and how strategic climate litigation can be strengthened in light of recent jurisprudential developments, including the ICJ’s Advisory Opinion.

Through moderated discussion, participants explored practical measures to operationalise international climate obligations in legislative, regulatory and judicial arenas. The workshop produced a set of concrete recommendations for advancing climate system justice, reinforcing the Institute’s role as a convening platform at the interface of scholarship, practice and governance.

T.M.C. Asser Press

The Institute's publishing house, T.M.C. Asser Press promotes and disseminates some of the best legal scholarship in international and European law from across the world. It provides a platform for academic cooperation through the publication of books, e-books and journals.

English-language titles from T.M.C. Asser Press are distributed worldwide by its publishing partner *SpringerNature* and accessible via *SpringerLink*. Publications are available in hardback, paperback, and e-book formats. Through extensive distribution to universities and libraries around the world, T.M.C. Asser Press ensures broad international distribution, visibility and readership.

In 2025, T.M.C. Asser Press published 19 new book titles and 5 journals, numbering a total of 18 publications.

Book publications, highlights:

- Two edited volumes in the Global Europe Series: 'A Geopolitical Europe in the Making? – The EU's Actorness in a (De-)Globalising World' and 'EU External Relations Law and Sustainability – The EU, Third States and International Organizations';
- Pieterjan Declerck's monograph by in IT&Law Series, vol. 40: "Ready to Play?" – A Children's Rights Analysis of Gambling-like Elements in Videogames';
- Three Yearbooks: the *European Yearbook of Constitutional Law* (2024), on 'Varieties of Constitutionalism'; the *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law*, vol. 26, on the theme of 'Humanitarian Actors'; and the *Netherlands Yearbook of International Law* (2022), on 'Reparations in International Law';
- Francesca Capone's monograph 'Dual-use Objects under International Humanitarian Law: Towards a Paradigm Shift';
- Emeritus Professor Karel Wellens's monograph: 'Question Time at the ICJ in Contentious Cases: A Functional Analysis of the Practice'.

Journals, some highlights:

- Issue 1, vol. 17 (2025) of the *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* (HJRL) was a special issue on 'What is Xi Jinping Thought on Rule of Law?', edited by Guest Editor Randall Peerenboom, containing nine articles, of which six were published open access;
- Four issues, vol. 25 (2025) of the *International Sports Law Journal* (ISLJ) with a Special Issue on 'Through Challenges and Disruptions: The Evolution of Lex Olympica';
- Issue 1, vol. 26 (2025) of the *European Business Organization Law Review* (EBOR) was a topical issue on 'Banking Resolution at Ten: Experiences and Open Issues', containing 12 articles;
- In addition to documenting national and international case law, vol. 43 (2025) of *Nederlands Internationaal Privaatrecht* (NIPR) featured more than 15 original articles on private international law.

The Impact Factors of two of Asser Press's English-language journals rose significantly. *The Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* reached eighth place in Clarivate's law journals list with a 2024 Impact Factor of 3.3, while the *European Business Organization Law Review* rose to 22nd place with an Impact Factor of 2.7.

Articles published in the English-language journals are made available on *SpringerLink* as soon as they are finalised ('Online First'), thereby ensuring the immediate dissemination of the latest research. A large number of the journal articles were published open access. Articles in NIPR (some in English) are published on www.nipr-online.eu.

You can find a detailed list containing all T.M.C. Asser Press publications that appeared in 2025 in the ANNEX (www.asser.nl/asserpress).



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