



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 NE 9

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, Professor of International Law, Italian Naval
Academy

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch buffet

- 13:30 – 15:15 *Session 4 – Total Defence from an International Humanitarian Law Perspective*
- Chair:
- Colonel (Ret.) Chris DE COCK, Visiting Professor, UGent and VUB
- Presenter:
- Colonel Bart HUBRECHTSEN, Head of the Liaison Service of the Belgian Armed Forces in Germany
- 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 Partners

DG Legal Support of the Belgian Ministry of Defence

EUROMIL

Netherlands Defence Academy