

On Changes, New Beginnings and Continuities

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A new academic year is about to start in many jurisdictions around the globe. Völkerrechtsblog is back after the summer break in Europe with some important personal news: We are very happy to announce that three new editors have joined our managing editors' team: **Spyridoula (Sissy) Katsoni** (Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict, Bochum), **Meike Krakau** (Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich) and Dr. **Cathérine Van de Graaf** (Academy for European Human Rights Protection, University of Cologne).

The change results from a cooperation with members from different universities and research institutes from all across Germany who are becoming our editorial partners (Herausgeber:innen) and will support Völkerrechtsblog with what we most need – staff resources until at least the end of 2022. The cooperation partners are Prof. Dr. Angelika Nußberger (Academy for European Human Rights Protection, University of Cologne), Prof. Dr. Anne Peters (Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg), Dr. Michael Riegner (Humboldt University Berlin, prospective Junior Professor for International Law and International Administrative Law, University of Erfurt starting 1 October 2021), Prof. Dr. Pierre Thielbörger (Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict, Ruhr University Bochum), and Prof. Dr. Christian Walter, Chair of Public International Law and Public Law (LMU Munich).

For Völkerrechtsblog, this forms a further step in growing and professionalization. The blog was founded in 2014 as a fully volunteer project by a small group of young researchers from Germany and Switzerland. As the blog grew over the years, it became clear that we needed some further professionalization and resources for staff and infrastructure. Since March 2019, we have received support from the German Research Funding Organization (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) together with Prof. Dr. Anne Peters and the MPIL in Heidelberg. One of the core aims of the project “Scientific Blogs as Infrastructure for Digital Publishing and Academic Communication: Expanding the Model Project ‘Völkerrechtsblog’”, led by Raffaella Kunz, was to develop a funding model that would allow the blog to continue operations and further evolve after funding ends in March 2022.

The cooperation with different chairs and institutions comes as a very important step for ensuring a sustainable future of the blog. Two different considerations mattered most to us when thinking about different ways to fund the blog. First of all, as an open access pioneer and publication format with a very international and diverse audience, it was clear for us that we wanted to operate without fees for either readers or authors. In other words, the “gold” open access model with “Article Processing Charges” pursued by more and more journals was not an option – for

us, open access not only means that the content on the blog is freely available via the internet, but also that the participation in the production of this content remains inclusive and independent of the financial means of authors and institutions.

Secondly, Völkerrechtsblog is a project that emerged out of the scholarly community and was always driven by dedicated young scholars with a keen interest in questions of public international law as well as publication formats and scholarly communication in the digital age. The cooperation with the different chairs and institutions not only allows us to operate without article fees or commercial advertisements – it is also very much in line with this original ideal, namely to be a publication platform from the scholarly community for the scholarly community.

In this sense, we are very much looking forward to open this new chapter for the blog together with our new managing editors – but also with you as our readers and authors who support us through your articles and comments. In this sense, please join us in warmly welcoming Sissy, Meike and Cathérine. We wish you an excellent start!

