



International Society for Military Law and the Law of War
‘Société Internationale de Droit Militaire et de Droit de la Guerre’

THE ‘SILENT LEGES INTER ARMA?’ CONFERENCE IX

By the *Belgian Group* under the Auspices of the
International Society for Military Law and the Law of War

PROGRAMME

Ref.: ISMLLW 1261 N E 8

Grand Hotel Casselbergh, Bruges
15-18 September 2026



Tuesday 15 September 2026

Arrival of the participants

14:00 – 17:00

Registration

14:00 – 15:15

Meeting of the Managing Board of the International Society for Military Law and the Law of War (separate invitations sent to the MB members)

15:30 – 17:00

Meeting of the Board of Directors of the International Society for Military Law and the Law of War (separate invitations sent to the BOD members)

18:00 – 19:30

Opening drink hosted at the bar of the Grand Hotel Casselbergh

Wednesday 16 September 2026

08:30 – 09:15 Registration

09:30 – 09:45 Opening of the Conference

Ludwig VAN DER VEKEN, President, Belgian Group of the International Society for Military Law and the Law of War

09:45 – 10:30 Group photo & Coffee/Tea

Conference Moderator:

Saskia LEMEIRE, Legal Advisor, Claims Office – International, DG Legal Support, Ministry of Defence, Belgium

10:30 – 12:15 Session 1 – The Non-Intervention Principle in Today's World

Chair:

Alfons VANHEUSDEN, Assistant Secretary General, International Society for Military Law and the Law of War

Presenters :

Prof. Dr. Marco MILANOVIC, Professor of Public International Law, University of Reading School of Law

Lauren KENIS, Legal Advisor, International Law Section, DG Legal Support, Ministry of Defence, Belgium

12:15 – 13:30 Lunch buffet

14:00 – 17:15 Social-cultural Programme in Bruges

Details by email

Thursday 17 September 2026

08:30 – 09:00 Keynote speech – What Compass for Europe in Times of Geopolitical Rivalry?

Theo FRANCKEN, Minister of Defence and Foreign Trade, Belgium

09:00 – 10:30 Session 2 – Current International Law Debates in the Cyber Domain

Chair:

Prof. Dr. Marco MILANOVIC, Professor of Public International Law,
University of Reading School of Law

Presenters:

Loïc MERTENS, Legal Advisor, International Law Section, DG Legal
Support, Ministry of Defence, Belgium

Commander Kat AUBREY-HORVATH, Director of Cyber Operations
Law, Office of the Judge Advocate General, Canada

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee/Tea

11:00– 12:30 Session 3 – Dealing with the Shadow Fleet in accordance with International and National Law

Commenting Moderator:

Prof. (Em.) Dr. Wolff HEINTSCHEL VON HEINEGG, President of the
Society & Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)

Presenters:

Corvette Captain Jeroen VAN OVERLOOP, Belgian Maritime
Information Crossroads (MIK)

Prof. Dr. Valeria EBOLI, Italian Naval Academy

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch buffet

13:45 – 15:15 Session 4 – Total Defence from an International Humanitarian Law Perspective

Chair:

Colonel (Ret.) Chris DE COCK, Visiting Professor, UGent and VUB

Presenter:

Dr. Hanne CUYCKENS, Associate Professor of Military Law,
Netherlands Defence Academy

15:15 – 15:45 Coffee/Tea

15:45 – 17:15

Session 5 – Rights & Protection of Local Staff in International Missions

Chair:

Emmanuel JACOB, President, EUROMIL

Presenters:

Prof. Dr. Sara DE JONG, Professor in Politics, University of York

Ratislav SPAC, Legal Advisor, European External Action Service

Free evening

Friday 18 September 2026

08:30 – 10:00

Session 6 – International Humanitarian Law Preparedness in Peacetime

Chair:

Colonel (Ret.) Chris DE COCK, Visiting Professor, UGent and VUB

General

Presenter:

Dr. Nele VERLINDEN, Senior Legal Advisor, ICRC Delegation to the EU, NATO and the Kingdom of Belgium

The medical domain

Presenter:

Niesje VANDUFFEL, PhD Researcher in Medical Law in Military Contexts, University of Antwerp & Royal Military Academy

10:00 – 10:30

Coffee/Tea

10:30 – 12:00

Session 7 – Humanitarian Access in Non-International Armed Conflicts

Chair:

Dr. Hanne CUYCKENS, Associate Professor of Military Law, Netherlands Defence Academy

Presenter:

Prof. Dr. Matthias VANHULLEBUSCH, Faculty of Law, UHasselt

Lente VERHEYEN, International Humanitarian Law Officer, Belgian Red Cross - Flanders

12:00 – 12:30

*Special Presentation – The Impact of Armed Conflict on Gender Issues
and How This May Play a Role in IHL Interpretation*

Presenter:

Frédéric CASIER, Legal Advisor, Belgian Red Cross French-speaking
community

12:30 – 12:45

Closing ceremony

Ludwig VAN DER VEKEN, President, Belgian Group of the International
Society for Military Law and the Law of War

Supporting Partner

Netherlands Defence Academy

EUROMIL