

**EDITORIAL:
INTRODUCING A NEW INTERNATIONAL LAW JOURNAL**

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After some years of preparation, we are proud to present a new journal, the *International Organizations Law Review*. The purpose of this very first editorial is to introduce briefly the new journal and to answer a number of questions related to the introduction of yet another international law journal. How do we justify the launch of another journal in the field of public international law? Why do we think it is useful to create a forum for both academics and practitioners? And, what types of issues will be covered by the *International Organizations Law Review*?

I. THE LAW OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS AN
ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

Within the discipline of public international law the law of international organizations has gradually developed into a separate field of study. The law of early organizations such as the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization was originally studied separately for each organization. But it was soon recognised that international organizations, irrespective of their many differences, also face similar questions and share a number of characteristics. On the one hand, international organizations have different purposes, different members, different decision-making procedures, and they use different types of decisions and supervisory procedures. On the other hand, they have many characteristics in common: they all *do* have purposes, members and decision-making procedures, and the types of decisions and supervisory procedures they use often bear strong resemblances, or are even identical. In other words: there is *unity within diversity*. The law of international organizations has gradually evolved, and it thus seems possible to contribute to a better understanding of it by making existing methods of study more sophisticated, by presenting new

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approaches, and by examining developments in practice. This is the *raison d'être* of the International Organizations Law Review.

II. VIEWS FROM BOTH THEORY AND PRACTICE

After the Second World War in particular, the law of international organizations developed as a discipline within public international law – separate, but not separable. The International Organizations Law Review purports to function as a discussion forum for academics and practitioners active in the field of the law of international organizations. It is based on two pillars; one is based in the world of scholarship, the other in the world of practice. In the first dimension, this Review focuses on general developments in international institutional law. Its main interest lies in general, theoretical, issues rather than in the law of specific organizations. Contributions may deal with individual organizations, but the relevance of the subject to other international organizations or to the discipline of the law of international organizations must be clear. Most contributions will therefore focus on institutional rather than on substantive issues.

Equally important, however, are the views from practice. The world of scholars and the world of practitioners largely function in separate settings. One is not always fully aware of developments taking place in the other. This Review aims at bridging this separation by creating a forum to identify and discuss legal developments within international organizations as observed by practitioners working for those organizations next to theoretical analyses of international institutional law. Both dimensions are to support and stimulate each other.

III. READERSHIP: FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Review distinguishes itself from other journals in the area of international law by focusing on international organizations and the relations between these organizations and (member) states, rather than on relations between states. Developments in the law of international organizations receive only limited attention in existing international law journals and are not always explicitly recognised. The strong proliferation of international organizations and the connected coming of age of the academic discipline that studies them calls for a broader and at the same time more in-depth discussion of international institutional law issues such as the legal status of international organizations, questions of accountability, competences and attribution of powers, *ultra vires* acts, legal protection and judicial control, division of powers, membership issues, succession issues, democracy and transparency, and the position of non-

governmental organizations. It is expected that the proliferation of international organizations fundamentally changes the international legal order and that some of these issues will increasingly dominate the international legal debate. These days this debate is scattered among many different journals on international law. A specialised journal on the law of international organizations will serve as an important forum for researchers active in international institutional law and for practitioners active in the daily (legal) work of international organizations and interested in sharing experiences in the field.

IV. THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE JOURNAL

When we started our *travaux préparatoires* for launching this new journal, we were glad to find a number of colleagues sharing our interest, enthusiasm and ideas, and willing to participate on the board of editors. Thanks to excellent cooperation within the board it has been possible to realize our plans. Some members of the Editorial Board have been willing to submit a contribution to this first issue (see the articles by Klabbers, Muller and Reinisch). In the same vein we would like to express our gratitude to Martinus Nijhoff Publishers – now an imprint of Brill Academic Publishers – for their willingness to publish this Review and for assisting us in numerous ways.

As most journals, the International Organizations Law Review has an Advisory Board. We have approached a number of authorities to sit on this Board and advise us. Most of them responded with enthusiasm and were willing to invest some of their precious time in the Journal. We also invited them to contribute to the first issue. More in particular, we have asked Advisory Board members to write about one or more fundamental questions facing this field of study. As a first result, this issue includes contributions by Schermers, Amerasinghe, Kuijper and Wouters/Naert. Preparing the first issue of a new journal is not an easy task. The journal still has to establish itself and attract potential authors. We invite both academics and practitioners to submit contributions. We hope that this first issue will stimulate colleagues to prepare shorter notes or more extensive articles in order to share their ideas or experiences with a wider audience.

As editors-in-chief we welcome all your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to contact us through our personal e-mail addresses: n.m.blokker@law.leidenuniv.nl and r.a.wessel@utwente.nl.