

Editorial

In Transition

The Amsterdam Law Forum Editorial Board

Since December, Amsterdam Law Forum has welcomed a new board and enthusiastic team of editors. Together with these editors, we are working to restructure Amsterdam Law Forum, and re-establish its four annual publications. This year also marks the reintroduction of ALF's themed issue, which shall be published this summer to correspond with our annual conference. This year, we will be exploring the topic of 'the environment and international law'. This is an exciting subject that touches upon current international debates regarding the law and climate change, human rights and the environment and the prolonged environmental consequences of armed conflicts, among others. We look forward to receiving thought-provoking contributions related to this continuously timely and important topic.

ALF's new board has made immense progress in revamping ALF as an organisation and preparing for the exciting year ahead. We are very pleased to present you with Amsterdam Law Forum's 2017 Winter Issue, the first publication of the ALF Board and Editor team. This issue reflects only a fragment of the work we as board have been carrying out over the past three months. However, it also serves as an introduction to a new Amsterdam Law Forum and sets the stage for the year we have planned.

To complement the transition that ALF has made, this 2017 Winter Issue is fortunate to feature several articles relating to ongoing developments in international law, and the way that legal issues are evolving during periods of transition. Our first article is an intriguing scientific piece by Dr. Musa Njabulo Shongwe. Shongwe explores the increasing fragmentation of the multilateral trading system and evaluates whether regional trade agreements have conflicted with World Trade Organization (WTO) law. Shongwe finds that the phenomenal growth of regional trade agreements affects the WTO's core principle of non-discrimination and the coherence of international trade law. The article offers an in-depth observation of this fragmentation and presents the reader with an informative overview of WTO law, the proliferation of regionalism and the normative and institutional conflicts that arise when these different legal systems come into conflict. Shongwe suggests that convergence, rather than divergence, should be sought between regional agreements and WTO law and measures should be sought at all levels – national, regional and multilateral – to do so.

The second contribution to this publication is a scientific article by Vasil Stoynov, a post-graduate student in Business, Competition and Regulatory Law in Berlin. Stoynov's article addresses an integral feature of international agreements concluded by the European Union: their direct effect. With a focus on bilateral

trade agreements, and specifically on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the author explores the direct effect of these agreements within the legal framework of the Court of Justice of the European Union. Through applying this jurisprudence to assess the potential implications of the controversial TTIP, the author engages the reader in a thorough legal assessment of a trade agreement that is still in transition, and given the current political climate now faces an increasingly uncertain future.

Finally, this publication features an opinion piece, contributed by Arno Lodder, Professor of Internet Governance at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Lodder explores how the territorial jurisdiction model of law that is so frequently applied, is increasingly challenged as we transition to a globalised world of cross-border smartphone use. In a world where countries have different laws to govern their citizens, what does it mean for sovereignty when those acts transcend a nation's borders? Does this render nation-based jurisdiction models obsolete? Lodder suggests in the face of technological developments, it is time to consider alternative models, and poses several critical questions that we must begin to explore if we hope to adapt our laws to keep up with the globalising world.

On a final note, ALF has been a fully student-run online journal since its establishment in 2008. While this has allowed many enthusiastic and talented law students to take the lead and explore the challenges and joys of independently running an academic legal journal, as of September 2017 ALF shall be supervised by members of the Faculty of Law at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. We believe this is a welcomed change and look forward to working more closely with the VU's staff members.

We hope you enjoy reading this, albeit short, issue and that the articles contained within offer you an interesting insight into these timely and diverse matters of international law in transition. Thank you to our contributors for their articles and a special thank you to the new members of our Editorial Team.

Isabella Regan – Editor-in-Chief

Adina Nistor – Associate Chief-in-Editor

Caitlin Dykes – Senior Editor

The ALF board 2017