

SPOTLIGHT

Supporting the next generation of legal talent

How the Firm is raising the bar in its support of the Willem C Vis moot court.

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The Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot celebrated its 30th anniversary in April this year. The Reporter Quarterly discovers how the Firm is broadening and deepening its support of this prestigious international event.

The Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot is among the most prestigious international moot court events, giving law students the chance to compete in the largest simulation of a commercial arbitration in the world.

No wonder then that the Firm is so committed to supporting the annual competition and has been doing so for decades.

Paris Partner Kirsten Odynski explains: "Our relationship with the Vis is extremely well established and, in recent years, we've stepped this up with a more coordinated approach, largely driven by our associates."

The 2023 competition was held in Vienna in April. A total of 378 teams took part representing 89 countries. Awards are presented to individuals and teams, both for the written and oral aspects of the competition.



A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark blazer and a pearl necklace, stands in a large, empty courtroom with rows of wooden seats. The background shows the high ceilings and architectural details of the court.

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Kirsten says: “This year’s event was particularly special because it marked the 30th anniversary of the competition. The Vis remains as popular as ever and is an important learning opportunity for young lawyers, giving them invaluable experience in written and oral advocacy.”

As well as providing coaches and arbitrators for the competition, the Firm also ran a unique event called the White & Case Vis Colloquium, which takes place in the Fall at the beginning of the Vis season, shortly after the problem has been issued.

As preparation for the 2023 competition, more than 150 students attended this Colloquium in person at our Brussels, Frankfurt, Geneva, London, Madrid, Milan, Paris, Prague, Stockholm and Warsaw offices with a further 445 attending online from all over the world.

Local Partner, Brussels and Luxembourg, Alexandre Hublet says: “The aim of the Colloquium is to introduce students to the Vis and to ensure they are as well prepared as possible to do well in the competition.”

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored shirt, stands in a large, empty courtroom with rows of wooden seats. The background shows the high ceilings and architectural details of the court.

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ANGÉLICA ANDRÉ, COUNSEL, PARIS

"The event is truly international and features presentations from international arbitration practitioners and academics who give tips on researching the Vis Moot problem."

This year's speakers at the Colloquium included White & Case lawyers and external guest speakers Hugh Meighen of BLG Toronto, Juan Ignacio Massun of PCA, Buenos Aires, and Professor Dr. Peter Huber of Mainz University.

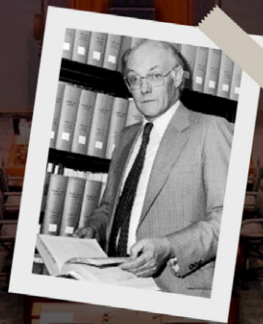
Following the Colloquium, the Firm also offers pre-moot competitions with selected teams at several offices, including Brussels, Frankfurt, Geneva, London, Paris, and Prague, giving them further support in the lead up to the event.

Paris Counsel Angélica André explains: "The pre-moots give the students an important chance to practice, get advice from our lawyers and take part in mock arguments."

"Feedback from students suggests that the Colloquium and pre-moots are really useful and appreciated by students and practitioners, attending as guest speakers or arbitrators alike."



Fast facts



The moot is named after Willem Cornelis Vis, an expert in international commercial sections and dispute settlement procedures

The Vis was first run in 1993, the year of Vis's death

The competition consists of two parts: a written phase which starts in October and oral arguments, which take place in Vienna around Easter



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The competition had a record 387 teams in 2022



The Firm also organized a reception for participants in Vienna. It was attended by approximately 350 people including arbitration practitioners, academics and coaches.

Alexandre says: "The Vis Moot is a unique opportunity to meet the arbitration community as well as students with a deep interest in international arbitration, combining business development and recruitment imperatives in one event."

"The demand from participants was amazing and the reception was over-subscribed, so we'll be looking at ways to expand it next year. It's clear the interest is there and that everyone really enjoyed it."

The reception was organized by Angélica, Alexandre and Paris associates Evanthis Kasiora and Gustavo Gaspar Nogueira. Associates Bianca McDonnell (Madrid), Karolina Brzeska (Warsaw) and Eric Lenier Ives (New York) helped on the day.

Supporting the Vis is not only beneficial to the students taking part, it's an important element of the Firm's global citizenship work and is something that many of our lawyers are passionate about supporting.

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ALEXANDRE HUBLET,
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Angélica says: "So many of our lawyers, including Alexandre and I, have taken part in the Vis, really enjoyed it and have gone on to become coaches and arbitrators. There is a real passion to give back and keep that involvement going."

"It's also a brilliant opportunity to network, because many practitioners attend the event as coaches and arbitrators."

Kirsten adds: "The various activities that the Firm engages in to support the Vis is good for potential business development, as well as introducing young lawyers to the Firm and increasing brand awareness."

"Certainly, many students who've taken part in the Vis have gone on to become lawyers at White & Case and we're now finding that many talented young lawyers are coming to us to ask about the potential of a career at the Firm, so it's having a positive impact on recruitment."

Looking forward, the Firm's relationship with the Vis Moot will only continue to grow.

Kirsten says: "All we've been doing in recent years has broadened and deepened our relationship with the Vis Moot. A big thank you to all the associates and partners who have dedicated so much of their time and efforts."

"All our events have been oversubscribed and we're excited about growing them even further in future."

