

# 10th ICC European Conference on International Arbitration

Paris | 23,25 March 2026



## PROGRAMME

### Monday 23 March 2026

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07.30 – 10.15 **Registration & Welcome Coffee**

08.30 – 10.15 **Official Opening of Paris Arbitration Week**

10.20 – 10.45 **Opening 10<sup>th</sup> ICC European Conference**  
**Why we are all a little biased: Cognitive Biases in Arbitration. Mihael Jeklic in conversation with Alexander G. Fessas**

Why is true neutrality so elusive? In this opening conversation, Alexander Fessas sits down with Mihael Jeklic to explore the psychological forces that shape decision-making in arbitration. Even the most experienced professionals are not immune to cognitive biases that distort how we perceive, reason, and decide - often without us even realizing it.

Drawing on psychology and behavioural science, the conversation examines the science behind human judgment, with a particular focus on Jeklic's latest research on myside bias - the tendency to favour information that supports our existing views while dismissing contradictory evidence. By examining how confirmation bias, myside bias, and other cognitive patterns affect arbitration practice, this conversation challenges the assumption that experience and good intentions are enough to ensure sound judgement.

- **Mihael Jeklic**, Lecturer and Director of Professional Skills, King's College London, United Kingdom

*Interviewer:*

- **Alexander G. Fessas**, Secretary General, ICC International Court of Arbitration; Director, ICC Dispute Resolution Services, Paris

10.45 – 11.15 *Coffee Break*

**11.15 – 12.00 Panel I: The Advocate's Dilemma - When Confidence Becomes Overconfidence**

*Understanding and overcoming overconfidence bias in arbitration*

Studies show that lawyers on both sides of a dispute typically predict victory with more than 50% confidence - a statistical impossibility that reveals how myside bias distorts judgment and prevents settlement. This panel examines why even experienced advocates fall prey to overconfidence, how this affects client advice and case strategy, and what practical debiasing tools work in practice.

- **Stephen Ruttle KC**, Commercial Mediator, Brick Court Chambers, United Kingdom
- **Noradèle Radjai**, Partner, Lalive, Switzerland
- **Speaker tbc**
- **Todd Wetmore**, Founding Partner, Three Crowns, France

*Moderator*

- **Claudia Salomon**, President, ICC International Court of Arbitration, Paris

**12.10 – 12.30 Q&A**

**Discussion Points:**

- *The data on lawyer overconfidence: Why do 90% of advocates think they'll win?*
- *Myside bias in action: Real case studies where overconfidence killed settlements*
- *The client-counsel dynamic: How to deliver bad news effectively*
- *Cross-cultural dimensions: Does overconfidence vary by legal tradition?*
- *Practical tools that work: Accountability mechanisms, pre-mortems, and structured devil's advocacy*
- *Can AI and predictive analytics cure overconfidence or amplify it?*

**12.30 – 14.15 Lunch**

## Monday 23 March 2026 (Cont.)

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### 14.15 – 15.00 **Panel II: Designing Better Deliberations - How Tribunals Really Decide**

*From groupthink to group wisdom: The science of collective judgment*

Behind closed doors, arbitral tribunals face unique psychological pressures—from groupthink to seniority dynamics - that can compromise independent judgment. Drawing on research from jury studies and judicial behaviour, this panel explores how deliberation design, appointment methods, and structured protocols can transform group dynamics and improve decision quality.

- **Juan Fernández-Armesto**, Partner, Armesto & Asociados, Spain
- **Hilary Heilbron KC**, Barrister and Independent Arbitrator, Brick Court Chambers, United Kingdom
- **Stella Leptourgou**, Counsel, ICC International Court of Arbitration, Paris
- **Melanie van Leeuwen**, Founding Partner, Vanguard International Dispute Resolution, France; Chair, ICC Commission on Arbitration and ADR

*Moderator*

- **Erica Stein**, Independent Arbitrator, Stein Arbitration, Belgium

### 15.00 – 15.30 **Q&A**

#### **Discussion Points:**

- *Inside the black box: How deliberation sequencing affects outcomes*
- *Institutional appointments vs. joint nominations: The ICC's approach to countering reactive devaluation*
- *The president's challenge: Building consensus without suppressing dissent*
- *Practical protocols: Sequential written views, structured devil's advocacy*
- *Cultural dynamics in international tribunals: When deliberation styles clash*
- *Lessons from other fields: What arbitrators can learn from jury research and corporate boards*

### 15.30 – 16.00 *Coffee Break*

## Monday 23 March 2026 (Cont.)

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### 16.00 – 17.00 **Panel III: Following the Money - How Financial Structures Shape Arbitral Outcomes**

*The behavioural economics of arbitration: Incentives, fees, and funding*

Fee arrangements, funding structures, and cost allocation create powerful but often invisible incentives that influence how cases are conducted and resolved. This panel examines how different compensation models affect advocate behaviour and settlement dynamics, the impact of third-party funding on case strategy, and the ICC's institutional approach to managing financial incentives through fee-fixing and cost management.

- **Sébastien Bonnard**, Managing Partner, Hughes Hubbard & Reed  
▲ Paris, France
- **Alina Dumitraşcu**, Head of Legal and Corporate Affairs, PPC, Romania
- **Fabiano Robalinho Cavalcanti**, Partner, Litigation and Arbitration, Bermudes Advogados; Professor of Conflicts of Laws and Arbitration, Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV), Brazil; Member, ICC International Court of Arbitration
- **Ayşe Yazır**, Managing Director, Bench Walk Advisors, United Kingdom

*Moderator:*

- **Carole Malinvaud**, Partner, Gide Loyrette Nouel, France; Vice-President, ICC International Court of Arbitration

### 17.00 – 17.20 **Q&A**

#### **Discussion Points:**

- *Counsel fee structures: How hourly billing vs. success fees impact settlement advice*
- *Alternative fee arrangements: Opportunities, limits and recoverability*
- *Third-party funding: How third-party funding influences arbitration conduct*
- *Radical proposals: Should we restructure arbitrator compensation?*
- *ICC's practice on fixing costs: The role of the institution in fixing costs*

### 17.20 – 17.30 **Closing Remarks**

- **Ulrich Kopetzki**, Acting Director, Arbitration and ADR, Europe, ICC Dispute Resolution Service

### 17.30 – 19.00 **Cocktail Reception**

Celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the ICC European Conference