

PAX Moot Court Rules

The 2026 Vladimir Koutikov Round



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I. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

1. Definitions

1.1. The following definitions are used in the Rules:

- “Bench” means private international law experts assessing either written pleadings or oral arguments (or both);
- “Case” or “Problem” means a hypothetical law problem, which will be pleaded during the Competition;
- “Competition” means the annual Pax Moot Round, each year named after a famous academic or practitioner in the field of private international law;
- “Court” means the Bench or a part hereof at the Oral Round;
- “Executive Secretariat” means the persons defined in the Rules;
- “OT” means an organising team to help in the arranging of the Competition under the direction of the Executive Secretariat.

2. Case

2.1. The Case is a hypothetical private international law problem, which is pleaded in front of the Court during the Competition, and which is prepared annually by private international law experts upon the invitation of the OT. The Case is available on [the website of the Pax Moot Court](#).

3. Executive Secretariat

3.1. The OT will designate an Executive Secretariat among its members. The Executive Secretariat’s task, other than specified in the following paragraphs, is to ensure that the proceedings are carried out in consistency with the overall spirit and aim of the Competition and to resolve all matters which would otherwise be detrimental to the organisation of the Competition. In particular, where the Bench is not able to reach a decision, the Executive Secretariat will have the final decision, including but not limited to matters of disqualification and calculation of results.

3.2. All decisions of the Executive Secretariat are final and not subject to appeal.

II. THE COMPETITION

4. Structure

4.1 The Competition consists of two phases:

- a written phase, in which all teams shall prepare written pleadings for both the Applicant and the Respondent; and
- an oral phase, in which the teams which are selected based on their written pleadings according to Article 16 of the Rules, shall defend their argumentation before the Court, pleading for both the Applicant and the Respondent.

5. Language

5.1. English is the official language throughout the Competition. Participants must use exclusively English in the written and oral phases of the Competition.

III. PARTICIPATION

6. Admission of teams

6.1. There shall only be one team per university.

6.2. Only students from a university or law faculty enrolled in undergraduate or Master programmes, without already having obtained a bar qualification, are eligible to participate in the Competition. If deemed necessary, the Executive Secretariat may request students to present a valid proof of enrolment in an undergraduate or Master programme, for the purposes of assessing their eligibility in the Competition.

6.3. The team shall consist of two to four law students, who must be enrolled in the same university or law faculty. Students being on exchange in another country are eligible to participate as team members of the host university. The teams shall submit their team composition via the registration form available on the [website of the Pax Moot Court](#).

6.4. Any change in the composition of a team shall be communicated through the Competition's official e-mail account (info@paxmoot.eu) and will only be permitted after approval by the Executive Secretariat.

6.5. Each team may have one or more team coaches. A team coach may only assist in general discussions concerning the Case, general points of law, research techniques, linguistic matters or presentational skills, and may give no substantive advice during either phase of the Competition. A team coach is not allowed to actively take part in the oral pleadings once the Competition has begun officially. Teams that are deemed to have breached this rule will be disqualified with immediate effect by the Executive Secretariat.

6.6. Team members and team coaches are not allowed to communicate with the Bench about Competition related matters throughout the Competition.

7. Registration

7.1 A team is considered as a participating team after completing the registration form available on the [website of the Pax Moot Court](#), and receiving timely confirmation of registration from the Executive Secretariat.

IV. OVERRIDING PRINCIPLES

8. Fair Play and the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

8.1. Participants are expected to comply fully with the standards of academic honesty, fairness, and integrity, at all stages of the Competition. They must show respect to all other participants, judges, and organisers.

8.2. Allowed use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Acknowledging the widespread prevalence and practical significance of AI, there are contexts and purposes for which AI can be used within the Competition. The exclusive list is as follows:

- a) using AI-enhanced research tools to find relevant sources (e.g., search engines), including using AI to generate overviews or briefings on relevant factual and legal topics which are not submitted as part of the memorials but solely used for the team's own understanding;
- b) using AI-enhanced proof-reading and editing tools;
- c) using AI-enhanced translation tools, to translate and understand legal sources;
- d) using AI-enhanced translation tools to aid an English translation of text within the submitted memorial.

8.3. All other use of AI is prohibited. The following are expressly prohibited and would be acts in contravention of these rules:

- a) the submission of text in the memorial that has been generated by an AI-tool other than as contemplated in 8.2.d) above – even if the AI-generated text has been altered, corrected and amended by the team members;
- b) reliance on AI-generated case summaries.

9. Anonymity

9.1. Strict anonymity of the teams is required during the written phase of the Competition. For this reason, each team must indicate an alias when submitting the written memorials. Submissions in breach of the strict anonymity rule will not be accepted by the Executive Secretariat.

9.2. During the Competition, teams shall not refer to their opponent, whether personally or as a group, explicitly by their personal identity. Instead, they are encouraged to use official references such as “the Applicant” and “the Respondent”.

10. External Assistance

10.1. Participation in both phases of the Competition must be an effort of the team only. External assistance that would interfere with the final submission of memorials or with the oral pleadings, is strictly prohibited and will be severely penalised upon determination by the Executive Secretariat. Any external assistance to teams, including that from a faculty member, coach, or similar, shall be limited to a general discussion of issues, suggestions as to research resources, or linguistic help.

10.2. During the oral phase of the Competition, the sharing of another team's substantial arguments with its future opponents is especially prohibited, and may result in severe point deductions or disqualification from the Competition, at the discretion of the Executive Secretariat.

V. TIMELINE OF THE COMPETITION

11. Timeline

11.1 The detailed timeline of the Competition is available on the [website of the Pax Moot Court](#).

12. Clarifications and Problem Corrections

12.1. Each team may submit a maximum of five clarification questions, up until Friday 16 January 2026, 23:59 CET, as mentioned in the timeline of the Competition, after which no more questions may be submitted unless a reasonable justification is provided to, and accepted by, the Executive Secretariat.

12.2. Requests for clarification should be limited to matters that would appear to have legal significance in the context of the Case. A request for clarification must include a short explanation of the expected significance of the clarification. Any request that does not contain such an explanation will not be considered.

12.3. Requests for clarifications must be sent to the Competition's official e-mail account (info@paxmoot.eu) with the subject line "Request for Clarification". The Executive Secretariat will transfer all questions to the OT.

12.4. The OT shall issue a single Clarifications and Problem Corrections document after the 16 January 2026 deadline, and any clarifications received after that date shall be decided upon on a case-by-case basis. The Executive Secretariat will publish the Clarifications and Problem Corrections document on the website of the Pax Moot Court, within the deadline indicated on the Competition's timeline.

12.5. Each team must ensure that it has access to, and adequately notes, the Clarifications and Problem Corrections in preparation for the Competition.

VI. WRITTEN PHASE

13. The Memorials

13.1. Each team must submit two written memorials, one on behalf of the Applicant and one on behalf of the Respondent. The written pleading on behalf of the Respondent should hypothetically be responding to the team's own Applicant memorial, hence it is advised to finalize the written memorial on behalf of the Applicant first.

13.2. The form:

- the colour of the external cover background shall be red for the Applicant and blue for the Respondent;
- the written memorials shall be typewritten on A4 paper, font Times New Roman, type face 1.5 line spacing (interlinear space), 12 pt font size, 3 cm margins top and bottom and 2 cm margins left and right; kerning is not allowed;
- the pages of the written memorials shall be numbered continuously at the bottom of each page;
- footnotes shall be numbered continuously and appear at the bottom of the page and presented in OSCOLA format;
- written pleadings shall be submitted in PDF format only.

13.3. Each written memorial shall have a minimum of 8 and maximum of 12 pages (title page, table of contents, bibliography, and index of authorities excluded). The statement of the facts shall not exceed one page. The memorial may end with the succinct exposition of the submissions of the party concerned (*petitum*).

13.4. The identity of the teams behind the alias chosen upon registration shall not be revealed to the Bench.

13.5. Infractions

13.5.1. Infractions of the instructions regarding the written pleadings may result in penalties to teams, that is, a loss of points or possible disqualification. Minor infractions may be ignored at the discretion of the Executive Secretariat. Notwithstanding other provisions contained in the Rules, the following infractions may result in penalties to teams:

13.5.2. Exceeding the stipulated length of written pleading. An argument section exceeding the stipulated length will result in the following penalties:

- exceeding by one page = minus 2 points;
- exceeding by two pages = minus 4 points;
- exceeding by three pages or more = compulsory disqualification.

13.5.3 Non-conformity with formatting formalities, such as interlinear space (per page), margins, etc. will result in a 2-point reduction of the written submission score.

13.5.4. In the case of minor infractions, the Executive Secretariat may return the written memorial to the team with comments. It is solely the team's responsibility to correct the minor infractions on the written memorial within the submission deadline.

14. Submission

14.1. Teams must submit their written memorials through the official channel provided on the Competition's website.

14.2. No team may revise, substitute, add to, delete or in any other manner alter its written memorials after submission, unless provided otherwise by the Rules.

14.3. Delayed submission of the written memorials.

14.3.1. The deadline for submitting the written memorials to the Executive Secretariat is Friday 27 February 2026, 23:59 CET, as indicated on the Competition's schedule, available on the [website of the Pax Moot Court](#).

14.3.2. A delayed submission will result in the following penalties:

- one hour late = minus 1 point;
- between 2 and 23 hours late = minus 5 points;
- more than 24 hours late = compulsory disqualification.

15. Evaluation of the Memorials

15.1. The written memorials for the Competition shall be judged by the Bench.

15.2. Each memorial shall be judged individually by two members of the Bench, acting independently of one another.

15.3. Memorial Scoring Structure

- a. Each judging member of the Bench shall award a maximum of 30 points.
- b. Scores are awarded as follows:
 - i. legal analysis: 10 points;
 - ii. research and use of authority: 10 points;
 - iii. clarity of argument and persuasiveness: 10 points;

- iv. Grammar and style: at the discretion of the members of the Bench, penalty points may be imposed for grammatical and linguistic errors, depending on the severity and frequency of these errors. Such penalty points shall be deducted from the total score awarded for the memorial. A maximum of 5 points out of 60 may be deducted for grammatical and linguistic errors.
- c. Grading Sheets of the written memorials will be e-mailed to each team upon completion of the Competition, together with the Grading Sheets of the Oral Rounds.

15.4. The final score for a memorial shall be the total points awarded by the 2 members of the Bench minus any penalty points. The maximum number of points that a team can score for the memorials (Applicant and Respondent combined) is 60.

VII. ORAL ROUND

16. Team Selection

16.1. If the number of teams participating in the written round exceeds the organisational capacity of the oral round, the OT may carry out a pre-selection process. For the purpose of this pre-screening, the OT may subject the memorials to technical tools designed to detect plagiarism and the use of AI. Among the X memorials identified as the weakest based on this screening, the members of the Bench shall determine the final selection of teams to be eliminated. For this purpose, X shall be equal to twice the number of teams to be eliminated. This rule is only to be applied as a last resort. The OT shall attempt to include in the oral round all teams which submitted their memorials on time.

16.2. Participation in practice moots or training sessions with other teams prior to the oral round is permitted.

17. The Oral Arguments

17.1. Each team shall prepare an oral argument for the Applicant and an oral argument for the Respondent. The oral arguments shall be presented in English. During the general rounds each team shall present an oral argument in four of the sessions of the general rounds: twice as Applicant and twice as Respondent. Per session of the general rounds, two team members shall present the team's oral argument for the Applicant or for the Respondent.

17.2. Teams are expected to be available for the entire duration of the oral rounds. In the event of a last-minute absence of a scheduled team, another team will be invited to act as a stand-in. Teams acting as a stand-in will be scored as well. The substitute team's commitment is rewarded by taking into account its stand-in score, should this score be higher than the score obtained in its regular sessions for the same role.

17.3. In each session of the oral rounds, teams shall be assigned a side (Applicant or Respondent) to represent. This will be randomly assigned by the Executive Secretariat when drafting the agenda of the Competition, but it shall always ensure that teams will represent each side twice over the entire general rounds (twice as Applicant and twice as Respondent). The written memorials of a team are not sent to its opposing team.

17.4. Teams are expected to plead only on private international law issues and are not allowed to address the content of the applicable national law.

17.5. Each oral round consists of 60 minutes of oral pleadings. Applicant and Respondent are each allotted 30 minutes. At the beginning of each session, Applicant and Respondent must indicate to the timekeeper how they wish to allocate their 30 minutes among (a) first pleader, (b) second pleader, and (c) rebuttal (for Applicant) or surrebuttal (for Respondent). The team may not allocate more than 20 minutes, including (sur)rebuttal, to either pleader. The (sur)rebuttal is performed by only one of the pleaders. Time allocated for, but not used by one pleader, may not be used by the other pleader or saved for (sur)rebuttal. Any team member may serve as a pleader in any session of the oral rounds and is not required to argue the same side in each session.

17.6. The order of the pleadings in each session of the oral rounds, and at all levels of the Competition is:

Applicant 1 & 2 --> Respondent 1 & 2 --> Rebuttal (Applicant 1 or 2) --> Surrebuttal (Respondent 1 or 2).

17.7. The scope of a team's oral pleadings is not limited to the scope of their submitted memorial. The scope of the Applicant's rebuttal is limited to the scope of the Respondent's pleadings and the scope of the Respondent's surrebuttal is limited to the scope of the Applicant's rebuttal. Failure to keep the oral pleadings within these limitations shall be taken into account by the Court judging the team's session.

18. Number of Pleaders

18.1. Each team must have two, and only two, pleaders during each session of the oral rounds.

18.2. Both pleaders must participate in their team's oral submissions, dividing the team's speaking time between themselves to two more or less equal time slots.

18.3. The rebuttal and surrebuttal must be presented by one pleader, designated at the start of the (sur)rebuttal at the latest.

18.4. The third and fourth team members may sit at the team's table at each session as silent researchers. Oral participation of the researchers during the pleadings is strictly forbidden and may be penalised by deduction of points under the discretion of the Executive Secretariat, if reported by the Court as having a negative impact on the proceedings. The researchers are allowed to pass documentation or notes to the pleaders.

18.5. The coach who attends the oral pleadings must be always seated behind their team in order to avoid any contact between the team and the coach during the session.

19. No Use of Electronic Devices Allowed

19.1. No electronic devices (such as tablets, mobile phones, smart watches, laptops, etc.) are allowed during the pleadings. During the pleadings, a team may only use **hard copies** of the following materials: memorials, supporting documents (i.e., legislation, case law, or doctrine), and materials that could be used to rebut arguments brought forward by the opposing team.

19.2. The use of a (digital) stopwatch is also prohibited for the purposes of time control. The pleaders shall solely rely on the indications of time given by the timekeepers of each session.

20. Prohibition of Scouting

20.1. During the general rounds none of the team members or coaches of the team, shall be allowed to attend any sessions other than those in which the team is pleading.

21. Spectators

21.1. The presence of team coaches or other spectators affiliated with the team is permitted in the courtroom during an oral round in which the team is competing. Teams are responsible for ensuring that their spectators do not engage in any disruptive behaviour. The spectators must refrain from any comments or extravagant facial expressions, as these may be interpreted as influence by the Court.

21.2. During the session in which a team presents its oral pleadings, all members of the team may be seated at the team table. No oral or written communication may take place between the team table and their coach and/or any member of the audience present in the courtroom.

22. Questions from the Court

22.1. Members of the Court are invited and encouraged to question the pleader on any point of its argument. The President of the Court shall ensure that each pleader receives at least one question from the Bench. There are significant differences in style depending both on individual personalities and on perceptions of the role of a judge in oral argument. Some judges may interrupt a presentation with persistent or challenging questioning, whilst others may listen to an entire argument without asking any questions. Therefore, teams should be prepared for both styles of sessions.

22.2. Judges and teams must be aware that time spent responding to the Court's questions is counted against the team's allocated 30 minutes.

22.3. Regarding either the rebuttal or surrebuttal, the pleader should be cognizant that judges are still permitted to ask questions during this stage of the oral round.

23. Duration of Oral Presentation and Time Keeping

23.1. In principle, 30 minutes are allocated to the pleadings of each team. The team should allocate equitably the time available to the two individual pleaders. The time allocation should take into account the time needed to answer eventual questions from the Court.

23.2. The time spent responding to the Court's questions is counted against the team's allocated 30 minutes. Pleaders should therefore be concise in their replies to questions. The timekeeper pauses the clock while a judge has the floor. When the pleader starts responding to the judge's question, the time resumes.

23.3. The timekeeper shall indicate (signs 5, 1, 0) the last minutes of the time allocated to the pleader and will inform the Court when the available time has expired. The Court, taking notice of the timekeeper's advice, may exceed the time limits stated, so long as neither team is allowed more than 35 minutes to present its argument, including the time necessary to answer the questions of the Court. It is the responsibility of the Court to ensure that all teams are treated fairly.

23.4. The timekeeper shall be in charge of checking a team's order of pleaders and the speaking time of each pleader.

24. No Interim Feedback during General Rounds or after the Quarter-Finals or Semi-Finals

24.1. Judges are prohibited from giving feedback to teams throughout the entire duration of the Competition. Both substantive feedback and tips on advocacy skills are prohibited. Judges are encouraged to give feedback through the Grading Sheets.

25. The Judging of the Oral Arguments

25.1. The oral arguments shall be judged by a Court consisting of three judges, with a minimum of two judges present. A member of the Court shall not take part in a hearing involving a team from the University with which they are professionally engaged. Additionally, a member of the Court shall not participate in a hearing involving one of the opponents of the team from the University with which they are professionally engaged.

25.2. A team coach within the meaning of Article 6.5 of the Rules is prohibited from acting as a judge.

25.3. Each team shall be evaluated on a total of 60 points. Pleader 1 and Pleader 2 shall each be awarded up to 25 points, while the rebuttal or surrebuttal shall be evaluated on a total of 10 points.

During an oral pleading, scores are awarded out of a maximum of 25 points per pleader. Scores are allocated as follows:

- i. **Knowledge of the Law.** Accurately states and applies rules of law. Demonstrates knowledge of cited cases. Presents strong legal arguments, including distinguishing unfavourable authorities. (10 points)
- ii. **Knowledge of the Facts and Application of the Law to the Facts.** Knows and (fairly) accurately interprets the facts. Applies the legal analysis sufficiently to the facts of the case. (5 points)
- iii. **Questions & Answers.** Deftly and directly answers questions about facts, law and policy. Makes strategic concessions and seamlessly ties Q&A into argument. (5 points)
- iv. **Style, Poise, Demeanour, Organization and Time Management.** Conveys formality, respect and professionalism while maintaining a conversational and engaged tone. Maintains posture and eye contact with the full bench. Clearly follows a logical roadmap, spending sufficient time on each principal issue, while maintaining an effective tempo. (5 points)

Rebuttal & Surrebuttal. The rebuttal and surrebuttal are presented by one pleader. In presenting the rebuttal, the Applicant must not submit new arguments and limit its response to the Respondent's pleadings. The Respondent's surrebuttal must be limited to responding to the Applicant's rebuttal, and cannot refer to points made during the pleadings by either the Applicant or Respondent. (10 points)

25.4. At the end of each session, each judge completes a separate Grading Sheet. Judges are encouraged to note constructive feedback for each oralist, as participants receive copies of the Grading Sheets after the Competition. Per judge, the team with the higher total score shall earn a win (1 point). In the event of a tie, both teams earn a draw (0.5 points).

25.5. After the general rounds in which each team pleads four times according to Article 17.1 of the Rules, the eight teams with the highest number of points based on the overall wins and draws shall participate in the quarter-final round.

In case of a tie in the number of overall wins between teams, the team with the highest number of total speaker scores shall be selected, and in case of a tie in total speaker scores, the team with the highest score on their written memorials shall be selected. If this still does not produce a winner, teams shall be selected by a coin toss.

25.6. Quarter-Final Round. The quarter-finals shall consist of four sessions, which determine the four teams advancing to the semi-finals.

Pairings for the quarter-finals shall be based on the final tournament ranking, according to the following scheme:

Session 1: Highest-ranked team (Rank 1) vs. Lowest-ranked team (Rank 8)

Session 2: Second-highest-ranked team (Rank 2) vs. Second-lowest-ranked team (Rank 7)

Session 3: Third-highest-ranked team (Rank 3) vs. Third-lowest-ranked team (Rank 6)

Session 4: Fourth-highest-ranked team (Rank 4) vs. Fourth-lowest-ranked team (Rank 5)

The winner of each quarter-final session shall advance to the semi-finals.

25.7. Semi-final Round. The semi-finals shall consist of two sessions, which will determine the two teams advancing to the final.

Semi-final pairings shall be determined as follows:

The winner of Session 1 (Rank 1 vs. Rank 8) shall face the winner of Session 4 (Rank 4 vs. Rank 5).

The winner of Session 2 (Rank 2 vs. Rank 7) shall face the winner of Session 3 (Rank 3 vs. Rank 6).

The two winners of the semi-final rounds compete in the final round.

25.8. Judges may not award a draw in the quarter-final, semi-final, or final round, but have to deliberate in order to determine a winner.

VIII. AWARDS

26. Certificate of Participation

26.1. Each participating team will be issued a Certificate of Participation.

27. Best Written Pleadings Award

27.1. The winner of the Best Written Pleadings Award shall be the team with the highest overall score on the written memorials (i.e., the highest total score, after adding up the Applicant score and the Respondent score).

28. Best Pleader Award

28.1. The winner of the Best Pleader Award shall be the person acting as either Applicant or Respondent with the highest average individual score in the general rounds. For the purpose of determining this award, the average score out of 25 obtained by each pleader shall be calculated. The score awarded for the (sur)rebuttal shall only be considered in evaluating the team's overall performance and shall not be taken into account for the Best Pleader Award.

28.2. To be considered for this award, a pleader must argue in at least two pleadings and for at least 10 minutes per pleading throughout the Competition.

29. Winning Team

29.1. The Winning Team shall be the winning team of the final round. The Winning Team shall receive an award.

The Winner, Runner-Up, Best Pleader, and Best Written Pleadings will be included in the [PAX Hall of Fame](#).