

## Foreword

Judge Thomas Buergenthal\*

It is truly a great pleasure for me to welcome the publication of the Göttingen Journal of International Law (GoJIL). As is already apparent from the high quality of the articles appearing in this, its first issue, the GoJIL is on its way to becoming an important voice in seeking to promote the exchange of creative ideas and research in the field of contemporary international law.

In its conception and execution, the GoJIL is in many ways unique as a German international law publication: it is student-edited, it is available only on the Internet and it is published in English. In the performance of their editorial functions, the student editors will work under the academic supervision of the law faculty of the University of Göttingen – the Georgia Augusta University – which has a long tradition of scholarly distinction in the international law field. The editorial responsibility will rest with the student editors, while the high academic standard is guaranteed by a thorough peer review.

In establishing the GoJIL as a student-edited journal, the editors of the GoJIL have opted for the American law review model where the vast majority of these journals is student-edited. Of course, their quality differs in that some are excellent, while others do not quite measure up to the highest professional standards. But the same is also true of those American law journals that are not student-edited. Some are excellent, among them for example, the American Journal of International Law, while others are by no means as good in terms of their professional quality as the leading student reviews. In short, student-edited journals can meet high professional standards, provided they enjoy the academic encouragement and professional support of distinguished law school faculties, which can

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certainly be expected the law faculty of the University of Göttingen will provide.

Today most, if not all, American law schools publish at least one student-edited law review and some even publish more than one. The latter are usually specialized law journals that deal with subjects such as international law, environmental law, intellectual property law, poverty law, etc. There are good reasons why student-edited law reviews are to be found in almost all American law schools: law school faculties consider the student-edited law review an integral and important part of their academic program. As a rule only the best students are selected to work on the law reviews. Students in their final law school year supervise those that are behind them. They teach them how to edit the articles submitted to the journal, they require them to undertake small research projects, to write so-called student Comments – short pieces usually consisting of an analysis of a recent judicial decision or some statutory provision – and Notes. The latter are more substantial research papers usually written by senior student editors. An important aspect of student-edited law journals in the US is that they have full discretion to publish or not to publish articles submitted to their journals, even with regard to articles submitted by their professors.

Having served as a faculty adviser on a number of law reviews at different American law schools during my long academic career, I am convinced that student-edited journals do play a valuable role in the education and professional development of future lawyers. They stimulate student interest in legal research and writing and they provide them with the necessary hands-on experience to develop these skills. It is an experience that is difficult to duplicate effectively in the normal classroom setting. I am sure, therefore, that the GoJIL will not only serve to encourage important scholarly discussions on critical international law issues among the community of international lawyers, it will also enrich the learning experience of its student editors. The Law Faculty of the University of Göttingen should be complimented on having encouraged this initiative.

The fact that the GoJIL will be published and available on the Internet and in English will give it an almost immediate worldwide exposure and enable it to address current developments and problems of concern to the international law community. I am sure that the decision to publish the GoJIL in English, given that it is being published in Germany by a German university, was by no means easy for the editors and the law faculty. They were wise, however, to recognize that they could not realistically hope to have a worldwide audience for their journal unless they chose English as its working language and the Internet as its mode of publication. By opting for

this approach, the GoJIL also offers the German international law community a much wider and more immediate international exposure than would otherwise be open to it.

The proliferation in recent years of international courts and tribunals, the growth in the number of inter-governmental international organizations, and the increasing impact of international law on the activities of governments, multinational corporations and individuals, has made the development and study of all aspects of this branch of the law more important than ever before. That is also why the decision to publish the GoJIL is so timely and welcome. It offers a vehicle for a scholarly exchange of ideas among and between academic international lawyers and practitioners, be they government lawyers, international civil servants and judges. At the same time, it gives the law students of the University of Göttingen the opportunity to get valuable international law experience while participating in and contributing to the development of that law.

It would not surprise me if other law faculties in Europe and elsewhere in the world begin to follow the example of the University of Göttingen and establish student-edited international law journals. While the United States already has a very large number of such publications, that is certainly not true in most other countries. The fact that such journals can serve as important training tools for students interested in pursuing careers in international law, should encourage other law faculties to provide them with opportunities similar to those now available at the University of Göttingen.

18 November 2008

