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**ALL-RUSSIAN JUDICIAL DEBATES:
HOW IT WAS IN 2025**

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Abstract. *The article is devoted to the results of the XXI All-Russian Student Model Trial “All-Russian Judicial Debates — 2025,” held on April 25–26 at Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University. It provides a detailed account of the key events, including the award presentations as well as the opening and closing ceremonies. The article also analyzes the geographic reach of the event and outlines the structure and rules of the model trial. As part of the Kazan International Legal Forum ecosystem, the event brought together more than 150 students from 20 of the country’s leading law schools. The participants competed in both civil and criminal proceedings, demonstrating practical skills and legal reasoning under conditions closely resembling actual court hearings. Particular attention is given to the educational and professional value of the debates, which were attended by representatives of the legal community, law enforcement agencies, the Bar, and other institutions. The article highlights the role of the event in fostering legal culture and in the professional development of future lawyers.*

Keywords: *debates, judicial process, students, judges, lawyers, law, knowledge.*

April 25–26, 2025, the Law Faculty of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University (KFU) hosted the in-person stage of the XXI Student Judicial Trial “All-Russian Judicial Debates — 2025”. For nearly three decades, Kazan and KFU have served as a hub for participants representing leading universities from across the country — from Kaliningrad to the Far East.

The All-Russian Judicial Debates is a unique, practice-oriented academic initiative designed for young Russian lawyers to enhance their professional competencies.

The event is held at the Law Faculty of KFU. In 2004, the first Judicial Debates were launched at the Law Faculty of what was then V.I. Ulyanov-Lenin Kazan State University, within a single section dedicated to civil procedure. Since 2006, the Judicial Debates have acquired All-Russian status, and a separate Criminal Procedure track was introduced.

This year, the Law Faculty of Kazan University warmly welcomed 40 teams, which, following a competitive selection process, advanced to the in-person stage. The organizing committee received over 100 applications in total. Over the course of its long history, the All-Russian Judicial Debates have evolved from a faculty-level initiative into a nationwide event, becoming a truly significant phenomenon not only in student life but also in the broader legal community of Russia.

The panel of judges and guests of honor traditionally includes representatives of the judiciary, namely the Arbitration Court of the Volga District, the Arbitration Court of the Republic of Tatarstan, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Tatarstan, and the district courts of Kazan.

It is particularly noteworthy that this year, the judicial panel and guests also included representatives of the Second Cassation Court of General Jurisdiction, the Fourth Appellate Court of General Jurisdiction, as well as the arbitration courts of the Moscow, Perm, Kirov, and Astrakhan, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Bashkortostan, the Moscow Regional Court, and the Vladimir Regional Court.

In addition, the ceremonial opening was attended by heads of state bodies of the Republic of Tatarstan, law enforcement officers, members of the Bar Association of the Republic of Tatarstan, business representatives, and delegates from some of Russia's leading law firms.

The opening ceremony took place on April 25 at 10:00 a.m. in the Imperial Hall of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University. The first to address the participants and guests was First Vice-Rector for Research, *Dmitry Tayursky*. He emphasized the practical orientation of the event, noting that the mock trial format offers law students a unique opportunity to refine their legal skills.

Next to speak at the opening ceremony was Dean of the Law Faculty of KFU, Doctor of Legal Sciences, and Professor of the Russian Academy of Sciences, *Lilia Bakulina*. She remarked that the All-Russian Judicial Debates closely simulate real court proceedings, largely due to the composition of the judging panel, which includes members of the Russian judiciary, law enforcement officials, respected scholars from Russian universities, attorneys, and practicing legal professionals.

The opening ceremony continued with welcoming remarks by:

1. *Igor Smolensky*, Deputy Chairman of the Arbitration Court of the Volga District;
2. *Nikolai Volkov*, Deputy Chairman of the Fourth Court of Appeal of General Jurisdiction for Criminal Cases;

3. *Eduard Kaminsky*, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Tatarstan for Administrative Cases;

4. *Rail Shaydullin*, Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Bashkortostan;

5. *Valery Golubtsov*, Chairman of the Arbitration Court of Perm.

The following also took part in the opening ceremony and addressed the audience:

1. *Vitaly Gilmutdinov*, Chairman of the Arbitration Court of the Republic of Tatarstan;

2. *Azat Gilmutdinov*, Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Tatarstan;

3. *Ainur Yalilov*, Managing Partner of the law firm Yalilov & Partners;

4. *Vyacheslav Gusakov*, Associate Professor at the Law Institute of Sevastopol State University, member of the Energy Law Commission of the Russian Lawyers' Association, Deputy Chairman of the International Union of Lawyers, and retired judge;

5. *Alexander Lazarev*, First Deputy Head of the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Entrepreneurs' Rights in Moscow;

6. *Gulshat Zagidullina*, General Director of Tatlift LLC;

7. *Lenar Gumerov*, First Deputy Director of the Kazan Branch of the Russian State University of Justice.

Following the ceremonial opening, master classes were held for the participants of the mock trial.

In Lecture Hall 2, a session titled "Selected Issues of Civil Procedure" was delivered by *Tatyana Volkova*, Deputy Chairman of the Arbitration Court of Astrakhan, Doctor of Legal Sciences, Associate Professor.

In Lecture Hall 3, *Bulat Mardanov*, a defense attorney at Yalilov & Partners, conducted a workshop on "The Role of the Defense Counsel During a Search".

Subsequently, the participating teams and mock trial judges received procedural briefings.

At 3:20 p.m., the first round of the competition commenced, transforming academic classrooms into improvised courtrooms.

By the end of the first day, a total of 20 hearings were held simultaneously — 10 in the Criminal Procedure section and 10 in the Civil Procedure section.

After the first round, a consultation stage on new case scenarios was held for the teams, and the day concluded with a team captains' contest in each section.

On April 26, the second day of the All-Russian Judicial Debates, the results of the first day were announced.

Sixteen teams advanced to the semifinals in both the Criminal Procedure and Civil Procedure categories.

The semifinals were once again held in the form of mock trials, followed by another consultation stage.

At 2:30 p.m., in Lecture Hall 1, the semifinal results were announced.

The finalists in the Civil Procedure section were four teams representing the following universities:

- Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University,
- O.E. Kutafin Moscow State Law University,
- V.F. Yakovlev Ural State Law University.

The Criminal Procedure section finalists were the teams from:

- O.E. Kutafin Moscow State Law University,
- Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University,
- V.F. Yakovlev Ural State Law University,
- Crimean Branch of the V.M. Lebedev Russian State University of Justice.

A unique feature of this year's competition was that the final round of the All-Russian Judicial Debates took place at the Arbitration Court of the Republic of Tatarstan!

The finalists demonstrated their theoretical training in their respective areas of law and their ability to argue previously undisclosed case scenarios.

At 6:00 p.m., the closing ceremony of the All-Russian Judicial Debates — 2025 took place in the conference hall of the Arbitration Court of the Republic of Tatarstan.

The presidium included:

— *Vitaly Gilmudinov*, Chairman of the Arbitration Court of the Republic of Tatarstan;

— *Igor Smolensky*, Deputy Chairman of the Arbitration Court of the Volga District;

— *Nikolai Volkov*, Deputy Chairman of the Fourth Court of Appeal of General Jurisdiction for Criminal Cases;

— *Tatyana Volkova*, Deputy Chairman of the Arbitration Court of Astrakhan.

Before the announcement of the winners and runners-up, the jury members were presented with certificates of appreciation during the ceremony. The closing ceremony concluded with the awarding of commemorative diplomas, statuettes, gift certificates, and other valuable prizes to the winners and runners-up.

The organizers of the XXI Student Judicial Trial “All-Russian Judicial Debates” were Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University and the Association of Alumni of the Law Faculty of KFU.

The title partner of the event was V.D. Shashin PJSC Tatneft.

The general partners included the law firm Yalilov & Partners and the Autonomous Non-Profit Organization “Institute for Legal Literacy and Support for Entrepreneurship”.

The information partners of the event were: Pravo.ru, the journal Herald of Civil Procedure, the International Association of Lawyers and Consultants, and the Youth School of Law.

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