

Happy Birthday, Völkerrechtsblog!

Pierre Thielbörger

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I became involved with the blog first in the scientific advisory board eight years ago. In this time, I have realized how much effort, stress resistance, and creativity goes into creating a blog. Since 2019, I have been one of the official publishers. In that capacity, I would like to thank a few people specifically for the enormous achievement that marks the tenth anniversary of the blog.

Maybe the last ten years of the blog are best understood in three phases. First, the founding phase. Dr. Dana Schmalz and Dr. Michael Riegner had the courage and foresight to start the project ten years ago. Little did they know about the impact the blog would have one day. Even less were they aware how much work it would create. It is thanks to their hard work, passionate dedication and strong network of colleagues and friends in international law that the blog even made it beyond this phase – after all, most start-ups die in the first few years. The blog, however, grew significantly, both in terms of reputation and outreach.

The second phase I would call the consolidation phase. In the meantime, funded by the DFG and supported by the Max Planck Institute in Heidelberg, Dr. Raffaella Kunz and her team professionalized the blog. Step by step, it became more than a project of highly motivated volunteers. The blog rose to a level where it was able to compete with more established and better funded competitors, such as Verfassungsblog, Opinio Juris or EJIL Talk!. Raffaella and her team deserve huge credit – it is unimaginable where the blog would be without their tireless efforts.

In the third phase – let's call it the advanced or experimental stage – the blog is now trying out different ways of maintaining the high academic level without institutionalized funding. In this time, the blog won – for different time periods and in different forms – support from several German chairholders in international law: Prof. Dr. Anne Peters (Heidelberg), Prof. Dr. Angelika Nussberger (Cologne), Prof. Dr. Christian Walter (München), Prof. Dr. Michael Riegner (Erfurt) and myself (Bochum). A big thanks for managing this not always easy period, often way beyond the call of duty, goes to Dr. Raffaella Kunz (Heidelberg), Dr. Catherine van de Graaf (Cologne), Meike Krakau (Munich), Jasmin Wachau (Erfurt) and Spyridoula (Sissy) Katsoni (Bochum), and of course the current editors-in-chief, Dr. Sué Gonzalez Hauck (Hamburg), (again) Meike Krakau (Munich) and Dr. Isabel Lischewski (Münster). And let's not forget the incredibly strong network of currently more than 30 editors and more than 50 members of the scientific advisory board!

This last phase of experimenting is far from over. Podcasts, symposia and Bofaxe have just been the beginning. New plans for more inclusivity, more diversity and more creative ways of peer-reviewing are already on the way. I am looking forward to whatever creative (and sometimes crazy) ideas our team will come up with in the future.

If I may make three wishes for the blog for the next ten years, it would be these: stay critical, stay adaptable, and become a bit faster with the reviews ;).

Blogging will only become more important in academia, and I have no doubt that the blog will become an even more important part of international law blogging worldwide. And that is indeed more than enough reason for a massive birthday celebration. So, happy Blögiversary!

