



# Annual report 2024



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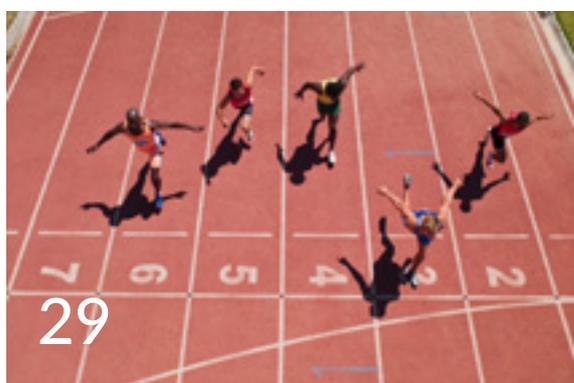
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# Commitment in Uncertain Times

This year began on a deeply sad note for the T.M.C. Asser Instituut, whose greatest strength is in its people. Only a few weeks into 2024, we received the devastating news of the unexpected death of our dear colleague Michiel van Rooij. Michiel joined the institute in November 1992 and soon became a highly valued member of our community. His dedication to research and his expertise in private international law were instrumental in numerous projects and publications. The Annual Report includes the *in memoriam* for Michiel, who will be dearly missed.



This year also brought a number of significant, though less sombre, organisational changes. On 1 February, we were happy to welcome Kasper Vrolijk as the new Managing Director, succeeding Gert Grift, who had served on the Asser Executive Board for nearly seven years. We formally bid farewell to Gert on 28 February, expressing our gratitude for his long-standing commitment to the Institute. This was particularly important during the final 18 months of his tenure during which he took on the demanding responsibilities of both Academic and Managing Director, driving the Asser Institute forward with the support of the strand coordinators. We wish him a great retirement!

In the meantime, the search for a new Academic Director continued throughout 2024, extending my role as Acting Academic Director beyond what had initially been anticipated. In March 2024, the research department was restructured, moving from four to three research strands. Staff from the 'Public interests and practices within international and European institutions' research strand were reassigned to two other strands in line with the focus of their research.

Despite these changes, the entire Asser staff continued to demonstrate remarkable resilience and patience, even under difficult external circumstances. The education sector was deeply affected by the new Dutch coalition agreement, prompting an Asser delegation to join the national protest against the planned budget cuts at the Malieveld on 25 November 2024.

At the same time, our fields of international and European law are increasingly being undermined, with the horrific situation in Gaza as one stark example. The election of Donald Trump in November 2024 is also widely expected to further worsen this situation, reinforcing a more transactional, rather than norms- and rules-based, international context. In these times, when the public interest is under severe pressure, it was particularly inspiring to hear from Fleur Johns, Professor in the Faculty of Law & Justice at the University of New South Wales, who delivered the ninth Annual T.M.C. Asser Lecture on 25 April. Entitled 'Connection in a divided world: Rethinking 'community' in international law', the lecture examined how the notion of community operates in contemporary



international law, especially in the context of humanitarianism. In her lecture, Professor Johns explained that as technology has radically changed the ways in which we connect, communicate, share values, exercise power, and engage in conflict, the concept of 'community' in international law has once again become contested.

Alongside our flagship activity, Asser researchers and support staff were involved in a wide range of research and related activities. These included publications (including in books and journals published by T.M.C. Asser Press), expert advice, podcasts, conferences and lectures on diverse topics such as Gaza, military AI, quantum technology, Ukraine, the protection of journalists, third party litigation funding, arms exports, transnational sports law, digital infrastructures of sustainability regulation, EU external relations, and memory laws and policies. In addition to working with our regular stakeholders, we engaged with artists. At the end of 2024, we launched the Artist-in-Residence project, that brought together three 4<sup>th</sup> year Photography students of the Royal Academy of Art The Hague (KABK) and Asser researchers to create a

visual narrative on the role of international law in society. The project will culminate in a public exhibition in early 2025. Furthermore, during the Just Peace Open Day on 22 September, we hosted the exhibition 'Voices from Gaza' in cooperation with artist Ingrid Rollema (HOPE Foundation) and interior architect KC Bodegom, attracting more than 450 visitors to the Institute.

Many further examples are presented in this annual report, which still reflects only a selection of our activities.

As last year, I cannot emphasise enough how proud I am to be part of the dedicated and talented team at the Asser Institute, whose mission is to contribute to the development of international and European public and private law. In today's increasingly dangerous and uncertain world, this mission is more important than ever.

*Christophe Paulussen,*  
Acting Academic Director  
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 activities. 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 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 community is a public-spirited community that is committed to excellence, integrity, inclusivity, and public values.

# At a glance – 2024 in numbers



**55**

Publications



**31**

Open access publications



**59**

Public events



T.M.C. Asser Press published

**11** new books and  
**5** journals



**23**

Training programmes



**70**

Media citations



**17,396**

YouTube views on public lectures  
and events



**+ 4,358**

New followers on LinkedIn



**340**

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).



**450**

More than **450** visitors visited the Just Peace Open Day at the Asser Institute – an event on art made by traumatised children from Gaza



Total staff in 2024

**55**

Staff male/female ratio





## Research strand

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

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

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

In 2024, many publications and events from the research strand '[In the public interest: accountability of the state and the prosecution of crimes](#)' addressed pressing questions in international law and security. The researchers tackled complex legal challenges while offering practical insights for policymakers and practitioners. Some of the works we would like to highlight include:

## Monograph

### Children's rights in counter-terrorism

The book [Children's Rights, 'Foreign Fighters', Counter-Terrorism: Children of Nowhere](#) (Edward Elgar Publishing), by Romyana van Ark and co-authors Devyani Prabhat and Faith Gordon, investigates the impact of counter-terrorism measures on children linked to foreign fighter networks.

The book focuses particularly on children of alleged foreign terrorist fighters still residing in Syrian and Iraqi camps after the fall of Islamic State. Van Ark

argues that these children's plight remains overlooked, with policy discussions often treating them as extensions of their parents rather than as individuals with their own agency and special protections under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The research challenges conventional approaches by advocating for a child-centred framework that treats all children as inherently vulnerable, regardless of their circumstances.

This perspective is particularly relevant as European governments continue to grapple with the repatriation of children from conflict zones. Van Ark's work provides essential guidance for developing policies that balance security concerns with fundamental children's rights obligations. The book's findings have already informed policy discussions across Europe, offering a framework for addressing one of counter-terrorism's most difficult dilemmas.

## Special issue

### Ukraine's long-term security impact

Christophe Paulussen, together with Walter Kemp and Janice Helwig, edited a special issue of [Security and Human Rights](#) examining [The War in Ukraine and its Long-Term Consequences for Security and Human Rights](#). Rather than focusing solely on immediate legal questions around war crimes, this collection explores the conflict's broader implications for European and global security architectures.

The introduction calls for an urgent rethink: if security and peace are to be restored in Europe, planning must begin now, as history shows that crises are typically needed to reform the multilateral system. The research addresses crucial questions: How will this conflict reshape the fledgling Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), one of the few remaining European security organisations

where Russia and the West can engage in dialogue? Could it play a key role in rebuilding the European security order? What lessons can Ukraine draw from the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan? What are the legal, economic and political effects of sanctions? These questions require systematic analysis as their answers will influence security thinking for years to come.

## Blogpost

### European Union support to Ukraine through windfall profits

James Patrick Sexton and Victoria Kerr analysed the EU's decision to send profits from frozen Russian Central Bank assets to Ukraine in the blog *Articles of War*. Estimated to

amount to around €3 billion per year, Sexton and Kerr argued that such windfall profits (or a large percentage of them) should be channelled towards victims of

the conflict by, for example, contributing to the proposed compensation fund to be attached to the [Register of Damage for Ukraine](#).

## Online symposium

### Corporate accountability in global supply chains

León Castellanos-Jankiewicz contributed to a symposium in the *American Journal of International Law Unbound (AJIL Unbound)* on [New Pathways Towards Supply Chain Accountability](#). The symposium explores legal mechanisms for holding corporations accountable across increasingly complex global

networks. It addresses a persistent challenge in international law: when companies source materials through multiple intermediaries, establishing legal responsibility for human rights violations or environmental damage becomes extremely difficult.

New global regulations, inspired by the UN Guiding Principles, are making companies more accountable for their supply chains. The EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), a key example, requires large corporations to prevent negative human rights, labour, and environmental impacts across their entire value chain. This push for greater accountability, and myriad domestic laws also aimed at supply-chain accountability, has created complex compliance challenges for businesses, leading to calls for simpler, more coherent regulations. The authors call for a careful monitoring of the legal developments to find a balance between practical feasibility and meaningful accountability. This might help ensure that corporate responsibility becomes a core part of global governance, rather than just an aspiration.





## Report

### Combatting impunity for crimes against journalists

A new report by Gabrielė Chlevickaitė and Maarten Bolhuis (VU Amsterdam) proposes an [International Investigative Support Body \(IISB\)](#) to combat the widespread impunity for crimes against journalists. With over 1,700 journalists killed since 1993 and a staggering 86-95% of cases unsolved, existing national and

international efforts have largely failed due to political obstruction and weak institutions.

The proposed support body would address these gaps by providing investigative assistance, collecting evidence, and offering capacity-building support to national and international bodies. The report

outlines potential structures and mandates for this new entity, offering a comprehensive approach to improve the safety of journalists and ensure accountability. The report was commissioned by the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands*.

## Event

### ASIL Closing Plenary 2024

Gabrielė Chlevickaitė also convened the traditional Closing Plenary of the 2024 annual meeting of the *American Society of International Law (ASIL)* in Washington D.C. The plenary was dedicated to taking stock of the work aimed at reducing impunity for crimes against journalists and addressed the risks and harms media workers experience from

several fronts: cyber threats, direct physical threats and intimidation, the challenges in investigating and finding a forum for prosecuting such crimes and related issues. Panellists included Catherine Amirfar (Co-chair of the International Dispute Resolution and Public International Law Groups of Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, and Deputy Chair of the High

Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom), Evelien Wijkstra (Director of policy and advocacy of the Amsterdam-based Free Press Unlimited, promoting press freedom and a safe and viable work environment for journalists) and Can Yeginsu (practising English barrister and the Deputy Chair of the High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom).

## Policy-oriented Research

### Event

#### The Ljubljana – The Hague convention seminar

Our engagement with practitioners and policymakers was highlighted by the [Ljubljana-The Hague Convention seminar](#) in February. Co-organised with the [Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security](#) at the Peace Palace,

the seminar took place one day after the landmark treaty aimed at strengthening international cooperation in prosecuting genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes was opened for signature by

68 countries. The event successfully brought together experts, practitioners and academics to discuss the new Convention's crucial implications.



### Conference

#### Strengthening Ukraine's capacity to investigate and prosecute international crimes

The year concluded with the [final conference](#) of the four-year MATRA project *Strengthening Ukraine's capacity to investigate and prosecute international crimes*, held in November. This joint initiative with [Global Rights Compliance \(GRC\)](#), funded by the [Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), focused on training and supporting Ukrainian investigators, the [Office of the Prosecutor General](#), regional

prosecutors' offices, judges, civil society organisations, journalists, and defence lawyers.

In addition to a range of [training programmes and workshops](#) delivered both in the Netherlands and Ukraine, the project also produced the [Handbook for Legal Professionals on the Fairness of Conflict-related Trials in Ukraine](#). The final conference brought

together key Ukrainian stakeholders and Dutch ministry officials, marking the successful completion of extensive capacity-building efforts during very challenging times for Ukraine. (Read more on page 30).



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



## The Gaza conflict

Throughout 2024, the Asser Institute maintained active involvement in legal developments surrounding the Gaza conflict through scholarship, legal analysis, and public engagement. León Castellanos-Jankiewicz provided expert commentary on Mexico's request to intervene in the genocide case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Israel, explaining that Mexico had "a very clear legal interest as a signatory" to the Genocide Convention.

The Institute closely followed the ICJ proceedings, including provisional measures issued in May demanding Israel halt military offensives in Rafah and maintain humanitarian aid corridors. Journalists from Follow the Money and The Investigative Desk also interviewed Castellanos-Jankiewicz about the Netherlands' increasingly relaxed interpretation of international military export rules to Israel.

### Key activities and research:

**Expert analysis of ICJ South Africa v. Israel case** through the Asser Institute's *JurisDictions* [podcast](#) by Carl Lewis, examining provisional measures and their implications.

**Expert analysis of the ICC arrest warrants for Israeli officials Netanyahu and Gallant** by Marta Bo for *OpinioJuris*, arguing that this could be a unique opportunity to set a precedent for addressing the complex ethical and legal implications of using artificial intelligence in warfare.

**Research on arms export controls and supply chain accountability** in conflict contexts by León Castellanos-Jankiewicz.

**Public lecture** '[The right to health for women in armed conflict: Addressing international law's role in the humanitarian crisis in Gaza](#)'.

**Exhibition** [Voices from Gaza](#), co-organised with artist Ingrid Rollema (HOPE Foundation) and interior architect KC Bodegom, during the Just Peace Open Day. The event, which turned the Asser Institute's building into an [installation](#), aimed to foster understanding of children's experiences in conflict zones while marking 125 years of peace and justice in The Hague. It attracted more than 450 visitors and featured Palestinian artwork, performances by breakdancers, actors, poets, journalists and legal expert presentations.



## 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 2024, 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. Four selected publications 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.

## Open access article

### Digital sovereignty, digital infrastructures, and quantum horizons

Geoff Gordon's open access publication '*Digital sovereignty, digital infrastructures, and quantum horizons*' (*AI & Society*, Springer Nature) explores how governmental investments in next-generation technologies are reshaping international legal imagination.

Quantum technologies are being developed to improve our current

digital systems, but they are still in an early, transitional stage. While they are rooted in today's computer technology, they point toward a future where our digital infrastructure will have much greater power and capability.

Gordon's article examines the European Union's €1 billion Quantum Flagship Initiative and programmes like Gaia-X, which aim

to create a trustworthy, federated network of cloud providers that enables digital sovereignty by giving users control over their data while driving Europe's data economy. Gordon argues that these investments are already shaping international law, revealing how new digital advances will influence our future legal and political systems.

## Publication

### Human agency in military AI decision-making

Taylor Kate Woodcock's publication '*Human/Machine (-Learning) Interactions, Human Agency and the International Humanitarian Law Proportionality Standard*' examines human-machine interactions in warfare, revealing how algorithmic decision-support systems (DSS) may undermine legal reasoning in military targeting decisions. Already pursued by China, the United States, Russia and used on

the battlefield by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) in Gaza, DSS in the military domain have the potential to be used for targeting, intelligence-gathering, detention, humanitarian operations and logistics.

Woodcock's research highlights the inadequacy of current machine-learning systems for proportionality assessments under international humanitarian law,

demonstrating how reliability issues, bias, and algorithmic opacity can distort military legal decision-making. Woodcock's work emphasises the fundamental importance of preserving human agency in legal reasoning, arguing that while human judgment may be flawed, current artificial intelligence limitations make algorithmic solutions inappropriate for such consequential decisions.

## Monograph

### Lawfully using autonomous weapon technologies

Jonathan Kwik's monograph *Lawfully Using Autonomous Weapon Technologies* provides military commanders and operators with guidance for applying international humanitarian law (IHL) to autonomous weapons systems (AWS). While there is international consensus that targeting rules such as proportionality and precautions must be respected when using AWS, there is legal and practical ambiguity as to how to translate

this normative commitment into practice. How are commanders in the field, when guns are already blazing, expected to exercise command-and-control when ordering AWS-attacks and ensure that their targeting obligations remain fulfilled?

Kwik's book bridges theoretical legal frameworks with operational realities. It invites the reader to step into the shoes of the military commander with all the

operational pressure and uncertainty inherent to this position. Kwik discusses how commanders can use existing targeting frameworks to ensure that their use of AWS remains in compliance with the rules governing the conduct of hostilities, and he offers practical tools. Kwik's work aims to help establish clear legal parameters for emerging military technologies.

## Chapter

### Criminal responsibility in autonomous systems

Marta Bo's chapter '*Are Programmers in or out of Control? The Individual Criminal Responsibility of Programmers of Autonomous Weapons and Self-Driving Cars*' in the book *Human-Robot Interaction in Law and Its Narratives: Legal Blame, Procedure, and Criminal Law*, edited by Sabine Gless and Helena Whalen-Bridge (Cambridge University Press)

examines one of the most pressing questions in today's technology law: who bears criminal responsibility when self-driving cars or autonomous weapons cause harm?

In her chapter, Bo argues that the programmers of these technologies, and not just the users, should be held criminally responsible for such incidents.

The key lies in determining whether the programmer had meaningful human control over the technology. According to Bo this control begins when the system is first designed and continues throughout its use. If a programmer could have understood, foreseen, and anticipated the risks of the technology, they can be held liable for the resulting crime.





## Online symposium

### **Military AI and the Law of Armed Conflict: The ‘Need’ for Speed – The Cost of Unregulated AI Decision-Support Systems to Civilians**

Against the backdrop of Israel’s military campaign in Gaza – described as the most destructive in a century – and other ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Yemen, Iraq and Syria, Marta Bo and Jessica Dorsey (*Utrecht University*) hosted an online symposium for the international law blog *OpinioJuris* on the military use of AI-enabled decision-support systems.

The increasing deployment of these systems in contemporary conflicts poses major legal and humanitarian challenges. The systems, including Israel’s *the Gospel*, *Lavender*, and *Where’s Daddy* programmes, generate military targets at unprecedented speed and scale, shifting from fifty targets per year to more than one hundred per day

and fundamentally altering targeting dynamics.

The authors argue that this speed imperative undermines core obligations under IHL, particularly the precautionary principle requiring verification of military targets and distinction between civilians and combatants. Reports indicate that up to twenty civilian casualties may be deemed acceptable per low-level target, and that imprecise munitions (‘dumb bombs’) are often used in densely populated areas without adequate human verification.

Critical concerns include AI systems’ accuracy rates of around 90 percent (implying one in ten targets may be illegitimate),

automation bias leading to over-reliance on machine recommendations, and the erosion of meaningful human control despite theoretical ‘human-in-the-loop’ safeguards. The dual-use nature of these systems further complicates regulation under existing IHL frameworks. Given the increasing use of these systems in military operations, the authors stress that it is crucial for policymakers to scrutinise their impact on legal compliance. Regulatory discussions must be broadened to include these systems and to create a framework that ensures accountability and minimises civilian harm.



## Global engagement and dialogue on military artificial intelligence

In 2024, the Asser Institute hosted a variety of innovative events on military AI. One example is a ground-breaking interdisciplinary workshop on the rules of engagement for military AI, convened by researchers from the *Designing International Law and Ethics into Military Artificial Intelligence (DILEMA) project* and *ELSA Lab Defence project*. The resulting report's impact was demonstrated when one of its drafters was invited to present at the *Polish Naval Academy's* annual IHL conference in Gdynia in 2025.

The Asser Institute's commitment to global dialogue was further exemplified at the *Responsible AI in the Military Domain (REAIM) 2024 Summit* in Seoul. The compelling breakout session 'Beyond the black box: Unpacking explainability in military AI' explored the legal, ethical, and technical dimensions of explainability in military AI applications. This engagement, alongside broader research on bias in military AI and its compliance with IHL, also led to a follow-up TV interview with Marta Bo.

### Project

## Implementing international responsibility for artificial intelligence in military practice

What are the legal and ethical challenges of military artificial intelligence use? Who bears international responsibility for wrongdoing with military AI, and what legal avenues exist for holding individuals and states accountable? In the project Implementing international

responsibility for artificial intelligence (I2 RAMP), Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow Magdalena Pacholska examined how to conceptualise and implement international responsibility for human rights and IHL violations from military AI use. This project has received funding from the

European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement.



European  
Union

## International Arms Control Law Hub

The Asser Institute's *International Arms Control Law Hub* educates the next generation of arms control law experts. Established in 2021 with a five-year grant from the *Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, the Hub aims to strengthen national expertise in international arms control law and to stimulate academic and policy debate that links practice with academia.

The Hub facilitates knowledge exchange on existing and emerging weapons systems between Dutch ministries, civil society, academia, and international organisations such as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

It focuses on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, nuclear

security, and conventional arms. Recent global developments have brought renewed attention to this specialised field of public international law, as new actors, instruments, agendas, and risks are once again placing arms control law at the centre of international affairs. Thilo Marauhn (Extraordinary Professor of International Arms Control Law UvA/Asser Institute) and Thea Coventry are the Hub's coordinators.

In 2024, the Hub organised a research seminar series on arms transfers under international law and a doctoral seminar series on international arms control that addressed arms control negotiations, reasons why countries join arms control treaties, and the effectiveness of arms control treaties.





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.

# Beyond borders: Redefining public interest in European and International Law

In 2024, 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 activities.

## Special issue

### Defining regional organisations' legal framework

Eva Kassoti and Samantha Besson (*Collège de France and University of Fribourg*) published a landmark special issue of the *International Organizations Law Review* (Brill publishing) titled '*The International Law of Regional Organizations*'. The issue presents the results of a three-year project by the *International Law Association (ILA) Study Group on Regional International Organizations* (RIOs), offering a comparative international law analysis. Featuring contributions from leading scholars, it is the first

special issue to directly address the complex questions on the international law of RIOs and organisations such as the European Union, which are increasingly central to the global legal system, as they do not only apply but actively shape international law. The research aims to better understand RIOs' profound influence and to ensure they operate as accountable public institutions that balance regional priorities with universal principles of international law.



## Report

### Mapping third party litigation funding across the EU

Vesna Lazić contributed to a [landmark study on Third Party Litigation Funding \(TPLF\)](#), responding directly to the European Commission's call for comprehensive regulatory guidance. TPLF is present when an external party pays for litigation costs in exchange for a portion of the financial recovery if the lawsuit is successful. This practice has become more common globally and is growing in the EU.

The extensive mapping exercise examined legal frameworks and practices across all 27 EU member

states and selected non-EU jurisdictions, including Canada, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The research revealed significant variations in TPLF approaches across jurisdictions, with most EU member states lacking specific regulation beyond provisions implementing the Representative Actions Directive. The TPLF Mapping Study has important implications for Business and Human Rights, particularly in the context of access to justice and corporate accountability. TPLF

enables claimants, especially vulnerable individuals, communities, or civil society groups, to pursue legal action against well-resourced corporate actors. The findings will inform the European Commission's future policy decisions on TPLF regulation, particularly as the number of climate litigation and other cases continues to grow.



## Moot court competition

### 2024 PAX moot court competition on private international law

The Asser Institute leads the annual Private International Law in Motion (PAX) moot court competition, an EU-funded

project launched in 2012. The competition gives students practical experience with the complexities of international legal

cooperation and EU regulations. It focuses on transnational law and private international law, or conflict of laws, which determines which national laws apply in international cases, as well as matters of jurisdiction and the enforcement of foreign judgments.



Supported by the EU, the moot has grown into a global competition for university students. Vesna Lazić designs the case and supervises both the written and oral rounds. The 2024 case explored legal challenges related to the digital age, including questions of jurisdiction, minors' contractual capacity online, and platform liability.

## Briefing

### Enhancing EU human rights clauses in third country agreements

The protection of human rights is a core public interest that transcends national boundaries. In 2024, Narin Idriz completed a comprehensive policy study on the effectiveness of human rights clauses in EU agreements with Ethiopia, Tunisia, and Vietnam.

Commissioned by the *European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI)* and coordinated by the *Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)*,

the [briefing](#) addressed critical gaps in monitoring and enforcement mechanisms that have historically limited the impact of these provisions. The research offers concrete proposals to strengthen consultative mechanisms, improve transparency in reporting, and establish robust monitoring frameworks.

Key recommendations include setting human rights benchmarks

during impact assessments and creating an independent complaints mechanism to address alleged human rights violations. The study evaluates the feasibility of binding enforcement mechanisms and human rights sanctions, while carefully considering the political and economic sensitivities of such measures. This research provides direct guidance to European policymakers on enhancing human rights compliance in international agreements.

## Project

### Digital infrastructures of sustainability regulation (DigiChain)

Launched in collaboration with the *University of Amsterdam*, the [DigiChain project](#) explores the intersection of technology and sustainability regulation, particularly in value chain due diligence. This interdisciplinary research examines how digital technologies, especially AI-driven tools, shape compliance with the *EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)*. The project bridges the gap between legal requirements and technological implementation, addressing practical challenges in sustainability regulation enforcement.

The project, coordinated by Antoine Duval and Klaas Eller (*UvA Law School*) maps existing technological tools across different due-diligence stages, evaluates how data analysis enables compliance with the EU's Green Deal

legislation, and develops recommendations for regulators and businesses. The team has engaged extensively with stakeholders including the *European Commission*, the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)*, national governments and private sector actors.

Through professional training sessions, publications and a Spring Academy at the Asser Institute featuring more than 30 speakers

from technology providers, NGOs, government, business, law firms and academia, the DigiChain project explores the legal, technological, regulatory and managerial dimensions of digital tools in value chains. The project and its various pillars are funded by the *University of Amsterdam (Seed Grant Responsible Digital Transformations)* and the Asser Institute.



UNIVERSITY  
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## Lex Sportiva – Transnational Sports Law

### Handbook

#### Transforming the sports and human rights discourse

Sports law expert Daniela Heerdt, together with William Rook (*Centre for Sport and Human Rights and Institute for Human Rights and Business*) and Shubham Jain (*University of Cambridge*), edited *The Routledge Handbook of Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights* – the first comprehensive examination of how major sporting events impact human rights. Drawing on contributions

from leading international experts, the handbook explores both adverse impacts and opportunities for promoting human rights through mega-sporting events.

The book provides new perspectives on human rights as a lens for understanding modern sport and as a guiding principle for responsible sport that protects

the interests of individuals and communities, as well as offering guidance on best practice. Its combination of concrete case studies with general chapters covering different actors, processes and norms provides a rich overview of the question and an in-depth introduction to the many challenges it raises.

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## Monograph

### Unmasking the European roots of global sports governance

Antoine Duval co-edited *The European Roots of the Lex Sportiva: How Europe Rules Global Sport*, an open-access monograph that challenges assumptions about transnational sports law's claimed universality. The research reveals how European legal institutions fundamentally shape global sports governance, raising critical questions about legitimacy and representation in international sports governing bodies (SGBs) like the *World Anti-Doping Agency* (WADA), the *International Federation of Association Football* (FIFA) and the *International Olympic Committee* (IOC).

As Duval said in an [interview](#): "The main aim of the book was to map how Eurocentricity played out in a variety of contexts. We show how European processes, norms, and discourses are fundamental to how international sports are governed (and how this governance is challenged). But we also hoped to steer the field towards a more critical approach to this Eurocentricity. European laws are travelling the world on the back of the *lex sportiva*, shaping the way non-Europeans experience sports. This raises

difficult questions linked to the legitimacy of such 'legal imperialism through the back door' or 'soft legal colonialism'. Seen from a more policy-oriented perspective, we aim to encourage readers to consider how governance in sports could be decentralised. How can we guarantee that European decision-making considers the voices of people affected by these processes, even if they lack political clout in Switzerland or legal standing before the European Court of Justice?"

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## Blog post

### Football: the Diarra ruling, a crucial turning point for the transfer system?

In 2024, the Diarra ruling of the *Court of Justice of the European Union* (CJEU) meant a significant turning point for football. In a [blog post](#) for *Verfassungsblog*, sports law expert Antoine Duval argued that the Diarra ruling challenged the core of FIFA's transfer system, which was built on shaky legal ground and encouraged a speculative market around player contracts.

The ruling targeted two key pillars of the system: the excessive compensation players must pay for a contract breach without just cause and the presumption that a new club is jointly liable for this breach. According to Duval, who was interviewed on the ruling by many national and international news outlets, including the Dutch Ajax fanblog pages *Ajaxshowtime*, players can now more easily switch clubs, and it will stimulate

clubs to recruit players without paying traditional transfer fees. The ruling might present the rare opportunity to collectively bargain a new, more equitable, system that treats players as humans, not commodities. Carl Lewis interviewed Antoine Duval for the Asser Institute podcast series *JurisDictions*, in the episode [Rights, transfers, and transnational law: Exploring football's legal and regulatory landscape](#).



## Research in focus

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

The *T.M.C. Asser Instituut's PhD programme* trains researchers to work at the cutting-edge of international law by conducting independent research situated at the interface of academia and practice. The interdisciplinary programme offers close contact 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 2024, 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.

James 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 project while participating actively in the Asser community. In 2024, 5 visiting researchers joined the visiting research fellowship programme. Achmed Ellaboudy studied the 'Rule of Law and Preventive Justice: Property Rights Protection in the Age of Countering Terrorism'; Dominika Iwan-Sojka worked on 'Access to justice for victims of dual-use export (Just2Export)'; Faraz Shahlaei researched 'From Rings to Resolutions: The Olympic Movement and the United Nations'; Fulbright Specialist Bruce Mackay conducted research in the field of international humanitarian law, international criminal law and legal aspects of countering terrorism; and Lou, a Shelter City Fellow (please see below), investigated 'The Accessibility of the ICC to Children and Young People Victims of Crimes against Humanity in the Philippines'.



### 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 2024, Lou (full name withheld for anonymity), a Filipina human rights defender, investigated the accessibility of international justice mechanisms for child victims in the Philippines.

### Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)

Since January 2016, the Asser Institute has served as the legal representative and host for the *GCTF Administrative Unit*. The GCTF is a 32-member informal, consensus-based multilateral platform that mobilises expertise and resources to reduce global vulnerability to terrorism by developing and sharing practical tools and strategies for prevention, combat, and prosecution.

The Asser Institute provides financial administration and general support to the GCTF, its administrative unit, and various donors and member states. It also contributes its unique research expertise and diverse network to the development and implementation of GCTF outputs, ensuring that all its counter-terrorism work is aligned with the *UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy's* fourth pillar, which emphasises the complementarity of effective counter-terrorism measures and the protection of human rights.

# Collaborative projects advancing justice and international law in 2024

## Designing international law and ethics into military Artificial Intelligence (DILEMA)

The *Designing International Law and Ethics into Military Artificial Intelligence (DILEMA) project* is a four-year initiative funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) that began in September 2020. The interdisciplinary project examines the legal, ethical, and technical aspects of military AI, with a particular focus on preserving human agency.

Researchers investigate why human control over military technology is crucial, identify specific military functions in which such oversight must be maintained to ensure legality and accountability, and analyse how systems can be technically designed to operate within established ethical and legal constraints. The project's findings

are translated into policy recommendations and technical standards for national and international institutions.

Asser Institute project leaders are Berenice Boutin and Marta Bo. (Read more on page 18).



## ELSA Lab Defence

**The ELSA Lab Defence is a public-private initiative addressing ethical, legal, and societal issues by developing a future-proof, independent, and consultative ecosystem for the responsible use of AI in the defence domain.**

The project aims to develop a methodology for context-dependent analysis, design, and

evaluation of ethical, legal and societal aspects of military AI-based applications. Building upon existing approaches to value-sensitive design, explainable algorithms and human-machine teaming, the lab also examines how both society and defence personnel perceive the use of military AI, how these perceptions evolve over time, and how they vary across different contexts.

Funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) and led by the research organisation TNO, the lab includes the Asser Institute as one of nine consortium members. The Institute is represented by Marta Bo and Jonathan Kwik.



## Enabling civil society efforts to address the misuse, diversion and abuse of arms exports in Latin America

Led by the Asser Institute in partnership with *Global Rights Compliance*, the *Center for Advanced Defence Studies (C4ADS)*, *Diálogos*, and *Fundación Myrna Mack*, this project aims to

empower Latin American civil society in combatting the misuse and diversion of arms exports. It focuses on rigorous documentation, investigations and human rights training, helping

civil society organisations and government stakeholders trace weapons and provides education on strategic litigation. The project is led by León Castellanos-Jankiewicz.

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

The H.E.R.O. (Human rights empowered through athletes' rights) project, funded by the *European Union's Erasmus+ programme*, aims to strengthen the respect, protection and promotion of athletes' human rights in

sports governance. Led by a consortium of experts, the project will develop a comprehensive roadmap for sport governing bodies, including sports federations, leagues, and professional clubs, to ensure

respect for athletes' human rights. The project is led by Antoine Duval and Daniela Heerdt.



## MATRA project

### Strengthening Ukraine's capacity to investigate and prosecute international crimes



A joint initiative of the Asser Institute and *Global Rights Compliance* which was implemented from 2020 to 2024, this project aimed to strengthen Ukraine's capacity to investigate and prosecute international crimes. The project, funded by the *Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs* and supported by the *Netherlands Ministry of Justice and Security*, assisted the *Ukrainian War Crimes Unit*, improved the skills of the judiciary, and empowered civil society organisations, defenders, and

victims' representatives. It also enhanced cooperation between government agencies and civil society through public dialogue and networking events, helping stakeholders more effectively combat international crimes and facilitate law enforcement. At Asser, the project was led by Christophe Paulussen (read more on page 12).



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

## Memocracy: Ruling on the basis of memory

The MEMOCRACY project, a collaboration between the *University of Cologne*, the *University of Copenhagen*, the *Polish Academy of Sciences*, and the Asser Institute/ UvA, investigated the legal and political ramifications of a culture war unfolding in Central and Eastern Europe. This conflict is driven by the rise of memory laws and policies that prescribe how national history should be remembered, posing a significant challenge to democracy.

The term 'memocracy', coined for this study, refers to 'ruling on the basis of memory'. Using a transdisciplinary approach, the research team analyses how the emergence of nation-centric memory governance erodes fundamental democratic rights.

In 2024, the team brought scholars from Latin America and East Asia together to The Hague, to explore new solutions to legal governance of history through

memory laws. They also offered workshops and policy briefs to inform public debate on democratic memory governance in Europe. At Asser, the project is led by Ulad Belavusau.



MEMOCRACY



VolkswagenStiftung

## Private international law in motion 2.0 (PAX 2.0)

The [PAX 2.0](#) project aimed to improve the understanding and application of legal instruments in civil justice. It combined an international moot court competition and judicial partnerships and included teams from non-EU countries in the creation of an online guide for the European Commission on organising moot courts on EU

private international law. Focusing on current issues in EU private international law, the project ensured that students, academics and trainee judges gain up-to-date knowledge. The Asser Institute was one of seven partners in the project, which was coordinated by *Antwerp University* and funded by the *Justice Programme of the European Union*.

Vesna Lazić was the Asser Institute's project leader, together with the late Michiel de Rooij, who passed away in February 2024 (see also p. 22).



## Satellite imagery as evidence in international justice proceedings

In April 2024, *UNITAR-UNOSAT*, the Asser Institute, the *Geneva Science-Policy Interface (GSPi)*, and *IUSTICOM* launched an innovative training course designed to equip legal professionals with the skills to use satellite imagery as evidence in international judicial proceedings. The course addressed a critical knowledge gap: legal professionals often lack experience with this type of evidence, while satellite imagery analysts may be unfamiliar with the criminal justice system. Given the importance of satellite images for documenting human rights abuses and atrocities in inaccessible locations, this training is essential for effective investigations and court cases. Christophe Paulussen served as the Asser Institute project lead.



# 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 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 framework for cooperation 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 create synergy and to consolidate high-quality research, the Asser Institute aligns its multi-annual research plans with the UvA's strategic agenda. Both organisations are working to strengthen multi- and interdisciplinary research, expand funding opportunities, increase the impact of joint research and develop new professional education courses. The UvA has also committed to maintaining its current annual funding for the coming years.

In 2024, the collaboration with the *UvA Faculty of Law* focused on educations and on joint research, including in projects such as the DigiChain project and the NWO-funded

DILEMA project. Key developments included greater involvement of Asser 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.

## Stakeholder universities

- University of Amsterdam
- VU Amsterdam
- University of Groningen
- Leiden University
- Maastricht University
- Radboud University of Nijmegen
- Erasmus University Rotterdam
- Utrecht University
- Tilburg University

# Inter-university research networks

In 1965, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut was founded by nine Dutch universities with a shared interest in international law. Today, the Asser Institute still actively promotes collaboration between Dutch law schools through research networks such as the research network *CLEER*, *Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research (NNHRR)* and the IHCL Platform.

## 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 EU's actions worldwide.

In 2024, the CLEER network organised several key events, including the CLEER Conference on General Principles in EU External Relations Law, and two separate PhD workshops on the legal implications of the EU's geopolitical awakening. In June, it hosted the 9<sup>th</sup> CLEER Summer School. In addition, Eva Kassoti and Ramses Wessel published the CLEER paper titled 'The European Union's External Action: Third State Perspectives and Recommendations'.



## 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 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 Stephanie Triefus as academic coordinator. In March, Ms Triefus organised NNHRR's annual PhD training day for 1st and 2nd year students at the Open University in Utrecht. In April, a dedicated training day for 3rd and 4th year students was held at Erasmus School of Law Rotterdam.





### 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 humanitarian and criminal law. It provides a forum for discussion on current and emerging legal issues and is coordinated by Christophe Paulussen.

In October 2024, the 13<sup>th</sup> IHCL Platform PhD Day was held. Moreover, SCL/Benjamin Ferencz and HILAC lectures (see also below) were organised on a variety of topics, namely 'Hate speech and incitement: International criminal and humanitarian law perspectives', 'A Typology of Perpetrators of Mass Atrocities', 'The Red Sea crisis: Assessing the international legal and maritime security implications', 'The Register of Damage for

Ukraine: Towards reparation for victims?', 'The principle of *ne bis in idem* in international criminal law' and 'The F-35 parts export case: International legal implications'. 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* and the *Royal Military Academy* in Belgium.



## Educational impact: Integrating theory and practice

The Asser Institute's education pillar, which includes university teaching, professional training, and global capacity building, expanded its reach in 2024. 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 theoretical knowledge. By integrating insights from our international policy-oriented work with institutions and stakeholders in The Hague and beyond, we provide students and professionals with timely, practice-oriented perspectives on current geopolitical developments.



## Training programmes in 2024



**Advanced professional training**  
Responding to human rights abuse in sport: Safe, Effective & Appropriate Investigation  
 – 5-6 March 2024 (in-person)

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of this professional training drew on real-life challenges from past investigations to provide insight into effective and ineffective responses to reports and allegations of sport-related abuse. It equipped participants with the tools and knowledge needed to address such cases responsibly, protecting those affected, complying with human rights and upholding the integrity of sport.

- **Speakers included (among others):**
  - Kat Craig (*CSHR*)
  - Joanna Maranhão (4x Olympian and survivor network coordinator *Sport & Rights Alliance*)
  - Loïc Alves (*FIFPRO*)
  - Peter Nicholson (*ICC*)
- **Coordinator:**  
Daniela Heerd
- **Co-organiser:**  
*Centre for Sport & Human Rights (CSHR)*



**Spring Academy**  
Technologies of Sustainability Due Diligence: Digital Tools and Global Value Chain Regulations – 8-12 April 2024  
 (in-person)

The newly developed edition of the Spring Academy brought together practitioners and academics to critically reflect on the role of digital technologies in the governance of global value chains through due diligence processes. The training blended theory and practice, combining academic lectures with practitioner-led workshops that explored the function and operation of specific technological solutions in the context of the due diligence process.

- **Speakers included (among others):**
  - Sotirios Kanellopoulos (*European Commission*)
  - Anna Beckers (*Maastricht University*)
  - Luc Fransen (*University of Amsterdam*)
- **Coordinators:**  
Antoine Duval and Klaas Hendrik Eller (*University of Amsterdam*)
- **Co-organiser/subsidy provider:**  
*University of Amsterdam*



### Spring Academy Artificial Intelligence and International Law – 22-26 April 2024 (in-person)

The spring academy is an innovative one-week training programme offering insights into current and emerging issues posed by AI from the perspective of international law and related disciplines. Its sixth edition took place in The Hague from 22 to 26 April 2024.

- **Speakers included (among others):**
  - Dr Filippo Santoni de Sio (*TU Delft*)
  - Dr Tamás Molnár (*EU Agency for Fundamental Rights*)
  - Ioana Puscas (*UNIDIR*)
- **Coordinators:**  
Bérénice Boutin and Jonathan Kwik



### Online summer programme Online summer programme International Sports and Human Rights – 22-29 May 2024

The first online edition of our training programme on Sport and Human Rights, jointly organised with the *Centre for Sport and Human Rights*, took place from 22 to 29 May. The programme examined the relationship between sport and human rights,

with particular attention to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, sport governance, freedom of expression, athletes' rights, and access to remedy. Combining academic research with practical experience, the interactive format fostered exchange between participants and experts from the Asser Institute, the Centre, and leading external speakers from academia and practice.

- **Speakers included (among others):**
  - Magali Martowicz (*International Olympic Committee*)
  - Irene Carretero Sala (*FIFA*)
  - Ginous Alford (*World Players Association*)
- **Coordinator:**  
Daniela Heerd
- **Co-organisers:**  
*Centre for Sport and Human Rights (CSHR)* and *LawInSport*



### Seminario de Fortalecimiento de las Capacidades en Investigación, Juzgamiento y Gestión Judicial de Graves Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos e Infracciones al Derecho Internacional Humanitario en Colombia – 28-30 May 2024 (online) and 24-28 June 2024 (in-person)

Seminar on capacity building in the investigation, prosecution and judicial management of serious violations of human rights and breaches of international humanitarian law in Colombia.

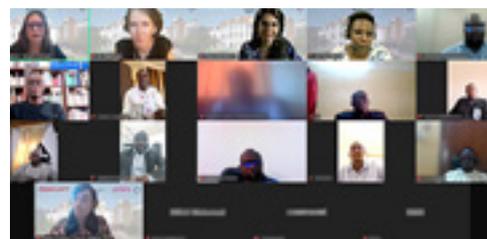
- **Speakers included (among others):**
  - H.E. Carolina Olarte Bácares (Colombian Ambassador in the Netherlands)
  - Miia Aro-Sanchez (ICC)
  - Matthew Gillett (University of Essex)
- **Coordinator:**  
Marta Bo
- **Co-organiser & subsidy providers:**  
*International Nuremberg Principles Academy, Antonio Cassese Initiative, Nuffic, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs*



**Annual summer programme**  
**International Criminal Law and International Legal & Comparative Approaches to Counter-terrorism** – 3-28 June 2024 (in-person)

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Programme on International Criminal Law and International Legal and Comparative Approaches to Counter-Terrorism, co-organised with the *War Crimes Research Office of American University's Washington College of Law*, was a month-long programme for advanced law students and early-career professionals from leading US institutions and beyond. Participants learned from internationally renowned practitioners and scholars, gaining in-depth insight into the core principles of international criminal law, the legal and ethical challenges of counter-terrorism as well as current debates shaping the field.

- **Speakers included (among others):**
  - Judge Fausto Pocar (*International Court of Justice*)
  - Dr Katharine Fortin (*Utrecht University*)
  - Alexis Demirdjian (*International Criminal Court*)
- **Coordinators:**  
Christophe Paulussen and James Patrick Sexton
- **Co-organiser/subsidy provider:**  
*American University Washington College of Law – War Crimes Research Office*



**Renforcement des Capacités Nationales à Poursuivre les Crimes Internationaux et Transnationaux en Afrique** – 4-6 June 2024 (online) and 1-5 July 2024 (in-person)

In collaboration with the *Antonio Cassese Initiative* and the *International Nuremberg Principles Academy*, the Asser Institute organised the training programme 'Strengthening the Capacity of Magistrates in the Prosecution of International Crimes in Africa'. The initiative aimed to strengthen the capacity of national jurisdictions in French-speaking African countries to effectively prosecute international and transnational crimes. The programme combined courses and workshops, focusing on both the legal and practical aspects of such prosecutions through concrete exercises and exchanges of professional experiences.

- **Speakers included (among others):**
  - Prof. Volker Nerlich (*ICC*)
  - Dr. Pauline Martini (*International Nuremberg Principles Academy*)
  - Myriam Fillaud (*Court of Appeal of Paris*)
- **Coordinator:**  
Marta Bo
- **Co-organisers/subsidy providers:**  
*International Nuremberg Principles Academy, Antonio Cassese Initiative, Nuffic, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs*



**Advanced summer programme**  
**Terrorism, Counter-terrorism and the Rule of Law** – 26-30 August 2024 (in-person)

The 14<sup>th</sup> edition of our summer programme featured inspiring lectures by leading experts, interactive sessions, in-person study visits to *Europol* and the *International Criminal Court*, as well as panel presentations and group discussions under the Chatham House Rule. The programme opened with a keynote by Prof. Ben Saul, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, and offered participants valuable networking opportunities with professionals in The Hague and beyond.

- **Speakers included (among others):**
  - Prof. Ben Saul (*UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism*)
  - Dr. Joana Cook (*Leiden University / International Centre for Counter-Terrorism*)
  - Dr. Anne-Marie de Brouwer (*IMPACT*)

- **Coordinator:**  
Niki Siampakou
- **Co-organiser:**  
*ICCT, subsidy provider (scholarships): Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs*



**Training programme**  
**Disarmament and Non-proliferation of WMD 2024** – 30 September – 4 October (in-person)

During this intensive training programme participants received a comprehensive overview of the international non-proliferation and disarmament framework. Renowned experts and practitioners delivered in-depth sessions, prompting active discussion on key issues and current debates in the field. The programme also offered valuable opportunities for professional networking, both with specialists and among the participants themselves.

- **Speakers included (among others):**
  - Oliver Meier (*European Leadership Network*)
  - Jonathan Herbach (*IAEA*)
  - Sibylle Bauer (*SIPRI*)
- **Coordinator:**  
Thea Coventry
- **Co-organisers:**  
*OPCW, subsidy providers (scholarships): OPCW and Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

# Capacity building programmes in 2024

In 2024, the Asser Institute in collaboration with a range of partners, continued its longstanding commitment to providing tailored capacity-building programmes for judges, prosecutors, policymakers, and other practitioners. The core aim of these initiatives is to improve skills on both existing and emerging topics, such as gender-based crimes, while fostering national and international professional networks and contributing to the development of international and European law.

In 2024, these efforts were exemplified by the MATRA project Strengthening Ukraine's capacity to investigate and prosecute international crimes, a joint initiative with *Global Rights Compliance* (GRC) and funded by the *Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs*.

Gabriela Radu and Gabrielè Chlevickaitė, along with Victoria Kerr, implemented many of the comprehensive series of trainings and expert engagements that focused on strengthening Ukrainian capacity in international criminal law (ICL) and fair trial standards. Key activities included the International and Ukrainian Perspectives on Prosecution of International Crimes workshops in January and February, followed by a guest lecture series for Ukrainian law students in February and March.

## Practical skills

Significant emphasis was placed on practical skills through Fair Trial Monitoring Training for civil society and journalists and a dedicated Defence Counsel Training held in Kyiv in March, co-organised with the Ukrainian Bar Association and the International Bar

Association. Further enhancing the legal framework, a series of expert meetings on International Criminal Law Implementing Legislation took place from February to May. In May and June, a study visit was organised on enhancing transitional justice frameworks and a separate international criminal law study visit for legal professionals. Later in the year, multiple Fair Trial Rights workshops were delivered in both Kyiv and The Hague, while a judicial training series, co-organised with the National School of Judges of Ukraine, was implemented from June to July to strengthen judicial capacity. These efforts culminated in a major MATRA exchange meeting and study visit for judges, prosecutors, and investigators in The Hague in November 2024. (Read more on page 30.)





## Restoring Dignity and Justice in Ukraine

This project aims to advance accountability for international crimes committed in Ukraine. Funded by the *Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, it is implemented by the *International Development Law Organization* (IDLO), in partnership with the T.M.C. Asser Instituut, the *Center for International Legal Cooperation* (CILC), and the *Netherlands Helsinki Committee* (NHC). Through a series of capacity development activities for legal and justice actors, the project will strengthen Ukrainian

municipal law and increase practitioners' understanding of IHL and ICL, fair trial standards, legislative drafting, digital evidence, and adjudication of conflict-related crimes.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

## 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 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 Asser Institute and the *Special Tribunal for Lebanon* (STL), the IUP became the first ICL specialisation in the region and a pioneer in online

legal education. It is currently jointly run by the Asser Institute, the *Human Rights Legal Clinic* at *La Sagesse University*, and *IUSTICOM* in cooperation with 14 universities across the MENA region.

### **Expanded reach**

Originally designed for Lebanese students, the course expanded significantly in 2024 to include students from universities in Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq, responding to the region's urgent need for ICL expertise and

accountability. The programme is highly regarded by students and lecturers alike, with one professor describing it as "the best attempt towards reconciliation in Lebanon." It has trained many students, some of whom have since pursued careers in the field and advanced ICL scholarship by publishing works in Arabic, thereby fostering cross-cultural understanding and enriching the global legal debate.

## Lecture series and events

In cooperation with other organisations and colleagues from The Hague legal community and beyond, the Asser Institute hosts a wide variety of free lectures and events. These include the SCL series on international criminal law and the HILAC lecture series on law and armed conflict, often organised in cooperation with the International Humanitarian and Criminal Law Platform (see above).

### SCL Lecture Series/ 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 SCL Lecture Series is a prominent platform to discuss international criminal law.

In February, an SCL lecture was organised entitled 'A Typology of Perpetrators of Mass Atrocities'.

In May 2024, the Asser Institute and the *Ukrainian Embassy in the Netherlands* hosted an SCL lecture titled 'The Register of Damage for Ukraine: Towards reparation for victims?'.

In June, the SCL Series was rebranded as the *Benjamin Ferencz Lecture Series*, to honour the international criminal justice champion Benjamin Ferencz, who had passed away in 2023 at the age of 103. Having served as chief prosecutor in the Einsatzgruppen trial at Nuremberg, Ferencz was a tireless advocate for international criminal justice.

In October, a Benjamin Ferencz lecture focused on 'The principle of ne bis in idem in international criminal law'.

On International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2024, acting academic director Christophe Paulussen and Don Ferencz, the son of Benjamin Ferencz, unveiled a bust of the former prosecutor and advocate at the Asser Institute. The sculpture was created by artist Björn Skaarup.



## Benjamin Ferencz Lecture Series

on International Criminal Justice



### HILAC Lecture Series

Since 2005, the Asser Institute in cooperation with the *Netherlands Red Cross* and the *UvA Amsterdam Center for International Law* has been hosting the HILAC Lecture Series on law and armed conflict.

In January 2024, the HILAC lecture 'Hate speech and incitement: International criminal and humanitarian law perspectives' was organised.

In March 2024, the HILAC lecture 'The Red Sea crisis: Assessing the international legal and maritime security implications' was organised.

In July 2024, a HILAC lecture in cooperation with the DILEMA project team was organised, titled 'Natural and Artificial Intelligence in Armed Conflict: Exploring Settled and Open Legal Questions'.

In November, the Institute hosted another HILAC lecture titled 'The F-35 parts export case: International legal implications'.

## Artist-in-residence

### Exploring the impact of international and European law through visual storytelling

A new collaboration between the Asser Institute and the *Royal Academy of Art* in The Hague (KABK) merged international law and art. From September to December 2024, three KABK Photography students – Anastasia T., Daria Radu, and Salome Erni

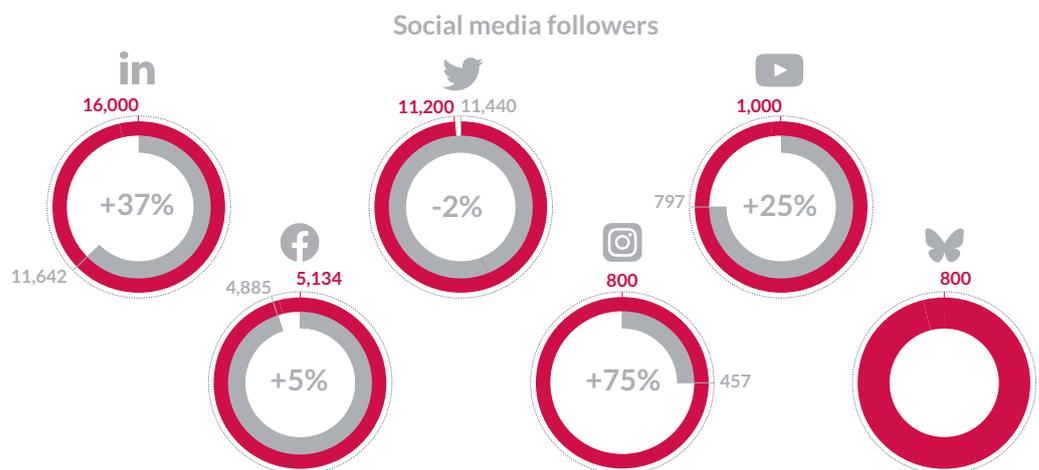
– were artists-in-residence at the Institute. Immersed in research on public interests in law, they used visual storytelling to make complex legal concepts more accessible. This unique project aimed to show the real-world

impact of law on people's lives. The work was showcased in a public exhibition in West, the former US Embassy in The Hague, with a talk-show featuring artists and researchers, film, live music, spoken word poetry, and a keynote lecture on art and law by Sofia Stolk. The project was led by Pascal Messer.

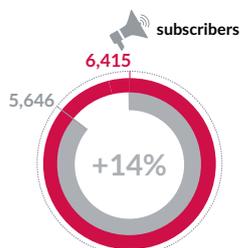
# Communications 2024

The Institute's online community continued to grow in 2024, with a particularly strong performance on visual and professional platforms. YouTube views increased by 90%; LinkedIn followers grew by 37%; our newsletter community expanded to more than 11,000 subscribers; and the launch of our Bluesky presence reflected our commitment to making legal research accessible across multiple platforms.

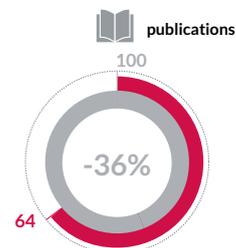
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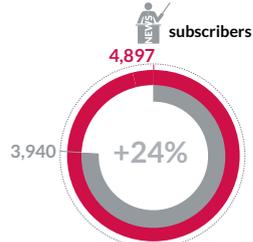
### 'Asser today' newsletter



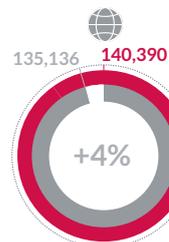
### Asser in the media



### Asser education & events newsletter



### Website visitors



# In the media

Throughout 2024, Asser Institute researchers provided expert analysis on pressing legal questions to media outlets around the world, thus contributing to public understanding of complex international law issues. With more than 60 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.

## Brussels wants stronger ties with Türkiye

“The increasing turmoil on the world stage is the main reason why the EU is seeking rapprochement with Türkiye,” says Narin Idriz in an [article in \*Het Financieele Dagblad\*](#). Narin was a co-author of a report by the *Advisory Council on International Affairs* on Turkey’s geopolitical role. Brussels wants to strengthen embattled ties with Turkey, as the wars in Gaza and Ukraine call for stable alliances. (23 January 2024, in Dutch)



## Groundbreaking dissertation sparks debate on AI weapons

Following his recent cum laude PhD graduation, Jonathan Kwik has drawn wide attention in both legal and technical communities for his research on the use of AI in warfare. His dissertation, which examines the legal implications of AI-powered weapons, attracted significant media attention and triggered important conversations about the future of armed conflict. Dutch newspaper *Het Parool* dedicated an [article](#) to his groundbreaking research (15 February 2024). This was preceded by an [interview](#) published

by the Amsterdam Law School in which Kwik discussed his insights and recommendations for regulating AI weapons (8 February 2024) and an in-depth [interview](#) in UvA’s student magazine *Folia* on the ongoing AI arms race and (14 February 2024).

## Het Parool

### Dutch court decision stopping F-35/F-16 parts exports to Israel

León Castellanos-Jankiewicz was [interviewed](#) by Al-Jazeera television on the Hague-based *Court of Appeal*’s decision ordering the Dutch government to stop exporting F-35 and F-16 jet parts to Israel. The court reversed a prior decision by a lower court that had declined to stop the exports. The judgment was brought in a preliminary procedure by three NGOs that challenged the Dutch state’s continued participation in supplying parts from the Dutch regional F-35 warehouse in Woensdrecht to Israel under a general export licence (20 February 2024).



### Gun violence & international Law

The BBC World Service's radio documentary *The Inquiry* invited León Castellanos-Jankiewicz as a contributor for their broadcast [Can Mexico win its battle with US gun companies?](#) The programme explores the legal, political, and transnational dimensions of Mexico's strategy to sue U.S. gun companies for their role in supplying firearms that are trafficked into Mexico – probing whether such litigation can succeed, what obstacles in terms of law, jurisdiction or immunity it might face, and what precedent or impact it might have. (10 March 2024).



### AI targeting humans

Magda Pacholska was quoted in *El País* in an [article](#) on Israel's use of the artificial intelligence targeting system *Lavender*. The automated decision-making system, part of the extensive digital surveillance network imposed on Gazans, processes data about Gaza Strip residents and uses it for targeting purposes. Pacholska notes that the Israeli army had previously used automated decision-making support systems such as *Lavender* and *Gospel* in 2021. Forces from the United States, France, the Netherlands and others, have also used such technologies, though until now only against material targets. "The novelty is that, this time, [Israel] is using these systems against human targets," highlights Pacholska. (17 April 2024)

**EL PAÍS**

### ICC warns against 'threats'

Before issuing arrest warrants against Israeli officials Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant, as well as the Hamas leaders responsible for the 7 October 2023 attacks in Israel, *International Criminal Court* (ICC) prosecutor Karim Kahn warned against threats and intimidation directed at the Court by Israel. Interviewed by news agency AFP, Gabrièle Chlevickaitė explained that Israel's reported retaliatory steps were aimed at the Palestinian authorities, "not at the ICC or the OTP". However, "some statements by Israeli officials could be interpreted as threatening the OTP officials indirectly and, or, interfering with the investigation," she told AFP. Such actions, she explained, would constitute not only an offence under the ICC's Rome Statute "but a blatant disregard of the rule of law." The [AFP article](#) was published in multiple newspapers internationally, including *France24*, *ABS-CBN News*, the *Strait Times*, *Al-Monitor*, *New Vision*, and the *Manila Times*. (3 May 2024)



### Legal history and colonialism

In an [article](#) about the history of India's unusual time zone, *CNN Travel* quoted Geoff Gordon whose work explores the temporal dimensions of international law and legal practice. "The railroads had immense sway over the colonial powers," Gordon explained. "Before the railroads won the contest for Madras time, there was a contest among the powerful cities – Bombay, Kolkata. That fight didn't last long." (8 May 2024)



### Deprivation of nationality as objectionable chest-thumping

In an [interview](#) with Dutch media organisation *de Kanttekening* on deprivation of nationality of former jihadists, acting academic director Christophe Paulussen called for a more evidence-based approach to counterterrorism policy. "I see the deprivation of nationality as purely symbolic politics. It's chest-thumping – a way to demonstrate that these people no longer belong to the Netherlands and therefore must leave. (...) While this may be politically understandable, it obviously doesn't solve the problem - it merely shifts it. (...) That idea - that we'll toss our problem over the fence and hope it disappears - is, from a moral perspective, highly objectionable." (22 May 2024)

**deKanttekening**  
Vrij, moedig & inzicht

### Landmark legal case rocking the football world

*The New York Times* [interviewed](#) transnational sports law expert Antoine Duval following the *European Court of Justice* ruling in the Lassana Diarra case, a landmark decision that rocked the football world by finding that certain FIFA transfer rules violated EU law. Duval described the ruling as "seismic" noting that it could concentrate even more power in the hands of the wealthiest clubs and lead to even higher salaries for the game's wealthiest players by making it easier and less punitive for athletes to walk out on their contracts. (4 October 2024).

**The New York Times**

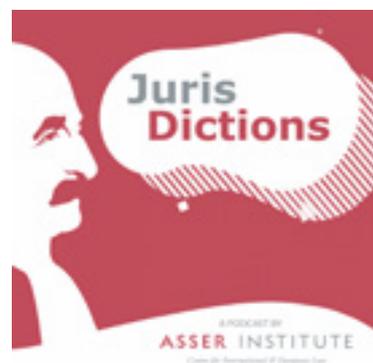
## New podcast series

### Asser Institute launches *JurisDictions*: International law podcast

How is it that a movie about a children's toy can raise tensions over territorial sovereignty? And why is it that certain international disputes draw more global attention than others? In February 2024, the Asser Institute launched *JurisDictions*, an educational podcast that explores the stories behind international legal concepts and issues. Hosted by Carl Lewis, each episode focuses on a particular concept that experts break down and explain.

#### Episodes in 2024:

- Why so serious? The importance of (fictional) maps in international law
- Gaza and the international legal community (?): South Africa v Israel at the ICJ
- The rules of modern warfare and ancient traditions





## 9<sup>th</sup> Annual T.M.C. Asser Lecture

Professor Fleur Johns, a recognised expert on international law and the role of automation and digital technology in global legal relations, delivered the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual T.M.C. Asser Lecture, titled 'Connection in a divided world: Rethinking 'community' in international law', on Thursday 25 April 2024 in the Peace Palace in The Hague.

Professor Johns' lecture explored the concept of community in today's international law, especially in the context of humanitarianism. As digital technology radically reshapes the ways in which people connect, communicate, share values, exercise power, and engage in conflict, the concept of community in international law is once being contested.

# 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 2024, T.M.C. Asser Press published 11 new book titles and 5 journals numbering a total of 18 publications.

#### Book publications, highlights:

- Two titles appeared in the *IT&Law Series*: 'From Encryption to Quantum Computing – The Governance of Information Security and Human Rights', a monograph by UvA scholar Ot van Daalen; and 'Digital Governance – Confronting the Challenges Posed by Artificial Intelligence', an edited volume, edited by Kostina Prifti, Esra Demir, Julia Krämer, Klaus Heine and Evert Stamhuis, *Department of Law & Business, Erasmus School of Law, Rotterdam*;
- 'Criminalising Hate Speech – a Comparative Study', edited by Eric Heinze, *Department of Law, Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom*;
- The fifth volume of the *European Yearbook of Constitutional Law (2023)*, with 'Constitutional Law in the Digital Era' as the central theme;
- 'Animal Law Worldwide – Key Issues and Main Trends Across 27 Jurisdictions', a volume edited by Federico Dalpane and Maria Baideldinova, *School of Law, KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan*;
- 'Lawfully Using Autonomous Weapon Technologies', a monograph by Jonathan Kwik.

#### Journals, highlights:

- Issue 1 of Volume 16, 2024 of the *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* was a special issue on 'The Catalan secessionist process and the rule of law, democracy, and human rights through the lens of International and European law', containing eight articles, four of which were published open access;
- Ten open access articles were published in the four issues (including one double issue) of Volume 24 (2024) of *The International Sports Law Journal*;
- Two special issues appeared in Volume 71 (2024) of the *Netherlands International Law Review*, one on 'Externalisation of Migration and Border Controls and Accountability Challenges in International Law' (issue 1, vol. 71) and one on 'Public Interest Litigation' (issue 3, vol. 71);
- The first issue of Volume 25 (2024) of the *European Business Organization Law Review* was a topical issue on 'Third Country Regimes in EU Financial Regulation';
- In addition to documenting national and international case law, Volume 42 (2024) of *Nederlands Internationaal Privaatrecht (NIPR)* featured 13 original articles on private international law.

The Impact Factors of Asser Press's English language journals all increased compared to the previous year. Notably, the *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* rose to 12<sup>th</sup> place in the Clarivate's law journals list (2023), achieving an Impact Factor of 2.9.

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](http://www.nipr-online.eu).

You can find a detailed list containing all T.M.C. Asser Press publications that appeared in 2024 in the ANNEX ([www.asser.nl](http://www.asser.nl)).



# In memoriam

## Michiel de Rooij (1962-2024)\*

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of our dear colleague and friend, Michiel de Rooij. Michiel, born on 1 September 1962, passed away unexpectedly last week. He leaves behind his wife, Nadine, and two children.

Michiel joined the Asser Institute in November 1992 and quickly became a valued member of our community. His dedication to research and his expertise in private international law were instrumental in numerous projects and publications. Michiel was specialised in private international law, civil commercial law with a focus on transnational aspects, and in general maritime law and the law of transport.

Michiel played a vital role in data collection and editing for the T.M.C. Asser Press periodical "**Nederlands Internationaal Privaatrecht**" (Netherlands Private International Law), demonstrating his commitment to advancing legal scholarship. In 2022, Michiel edited the 14th edition of 'Jurisprudentie Internationaal Privaatrecht 2022', detailing the most important judgments from 1924 to 2022 in the field of Private International Law, aimed at students and legal practice.

T.M.C. Asser Press publisher Frank Bakker: "For many years Michiel selected, analysed and reported on case law in the field of private international law, forming the backbone of our journal *Nederlands Internationaal Privaatrecht*

and of the documentation part of the online database NIPR Online. His deep knowledge of private international law and civil law, his commitment to his work and his wit and good humour will be greatly missed by his colleagues at Asser Press and by the members of the Editorial Board of NIPR."

Acting academic director Christophe Paulussen: "Beyond his professional contributions, Michiel will be remembered for his warmth, kindness, and genuine connection with others. His daily walks to the coffee machine led to many informal gatherings, where colleagues could engage in stimulating discussions on legal matters or simply enjoy his vibrant personality. Whether you had a complex legal question or a casual inquiry, Michiel was always willing to help, offering insightful answers that went above and beyond."

We all held deep respect and affection for Michiel. The entire Asser Institute team will miss him dearly.

*Christophe Paulussen and Kasper Vrolijk,*  
Executive Board of the Asser Institute

\*As it appeared on the Asser website on 16 February 2024.



**ASSER**  
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