

Kluwer Arbitration Blog

Kluwer Arbitration Blog: Celebrating 15 Years!

Gwen de Vries (Director Content and Market Development, Wolters Kluwer Legal & Regulatory, International Group), Roger Alford (General Editor) (Notre Dame Law School), and Crina Baltag (Managing Editor) (Stockholm University) · Sunday, January 28th, 2024

On January 28, 2009 we [launched the Kluwer Arbitration blog](#) with the goal of featuring “posts of the highest possible quality” as an “interactive publication” that would render Kluwer’s arbitration offerings even more complete. As Roger Alford wrote in [his first post](#) in January 2009, “[g]iven the nature of international arbitration, it is astonishing that we do not currently have an effective forum for daily discussion about the world of international arbitration. It is our hope that Kluwer Arbitration Blog will be that forum.”



On the occasion of the Kluwer Arbitration Blog’s 15th anniversary the persons who initiated the blog ([Roger Alford](#) and [Gwen de Vries](#)) and the person who has been involved for the past 12 years, and contributed greatly to the success of the Blog ([Crina Baltag](#)), came together discussing the past and looking at the future, and asked each other some questions.

Gwen: Roger, can you elaborate on the start of the Blog: how did it all begin, what did the Blog aim to achieve?

Roger: The idea of the blog began with a series of conversations between Gwen and Roger in the summer of 2008. With the successful launch of Kluwer Arbitration database in 2001, we thought it would be beneficial to also offer a blog that would generate interesting commentary on the latest developments in the field of international commercial arbitration. So we decided to invite a few prominent names to be permanent contributors and then also reach out to new voices to be guest contributors. In a few short years we started receiving many offers to write guest contributions. It grew so much that we established a team of over four dozen editors to manage the workflow. From the beginning we were very intentional about our editorial guidelines. They included: no

puff pieces, no gossip, a broad geographic diversity, one short post a day, and a strong commitment to substantive commentary. These guidelines have served us extremely well.

Roger: Crina, you joined the Blog in 2012 – 12 years ago. In the early years, the blog had an average readership of approximately 8,000 unique visitors per month. At the end of 2023 we had approximately 150,000 unique visitors each month. What in your opinion contributed to this huge success?

Crina: The Blog grew organically, ensuring the international and regional coverage of arbitration, as well as the diversity of ideas, legal background, and jurisdictions. The Blog continues to raise awareness about arbitration, as a preferred dispute resolution mechanism for the resolution of commercial disputes. Essential to the success of the Blog is the editorial team. The 40+ editors of the Blog ensure that posts are published daily, and they do so with enthusiasm and passion for arbitration. I am fortunate to be able to build the strategy of the Blog together with you, Roger, as the General Editor, and with the Associate Editors of the Blog who are coordinating the regional and topics teams. Part of the success of the Blog is the tremendous support of Wolters Kluwer – David Bartolone, Gwen de Vries, Vincent Verschoor, Rostislav Kats and Eleanor Taylor -, as well as the technical team, whenever technical issues – rarely – occur.

Crina: Gwen, you have been active as a Publisher in the arbitration field since 1990. From your angle, i.e. information provider, how have you seen the landscape change?

Gwen: When I started printing books, journals and looseleaf publications were the main sources for doing research. First big change was of course the establishment of a research platform such as Kluwer Arbitration, including the content from the traditional books, journals and looseleaf publications with a good search engine. At the same time, with the Internet we also saw free sources coming up, such as the Kluwer Arbitration Blog. Then we saw the development of practical tools with content that was developed for online first use, such as the Quick Answers or Practical Insights Topics. More recently, data driven tools were created, where data is mined from the content to provide new insights, such as our arbitrator tools (Profile Navigator and Relationship Indicator). Technology enabled more efficient research. Some things did not change, and that is the wish of arbitration lawyers to share their knowledge and the fact that good content is crucial (AI on top of bad content is very risky). Wolters Kluwer is committed to offer a platform to the arbitration community and continue developing the most comprehensive database of excellent and curated content with cutting edge technology to support arbitration lawyers in their daily practice.

Gwen: Crina, you've been the managing editor for quite a number of years and have not lost your ambition to continue growing the blog, always coming up with new ideas. What changes will you make in the coming 5 years and what will definitely remain?

Crina: We will continue to publish blog posts which address current issues in international and regional arbitration, and we will continue to encourage dialogue in the arbitration community. We have published over 4,400 blog posts in the past 15 years, and the diversity of topics and perspectives is impressive and constantly present, from posts authored by established arbitration

practitioners to those authored by students aspiring to a career in arbitration. We will continue to support diversity and inclusiveness initiatives in international arbitration, as well as the coverage of new areas of interest for arbitration, such as technology. Through the [series of interviews](#) with the arbitration institutions, we are raising awareness of the excellent work institutions are doing, not only in promoting arbitration, but also in addressing concerns with the process, as highlighted by users. With the backlash against [investor-State dispute settlement \(ISDS\)](#), the Blog proved to be an impartial forum of discussion, hosting discussions not only about the advantages of ISDS, but also about its drawbacks.

Roger: Gwen, what can we expect at the 2024 ICCA Hong Kong Conference for the Blog?

Gwen: Of course, another version of the famous [Kluwer Arbitration Blog Quiz](#), with Quiz masters Michael McIlwrath and Crina Baltag. A huge success in Edinburgh, the Quiz is a mix of serious and not so serious questions to a select panel of arbitration lawyers and with an active participation of the audience with attractive prizes. Watch out for the announcement and very much look forward to seeing everybody in Hong Kong!

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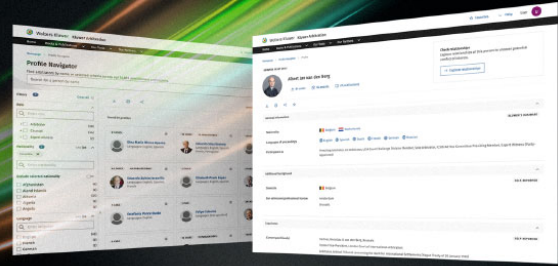
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