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EDITORIAL

The new volume (XXXIX) of the Polish Yearbook of International Law is finally out. As you can see, we continue our editorial policy of giving priority to those issues of international law that are particularly important for Central and Eastern Europe.

The first half of 2020, i.e. when we were preparing the current volume, was a very difficult time. Undoubtedly the world has found itself in the middle of a global multi-dimensional crisis. This crisis, caused by the outbreak of Covid-19, is probably one of the biggest challenges that humanity has experienced in the last few decades. We still cannot predict how it will impact the national and global economies, health systems, politics, and law. Neither do we know how we should respond to it. Perhaps Yuval Noah Harari was right when he noted that: “In this time of crisis, we face two particularly important choices. The first is between totalitarian surveillance and citizen empowerment. The second is between nationalist isolation and global solidarity.”¹ If this assessment is correct, these choices will obviously determine the shape of public international law in the forthcoming future, both at the general level as well within its specific branches. So what should be the response to a global economic crisis? Do we want to come back to the previous status quo? Or rather build a new more sustainable system? How can we protect human rights and at the same time ensure the effective management of public health? How can we provide humanitarian help while ensuring the protection of local and national communities? We expect that researchers will be able to identify many specific scientific problems and analyse them in greater depth. Hopefully this will already be visible in the next volume of PYIL.

The year 2020 was also difficult because we lost some important members of our academic community. In particular two excellent professors of international law who for many years have acted as Editors-in-Chief of the Polish Yearbook of International Law passed away. We dedicate the memoir article to professor Andrzej Wasilkowski (by Jerzy Menkes) and we decided to pay a tribute to professor Janusz Symonides by reserving a part of the next volume to him and his research achievements (for details see our call for papers).

The next issue will also be special because it will be a jubilee number; the 40th volume of the Yearbook marks the long journey that the journal has made over last 50 years. We are truly proud that we have been able to take part in this journey for more

¹ Y.N. Harari, *The World after Coronavirus*, Financial Times, 4 May 2020.

than a decade now, and we also thank our Readers for being with us. In this context, we would like to call the attention of our Readers to the forthcoming special volume of the Netherlands Yearbook of International Law, which will be dedicated to International Law Yearbooks published in different parts of the globe. The volume will also feature a text on PYIL.²

As far as the current volume is concerned, its first section, entitled “General Articles”, includes three texts that deal with classical problems of international law: the right to self-determination; sources of general international law; and the status of unrecognized entities (by Peter Hilpold, Przemysław Saganek and Anna Czaplińska respectively). They are followed by a very interesting article that looks at the international law traditions at the Saint Volodymyr Imperial University of Kyiv (by Kostiantyn Savchuk). As usual, texts relating to international and European human rights law are strongly present in the volume. This group particularly includes articles analysing the problems posed by the restitution of property taken during WWII and by the Communist regime (by Aleksandra Mężykowska), memory laws (by Anna Wójcik), and the law and cases dealing with the excessive length of proceedings (by Elżbieta Morawska). Wojciech Burek’s text also falls into this category, although the author looks at the protection of national minorities by their kin-states more broadly, by including in his analysis other sources of international law. The section ends with three articles dealing with international economic law. On the one hand Konstantina Georgaki, Thomas-Nektarios and Łukasz Kułaga take a look at the Achmea judgment and discuss its legal consequences for the protection of investors’ rights within the EU. On the other hand, Tatsiana Mikhaliova offers an insightful overview of the legal system established by the Eurasian Economic Union.

The second section (i.e. “Polish practice”) this time contains only one text. This limited selection is however offset by the quality of the presented research. Dawid Miąsik and Monika Szwarc analyze the problem of the interpretation and effectiveness of EU directives in the national courts by examining in detail the judgement in a preliminary ruling proceeding initiated by the Polish court (*C-545/17 Pawlak*). The last part of the volume includes four reviews. Patrycja Grzebyk discusses the recent book by Marco Sassòli; Przemysław Saganek examines the latest edited work of Łukasz Gruszczyński; Marcin Kałduński takes a look at two books by Antonio Augusto Cançado Trindade; while Yu Lu and Maciej Żenkiewicz provide a comprehensive review of another edited volume by Julien Chaisse.

Last but not least, we are delighted to inform you that PYIL has been recently accepted for inclusion in Scopus. The indexing process should be completed by the end of this year. This decision formally reaffirms the scientific quality of the Yearbook and creates new opportunities for its further development.

² L. Gruszczyński, K. Wierczyńska, *Polish Yearbook of International Law: A History of Constant Change and Adaptation*, 50 Netherlands Yearbook of International Law (2019, forthcoming).