

In memoriam DDr. Werner Melis



The Willem C. Vis Moot Association is mourning the loss of its valued supporter, DDr. Werner Melis who passed away on 20 September 2022 at the age of 87.

Werner Melis will be remembered as an arbitration visionary who had far-ranging academic interests, while being a humble, unassuming gentleman by nature. He acquired three different degrees, a doctoral degree in law from the University of Vienna which was followed by a postgraduate degree in international studies as well as a doctoral degree in political sciences. His professional career started in the banking sector until he was persuaded to join the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, where he first served as Secretary General of VIAC from 1975, and then subsequently as its President for 25 years. In parallel he pursued a brilliant career as counsel and arbitrator and developed an outstanding reputation as a leading arbitration practitioner.

In his capacity as VIAC Secretary General, he significantly influenced the development of the Vis Moot in Vienna. At the very beginning of the Moot, in 1993, he kindly offered VIAC's facilities to conduct some of the very first Vis Moot pleadings. He shared the enthusiasm of Vis Moot founder Professor Eric E. Bergsten for supporting students in the field of international commercial law. It was partly due to his dedication and influence that the Vis Moot has developed into a true, stand-alone, renowned arbitration event. In honour of this support, the Vis Moot Organising Committee introduced 'The Werner Melis Award' back in 1997 as the award which recognised the Best Memorandum for Respondent. Every year, without fail, Werner looked forward to presenting "his" award at the Vis moot to the next generation.

Werner Melis will long be remembered for his generosity, friendship and his work, his achievements and visions will live on in the next generation.