

## Michael Tselentis KC, SC

**SILK: 1989 (SENIOR COUNSEL, SOUTH AFRICA); 2003 (ENGLAND AND WALES) | CALL: 1978 (SOUTH AFRICA); 1995 (ENGLAND AND WALES)**

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Languages: Afrikaans. Reading knowledge of French.



### Overview

Michael Tselentis KC's practice as an international arbitrator covers a wide field, which includes energy and natural resources (principally oil and gas, mining and minerals, renewables and power sale agreements), shipping and commodities, commercial disputes (including agency, distribution/franchising, joint ventures, shareholder agreements and contractual disputes generally), investment arbitration (with a focus on mining disputes in Africa), telecommunications, insurance, infrastructure, construction and engineering.

He has been a full-time arbitrator since 2015 when he retired from advocacy work in order to concentrate on his international arbitration practice. During a 36-year career as an advocate (1978-2015), he appeared as leading counsel in many cases in these areas before trial and appellate courts and arbitral tribunals, including a number of high-value international arbitrations in London, Paris and Singapore. Details of his advocacy and advisory work in this period appear in the "Advocacy and Advisory Career" link below.

Before Michael relocated his practice to London in 1996, he was a leading commercial silk at the Johannesburg Bar, with a specialization in mining and commercial law, and held general retainers from the Anglo American and De Beers groups of companies. He was appointed as an acting judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa in 1992, and was the chairman of the Johannesburg Bar in 1993/1994.

Michael has been appointed in over 150 references as presiding arbitrator, tribunal member and sole arbitrator, principally (though

### Panel memberships

- Arbitration Foundation of Southern Africa (AFSA)
- Association of Arbitrators of Southern Africa (Fellow)
- Badan Arbitrase Nasional Indonesia (BANI)
- BVI International Arbitration Centre (BVI IAC)
- Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (CRCICA)
- Chicago International Dispute Resolution Association (CIDRA)
- China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC)
- CIArb (Chartered Arbitrator and Fellow)
- Commercial Bar Association
- Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC).
- Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC)
- ICC (UK)
- International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA)
- LCIA

by no means exclusively) in ICC, LCIA, PCA, SIAC, LMAA, HKIAC and ad hoc arbitrations under the UNCITRAL rules. Much of his arbitration work has an Asian, African or CIS focus. Arbitral seats have included London, Paris, Geneva, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, DIFC, Dubai, Lagos, Cyprus, Dar Es Salaam, Jakarta, Johannesburg and Mauritius. His appointments have involved a wide variety of governing laws, including the laws of England, France, Spain, Singapore, the Netherlands, Western Australia, Indonesia, Qatar, UAE, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Trinidad and Tobago, South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho, Angola, Tanzania, Zambia, Nigeria, Malaysia, Rwanda and international law.

His common law expertise is complemented by a extensive experience of civil law systems, including South Africa, France, the Netherlands, Indonesia, Thailand, Romania, Finland, Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

For convenience, details of his arbitration appointments, arbitration accreditations, and legal career generally appear in the sections below.

He has been highly recommended by various practice directories in the fields of International Arbitration and Energy and Natural Resources over the years. For example:

- *Chambers and Partners*, International Arbitration, Arbitrators, 2026: "Michael Tselentis is hugely experienced and so good in managing the arbitration and the people. He is outstanding."
- *Chambers and Partners*, International Arbitration, Arbitrators, 2026: "Michael has been absolutely phenomenal. He takes on all of the work and has got a really good judgement."
- *Chambers and Partners*, International Arbitration, Arbitrators, 2026: "Michael is a man for the detail. He commanded the respect of the parties, drove the process and dealt with everything expeditiously."
- *Chambers and Partners*, International Arbitration, Arbitrators, 2025: "Michael Tselentis KC is a very good chair. He's very organized, quick to turn things around and very user-friendly." "Michael is an extremely good barrister and highly perceptive. He can see through a theoretical argument that has the look of something good but is actually nonsense." "Michael is a big name for work in African states."
- *The Legal 500*, International Arbitration, Arbitrators, 2025: "Thoroughness, competence, care and diligence."
- *The Legal 500*, International Arbitration, Arbitrators, 2024: "Michael is meticulous in his approach. He is thoughtful, careful and courteous, and is easy to work with."
- *The Legal 500*, International Arbitration: Arbitrators, 2023: "His analytical skills and arbitration knowledge are first rate."
- *The Legal 500* International Arbitration, Arbitrators, 2022: "A truly excellent arbitrator, hugely experienced, conscientious and diligent, scrupulously fair, and approachable."
- *Chambers and Partners*, UK Bar 2016, Energy and Natural Resources: "He is a highly respected member of the Bar who has decades of experience in litigating energy issues, and increasingly focuses his practice in acting as an arbitrator. He is highly knowledgeable on upstream oil and gas contracts, licensing disputes, and mining transactions. Strengths: he has a formidable intellect and is a worthy opponent."
- *Chambers and Partners*, UK Bar (2015), Energy and Natural Resources: "Michael Tselentis KC acts in litigation and arbitration and sits as an arbitrator in energy disputes. He has an internationally focused practice and appears in

- LMAA (supporting member)
- Pacific International Arbitration Centre (PIAC)
- Scottish Arbitration Association
- Singapore Chamber of Maritime Arbitration (SCMA)
- Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC)
- Technology and Construction Bar Association
- Vancouver International Arbitration Centre (VANIAC)

## Professional memberships

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- Association of Arbitrators of Southern Africa (Fellow)
- CIArb (Chartered Arbitrator and Fellow)
- Commercial Bar Association
- ICC (UK)
- International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA)
- LCIA
- LMAA (supporting member)
- Scottish Arbitration Association
- Technology and Construction Bar Association

## Publications

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- "International Arbitration in the Resources and Energy Sectors": guest lecture at Coventry University Law School, 28 November 2017.
- "Pathological Arbitration Clauses in English Law": paper given at the 2nd Oxford Symposium on International Commercial Arbitration, Wolfson College, 17 November 2017.
- Speaker at Ince & Co/Twenty Essex joint seminar, "Energy and Resources Arbitration Arising from Africa and Latin America", 28 September 2017.

matters connected to areas such as oil and gas and mining. Strengths: very solid and thorough, he leaves no stone unturned and has excellent analytical qualities.”

- *Who's Who Legal*, UK Bar 2015, Energy and Natural Resources (which listed him as one of the six most highly regarded silks in this sector): “Michael Tselentis KC garners particular acclaim as both a barrister and arbitrator in this sector. He is internationally renowned for his work in the mining sector, having been involved in many high-profile cases, including precious metal and base mineral disputes in South Africa, where he practiced for many years.”
- *Chambers and Partners*, UK Bar (2013), Energy and Natural Resources: “The outstanding Michael Tselentis KC is absolutely top-class for energy and mining disputes. He receives particular recognition for the extensive work in this area that he has recently been undertaking in South Africa.”

He holds dual Greek and South African nationality.

## Lectures / talks

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- ‘International Arbitration in the Resources and Energy Sectors’: Coventry University Law School (28 November 2017).
- ‘Pathological Arbitration Clauses in English Law’: 2nd Oxford Symposium on International Commercial Arbitration, Wolfson College (17 November 2017).

## Education

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- University of Oxford, Magdalen College: Bachelor of Civil Law, First Class (1975). Rhodes Scholar, 1973.
- University of Cape Town: BA, Distinction (1969); LLB, First Class Honours (1971). Rhodesian Government Scholarship, 1967-1971; UCT Council Scholarships, 1967-1969; Roderick Noble Scholarship, 1969; Scheepers Memorial Scholarship, 1970; Douallier Prize (Classics), 1967; Field Marshall Smuts Scholarship, 1971.

## Example cases and appointments

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His current and recent references include the following:

- Presiding Arbitrator in an LCIA reference between Swiss and Nigerian interests arising out of a shareholders’ agreement and a share purchase agreement (London seat; Nigerian law).
- Presiding arbitrator in a DIAC reference relating to a Terminal Operations Agreement (London seat; UAE law).
- Presiding arbitrator in an ICC reference pursuant to a suite of agreements for the construction of a photovoltaic solar generating facility in Kenya (London seat; English law).
- Presiding arbitrator in a SIAC reference arising out of a Facilities Agreement and related transactions (Singapore seat; English and Indonesian law).
- Sole arbitrator in an ad hoc reference under the Arbitration Act, 1996 relating to a tidal defence scheme at an English harbour (London seat; English law).
- Tribunal member in an LCIA reference arising out of a power purchase agreement (Mauritius seat; Rwandan law).
- Tribunal member in a US\$2 billion ICC reference relating to a hydro-electric project (Paris seat; Nigerian law).

- Tribunal member in two related LCIA references arising from agreements to develop a port facility in Egypt (London seat; English law).
- Member of a number of LMAA Tribunals in disputes under charterparties and sea waybills arising from damage to a cargo of rubber on a voyage between Thailand and the USA (London seat; English law).
- Member of an SCMA Tribunal in a dispute under a settlement agreement (Singapore seat; English law).
- Tribunal member in two concurrent LMAA references between Owners, Charterers and Sub-Charterers of a vessel arising from a maritime casualty on the Mississippi River (London seat; English law).

A more extensive list of his appointments appears in the [Arbitration appointments link](#).

## Arbitration appointments

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Examples of his current arbitration appointments appear in the “[Example Cases and Appointments](#)” link above. His past arbitration appointments include:

- Presiding arbitrator, sole arbitrator or tribunal member in a number of institutional and ad hoc references relating to ship-building and ship-conversion contracts, floating production units, voyage charter, shipping, bills of lading, commodity contracts, guarantees and professional indemnity insurance policies (variety of seats and governing laws).
- A number of references relating to the supply, off-take and out-turn/delivery of crude oil and petro-chemical products.
- Presiding arbitrator in a DIFC-LCIA reference relating to a substantial construction project in Abu Dhabi (DIFC seat; Abu Dhabi law).
- Member of a DIAC Tribunal in a dispute under a long term contract for the purchase and sale of coal (Dubai seat; UAE and Dubai law).
- Presiding Arbitrator in an ICC reference relating to the provision of a floating LNG storage and regasification vessel at an Indian port (London seat; English law).
- Presiding arbitrator in an ICC reference relating to the construction and operation of a coal crushing, screening and washing plant in South Africa (Johannesburg seat; South African law).
- Sole arbitrator in an LCIA reference relating to a dispute under a 1992 ISDA Master Agreement and currency swap transactions (London seat; English law).
- Sole arbitrator in a two consolidated HKIAC references between Russian and Japanese interests arising from coal purchase transactions and related agreements (Hong Kong seat; English law).
- Tribunal member in an ICC reference relating to a dispute under Master LNG FOB Sales and Purchase Agreements (London seat; English law).
- Tribunal member in an LCIA reference between Swiss and Ukrainian interests in a dispute relating to crude oil contracts (London seat; English law).
- Member of an LMAA Tribunal in a reference arising out of a Deed of Indemnity and transshipment operations (London seat; English law).
- Presiding arbitrator in an LCIA reference relating to coal supply contracts (London seat; English law).
- Tribunal member in an LCIA reference relating to project logistics and freight forwarding services for a project in Kyrgystan (London seat; English law).
- Presiding arbitrator in a SIAC reference relating to an integrated security system for a Middle Eastern oil field (Singapore seat; English law).
- Sole arbitrator in an LCIA reference relating to a Guarantee and Structured Loan Agreements (London seat; English law).
- Sole arbitrator in an ad hoc reference under the UNCITRAL Rules relating to Power Sale Agreements between an electricity utility and a mining company (London seat; Zambian law).
- Tribunal member in six consolidated LCIA references relating to offtake contracts for the supply of vacuum gas oil and matching pre-payment agreements between a refinery and a major commodity dealer (London seat; English law).
- Tribunal member in an ICC reference arising from contracts for onshore and offshore engineering and procurement works in respect of an integrated oil refining and petrochemical complex (Singapore seat; Malaysian law).
- Tribunal member in an ICC reference relating to a solar energy project in Abu Dhabi (London seat; English law).
- Tribunal member in two LCIA references between investors and African governments arising from alleged expropriations

and breaches of mine development agreements, with aggregate claims and cross-claims exceeding US\$190 billion (London seat; international law).

- Presiding arbitrator in an ICC reference relating to a Farm-In Agreement, a Joint Operating Agreement and a Technical Services Agreement in respect of an offshore oil field (London seat; Nigerian law).
- Presiding arbitrator in an ad hoc reference under the UNICTRAL rules relating to a power sale agreement (London seat; Zambian law).
- Presiding Arbitrator in an LCIA reference relating to a purchase and sale agreement for the shares of a Southern African mining company (London seat; English law).
- Presiding Arbitrator in an ICC reference between an international legal firm and a sovereign wealth fund which related to financial sanctions issues (Paris seat; English law).
- Tribunal member in six consolidated LCIA references relating to contracts for the construction and operation of a quay wall in a free zone and for the construction of an FPSO (London seat; English and Nigerian law).
- Tribunal member in an LCIA reference between a major commodity trader and a national state oil company arising from a long-term Master (Delivered ex Ship) LNG SPA and confirmation notices for the purchase of 60 individual LNG cargoes thereunder (London seat; English law).
- Sole arbitrator in an LCIA reference relating to a settlement agreement (London seat; English law).
- Sole arbitrator in an AFSA International reference relating to the financing of a platinum tailings operation (Johannesburg seat; South African law).
- Presiding arbitrator in an LCIA reference relating to the manufacture and supply of drill rig components (London seat; English law).
- Tribunal member in an ICC reference relating to a major infrastructure project in Riyadh (London seat; Saudi Arabian law).
- Emergency arbitrator in an LCIA reference between Russian and Korean interests relating to a bank in the Ukraine (London seat; English law).
- Member of two Tribunals (HKIAC and LCIA) in disputes relating to FPSO conversion contracts (London and Hong Kong seats; English law).
- Member of a BANI (Badan Arbitrase Nasional Indonesia) Tribunal in a reference relating to an EPC contract for an oilfield extension (Jakarta seat; Indonesian law).
- Sole arbitrator in an ICC reference relating to a commercial agency for the sale and distribution of aircraft spare parts and logistical solutions (London seat; English and Spanish law).
- Member of an AFSA International Tribunal in a dispute under a salvage contract for a cargo of silver bullion (Johannesburg seat; South African law).
- Tribunal member in an ICC reference relating to commercial agreements for the exploitation of hydrocarbon exploration rights (London seat; English law).
- Sole arbitrator in an ICC reference relating to an agreement for the provision of specialized chemical analytical services in the upstream oil and gas industry (London seat; English law).
- Tribunal member in PCA Case 2016, Van Zyl and Others v Kingdom of Lesotho, an investment arbitration arising from the alleged expropriation of mining leases (Mauritius seat; Lesotho law).
- Presiding arbitrator in three Arbitration Foundation of South Africa references between mining interests and contractual counterparties (Johannesburg seat; Tanzanian law).
- Presiding arbitrator in an LCIA reference relating to a property development project in Qatar (London seat; Qatari law).
- Presiding arbitrator in two consolidated LCIA references relating to oil and gas assets in the Black Sea (Geneva seat; English law).
- Presiding arbitrator in an ICC reference between French and Tanzanian interests under a road construction contract (Dar Es Salaam seat; Tanzanian law).
- Presiding arbitrator in an ICC reference under a contract for the provision of engineering services in Nigeria (Lagos seat; Nigerian law).
- Presiding adjudicator in a dispute under a port dredging contract (London seat; Kenyan law).
- Sole arbitrator in a SIAC reference relating to a mining venture in Indonesia (Singapore seat; Indonesian law).
- Sole arbitrator in two SIAC references between Australian and Chinese interests arising out of agreements for the sale of iron ore mining tenements in Western Australia (Singapore seat; Western Australian law).
- Tribunal member in an ad hoc reference under the UNCITRAL Rules relating to the supply of components for mining

equipment to a global mining house (London seat; English law).

- Tribunal member in an ad hoc reference under the UNCITRAL Rules relating to a US\$1 billion equity redetermination in respect of an offshore oil field (Lagos seat; Nigerian law).
- Tribunal member in an ad hoc reference under the UNCITRAL Rules arising out of a long-term petroleum supply contract (London seat; Zambian law).
- Member of an ICC Tribunal in a reference relating to a joint venture for telecommunications services in a middle-Eastern country (DIFC seat; English law).
- Member of an LCIA Tribunal in a reference relating to a shareholders' agreement for a digital pay TV platform in a Middle Eastern country (London seat; English law).
- Member of an ad hoc Tribunal sitting under UNCITRAL Rules in respect of a dispute relating to a pricing adjustment formula in a long-term coal supply contract (London seat; English law).
- Member of four Tribunals (ICC, LCIA and ad hoc) in references relating to deep-water oil drilling rigs and related commercial agreements (Paris and London seats; English law).
- Sole arbitrator in a US\$1 billion LCIA reference between hedge funds and their managers, investment managers and valuation agents, relating to the management of the funds, fraud by the investment manager, and the valuation of complex and illiquid securities (London seat; English law).
- Presiding arbitrator in an ICC reference between USA and Trinidad and Tobago interests arising out of a contract for the provision of sub-sea horizontal directional drilling services and the installation of gas pipelines in the West Indies (London seat; Trinidad and Tobago law).
- Chairman of an ICC Tribunal in a reference between USA and Kuwaiti interests pursuant to an agreement for the distribution in the Middle East of computer software for hydrocarbon processing industries (London seat; English law).
- Member of an ICC Tribunal in a reference between USA and South African interests relating to a licence agreement and proprietary technology in respect of land mine-protected military vehicles (London seat; English law).
- Member of an ICC Tribunal in a reference between two major brewery groups over a trademark licence agreement relating to the production of a beer brand in Southern Africa (London seat; South African law).
- Member of an ICC Tribunal in a reference between Romanian and South African interests under a contract governed by French law for the manufacture and marketing of motor vehicles (Paris seat; French law).
- Sole arbitrator in an ICC reference relating to a dispute between Israeli and Dutch interests arising from a commercial venture in Eastern Europe (Cyprus seat; Dutch law).
- Member of an ICC Tribunal in a reference between a UK corporation and the government of an East African country under an agreement to render pre-shipment customs inspection verification services (London seat; Kenyan law).
- Sole arbitrator appointed by the parties in 6 references (which were heard concurrently) between the South African oil and gas parastatal, Sasol, and the major international petroleum companies operating in the South African market arising out of agreements for the manufacture and marketing of petroleum products, LPG and natural gas in South Africa (Johannesburg seat; South African law).
- Sole arbitrator appointed by the LCIA in a reference between a USA corporation and Jordanian interests in respect of a contract for the construction of water reticulation works in Jordan.
- Sole arbitrator in two references under the LMAA rules (which were heard concurrently) between the disponent owners of a bulk carrier, the demise charterers, and the sellers of a cargo of coal, arising from the loading of hot coal at a Mocambique port and an ensuing methane explosion on the vessel (London and Johannesburg seats; English and South African law).
- Sole arbitrator in an LCIA reference under a distributorship agreement for medical diagnostic equipment between Netherlands and Kuwaiti interests.
- Sole arbitrator in an LCIA reference relating to a seismic survey contract in offshore West Africa.
- Sole arbitrator in an LCIA reference relating to the establishment and operation of a t20 cricket league in a prominent cricketing jurisdiction (London seat; English law).
- Sole arbitrator in an LCIA reference relating to loan and guarantee agreements (London seat; English law).
- Sole arbitrator in an LCIA reference between South African and Israeli interests arising out of joint venture and shareholders' agreements for the manufacture of automotive components.
- Sole arbitrator in an ad hoc reference between UK and Canadian interests arising from contractual, accounting and tax disputes under a contract for the sale of shares in a platinum group metals processing venture.
- Sole arbitrator in a dispute between South African and Botswana interests relating to the exploitation of forestry reserves.

- Sole arbitrator in an Arbitration Foundation of Southern Africa reference relating to the preparation and implementation of closing date accounts in respect of the sale of a South African supermarket group (Johannesburg seat; South African law).
- Sole arbitrator in two consolidated ICC references under a Software Agreement and Services Agreement between Swiss and South African interests (Johannesburg seat; South African law).
- Member of an Appeal Tribunal in a dispute under special risks insurance for damage caused by forest fires.
- Sole arbitrator in an ICC reference arising from a JOA in respect of a hydrocarbon block in Columbia.
- Member of an ICC Tribunal in a reference between USA and UAE interests pursuant to a jet fuel and diesel supply contract (London seat; English law).
- Member of an LCIA Tribunal in a reference between Chinese, Japanese and Singaporean interests pursuant to a long-term iron ore supply contract.
- Member of an LCIA Tribunal in a dispute between commodity traders and the Swaziland Sugar Association arising from ethyl alcohol supply contracts (London seat; Swazi law).
- Member of an LCIA Tribunal in a reference between Swiss and Indonesian interests relating to coal supply contracts.
- Sole arbitrator appointed by the London Commercial Court in two ad hoc references between the government of a West African country and a Korean corporation relating to contracts for the supply of heavy equipment (London seat; English law).

## **Arbitration accreditations**

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- Chartered Arbitrator (UK), 2008.

### **Fellowships:**

- The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (UK) (FCIArb).
- The Association of Arbitrators of Southern Africa.

### **Arbitration panel memberships:**

- Arbitration Foundation of Southern Africa (AFSA).
- Badan Arbitrase Nasional Indonesia (BANI).
- BVI International Arbitration Centre (BVI IAC).
- Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (CRCICA).
- Chicago International Dispute Resolution Association (CIDRA).
- China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC).
- Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC).
- Energy Arbitrators' List of the ICDR.
- Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC).
- Pacific International Arbitration Centre (PIAC).
- Singapore Chamber of Maritime Arbitration (SCMA).
- Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC).
- Vancouver Institute for International Arbitration (VIAC).

### **Other professional affiliations:**

- Commercial Bar Association (COMBAR).
- International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA).

- ICC (UK).
- LMAA (supporting member).
- LCIA.
- Technical Bar Association (TECBAR).

## **Professional career**

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- 2015 to date: Full-time International Arbitrator at Twenty Essex.
- 1996 to 2015: Barrister and Arbitrator Member of Twenty Essex.
- 2008: Chartered Arbitrator (UK).
- 2008: Bencher, Gray's Inn.
- 2003: Queen's Counsel, England and Wales.
- 1995: Called to the English Bar by Gray's Inn.
- 1978 to 2000: Practicing member of the Johannesburg Bar.
- 1993-1994: Chairman of the Johannesburg Bar.
- 1992: Acting Judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa
- 1989: Senior Counsel of the Republic of South Africa.
- 1978: Advocate of the Supreme Court of South Africa.
- 1972, January to August 1973, September-December 1975: Senior lecturer in law at South African universities.

## **Advocacy and advisory career**

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His arbitration work is informed by his broad experience as Counsel in commercial disputes, both in South Africa (1978-2000) and the United Kingdom (1996-2015), the main features of which are the following:

### **International arbitration**

He was leading Counsel in a number of high-value international arbitrations, which included:

- Two long-running International Chamber of Commerce arbitrations before Singapore Tribunals on behalf of the Claimants, operators of pulp and paper and electricity generation plants in Thailand who sought substantial damages (in the form of lost pulp and paper production and diminished electricity generation) from the Finnish designers/suppliers of biomass-fuel fluidized bed power boilers on the grounds of defective design and unsuitability for burning locally-sourced biomass fuels, and negligent erection supervision.
- An LCIA arbitration before a Paris Tribunal between Russian and Nigerian interests arising from an offshore oil prospecting licence granted by the Nigerian Government and ensuing commercial agreements.
- An arbitration under UNCITRAL Rules before a London Tribunal between the operator of an oil and gas plant in Kazakhstan and a contractor, which raised issues relating to the proper performance of welding work on small-bore piping, quantification of loss and damage, and VAT liabilities under the laws of Kazakhstan.
- An arbitration before a London Tribunal between the main contractor and a sub-contractor in respect of the design and installation of sub-sea flow-lines in an oil and gas field off the South African coast, the conversion of an oil tanker into an FPSO, and its installation on site.
- Expert determination proceedings before an Australian KC under the laws of Western Australia between a leading mining house and commodity trader arising from an economic hardship clause in an iron ore supply contract and the collapse of the iron ore market in 2008.
- An arbitration before a London Tribunal between the national shipping corporations of Iran and Azerbaijan, arising from a joint shipping venture in the Caspian Sea and the break-up of the Soviet Union which raised issues as to state succession and continuity of corporate legal personality under English conflict of laws and the laws of the USSR, Azerbaijan and Russia.
- An arbitration before a London Tribunal between a leading commodity trader and the governmental purchasing agency of a European country relating to alleged breach of contract and fraud in respect of 32 cargoes of crude oil.
- Two references between the insured interests and underwriters of aircraft hull and liability policies arising from aircraft

accidents.

## Commercial

He has considerable experience as an advocate in this field, both in South Africa and England, including a large amount of advisory work. He also has a considerable number of reported cases, particularly in the South African High Court and Appellate Division on a range of commercial issues, which include marine and non-marine insurance issues, schemes of arrangement under the South African Companies Act, subordination agreements and personal liability of company directors, the assignability of future and contingent rights, the concurrence of contractual and tortious remedies for pure economic loss, unjustified enrichment, the effect of bribery on contractual obligations, the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments, vicarious liability for the negligence of independent contractors, the validity of discretionary trusts, insolvency issues, rights of pre-emption, conditions of auction, the stay of legal proceedings in favour of arbitration, exchange control issues, and the fiduciary duties of trustees and the liability of trustees' professional advisers for professional negligence. A list of his reported cases is available on request.

## Mining and Energy

He specialized in mining law while in practice in South Africa, and held general retainers from the Anglo American Corporation, De Beers Mining Corporation, and their subsidiary and associated companies.

He was Counsel in a number of South African High Court and Appellate Division cases relating to a wide variety of mining-law issues. A list of his reported cases is available on request. His expertise in this field was acknowledged by his appointment as an expert witness on South African mining law on behalf of the investors in *Piero Foresti v The Government of the Republic of South Africa* (2008), a BIT case under ICSID Rules.

He was the leading counsel for Impala Platinum in their high-profile dispute with the Royal Bafokeng Nation which challenged Impala Platinum's rights to mine platinum group metals in Bophuthatswana, in the period 1996-1999 (*Bafokeng Tribe v Impala Platinum Ltd and Others* 1999 (3) SA 517 (BH)). He was also a member of Impala Platinum's legal team in the 1988-1989 litigation with the Royal Bafokeng Nation (*Bafokeng Tribe v Impala Platinum Limited and Others*, High Court of Bophuthatswana Judgment delivered on 30 May 1989).

## Shipping and Commodities

His experience as Counsel in this field includes a number of arbitrations, London Commercial Court and Admiralty Court cases relating to disputes under demise, time, and voyage charters, bills of lading and shipbuilding contracts, including two references arising from sulphur corrosion damage to the holds of bulk carriers, and an arbitration arising from the sinking of a bulk carrier as a result of the fluidization of a fluorspar cargo.

His reported cases in this field include *Standard Chartered Bank v Dorchester LNG*, (The "Erin Schulte") [2013] EWHC 808 (Comm) and [2014] EWCA Civ 1382 (the provisions of COGSA, 1992 relating to the delivery of indorsed bills of lading and title to sue, the rights of a confirming bank under letters of credit, and the legal nature of a beneficiary's claims under such letters); *Macieo Shipping Ltd v Clipper Shipping Lines Ltd* ("The Clipper Sao Luis") [2000] 1 Lloyd's Rep. 645 (fire damage to cargo; liability for negligence of stevedores); *Seawind Tankers Corporation v Bayoil SA* [1999] 1 Lloyd's Rep. 211 (CA) (whether winding up proceedings competent on the basis of claims for freight and diversion expenses notwithstanding cross-claims for damages); *Marine Trade SA v Pioneer Freight Futures Co Ltd & Armada Singapore Pte Ltd* [2009] EWHC 2656 (Comm) (derivatives (forward freight agreements) and construction issues relating to the 1992 ISDA Master Agreement); *North Sea Energy Holdings BV v Petroleum Authority of Thailand* [1999] 1 Lloyd's Rep. 483 (CA) (disputes under a crude oil supply agreement and claim for damages on the basis of a "loss of chance"); *Toepfer v Societe Cargill* [1998] 1 Lloyd's Rep. 379 (CA) (anti-suit injunctions); and *Savage and Lovemore Mining (Pty) Ltd v International Shipping Co (Pty) Ltd* 1987 (2) SA 149 (W) (conformity of shipping documents presented under CIF sales of steam coal and effect of contravention of statutory export control scheme on seller's right to recover the purchase price).

## Insurance

He has advised in a number of insurance disputes involving South African and UK insurers/insureds and reinsurance interests under both English and South African law, including asbestosis and silicosis claims.

He has also advised in a broad variety of insurance disputes, including liability and professional indemnity cases, and has appeared in a number of reported South African insurance cases, and in two arbitration references between the insured interests and the underwriters of hull and liability policies arising out of aircraft accidents.

## Publications and conference papers

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- "International Arbitration in the Resources and Energy Sectors": guest lecture at Coventry University Law School, 28 November 2017.
  - "Pathological Arbitration Clauses in English Law": paper given at the 2nd Oxford Symposium on International Commercial Arbitration, Wolfson College, 17 November 2017.

- Speaker at Ince & Co/20 Essex Street joint seminar, “Energy and Resources Arbitration Arising from Africa and Latin America”, 28 September 2017
- “The Concept of the “Holder” of a Bill of Lading under COGSA, 1992” (paper given at the XIX International Congress of Maritime Arbitrators in Hong Kong in May 2015).
- Singapore chapter in “Arbitration World”, 5th Edition (2015), 4th Edition (2012) and 3rd edition (2010).
- “Effective Advocacy in International Arbitration: a Masterclass for Chinese Lawyers” (20 Essex Street Seminar, Beijing, June 2012).
- Seminars on English Commercial Law with members of the Russian Judiciary, on behalf of the Slyn Foundation, Moscow and St Petersburg, March 2012.
- “Arbitral Awards on Jurisdiction Post Dallah: the Role of the Courts” (20 Essex Street Arbitration Seminar, Maxwell Chambers, Singapore, February 2011).
- “International Commercial Arbitration and the Southern African Development Community”, Advocate (Journal of the South Africa Bar), August 2009.
- “Adapting the UNCITRAL Rules of Arbitration for Regional Needs-Problems and Solutions” (Conference held in Mauritius in April 2007 under the auspices of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and the Arbitration Foundation of South Africa).
- “Criteria for Investment, with Particular Reference to Dispute Resolution” (ibid).

## Recommendations

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Michael has been absolutely phenomenal. He takes on all of the work and has got a really good judgement. [Chambers UK Bar 2026](#)

Michael Tselentis is hugely experienced and so good in managing the arbitration and the people. He is outstanding. [Chambers UK Bar 2026](#)

Michael is a man for the detail. He commanded the respect of the parties, drove the process and dealt with everything expeditiously. [Chambers UK Bar 2026](#)

Michael is an extremely good barrister and highly perceptive. He can see through a theoretical argument that has the look of something good but is actually nonsense. [Chambers UK Bar 2025](#)

Michael Tselentis KC is a very good chair. He's very organized, quick to turn things around and very user-friendly. [Chambers UK Bar 2025](#)

Michael is a big name for work in African states. [Chambers UK Bar 2025](#)

Michael is meticulous in his approach. He is thoughtful, careful and courteous and is easy to work with. [The Legal 500 UK Bar 2024](#)

His analytical skills and arbitration knowledge are first rate. [The Legal 500 UK Bar 2023](#)

A truly excellent arbitrator, hugely experienced, conscientious and diligent, scrupulously fair, and approachable. [The Legal 500 UK Bar 2022](#)

He is a highly respected member of the Bar who has decades of experience in litigating energy issues, and increasingly focuses his practice in acting as an arbitrator. He is highly knowledgeable on upstream oil and gas contracts, licencing disputes, and mining transactions. Strengths: he has a formidable intellect and is a worthy opponent. [Chambers UK Bar 2016](#)

Michael Tselentis KC is highly rated for energy and mining disputes. Experienced at the South African Bar and in African mining matters generally. He is very user-friendly and a stickler for detail. Delivers great results. [Chambers Global 2015](#)

Michael Tselentis KC acts in litigation and arbitration and sits as an arbitrator in energy disputes. He has an internationally focused practice and appears in matters connected to areas such as oil and gas and mining. Strengths: very solid and very thorough, he leaves no stone unturned and has excellent analytical qualities. [Chambers UK Bar 2015](#)