
EDITORIAL

This issue of the *Leiden Journal of International Law* is the second one in her fifth year of existence. A year that has been full of events important to the development of international law in various fields. The signing of the Treaty of Maastricht and the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro are just two of this year's events which may later prove to have been signs of a new world order, in which the role of international law becomes increasingly more important.

One event however throws a dark shadow over 1992. In a year in which twelve European countries take the final steps towards a united Europe in 1993, that same Europe, for the first time since the Second World War, sees a shocking civil war in former Yugoslavia.

Is international law being silenced by war? One would think that when a war breaks out or a conflict escalates international law has failed in promoting cooperation and peaceful coexistence between various peoples or nations. The mediation by both the European Community and the United Nations could not prevent the outbreak and escalation of this civil war. Nor did the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, which contain various measures to be taken against Yugoslavia, have an immediate, appeasing effect.

On the other hand, however, these actions of the European Community and the United Nations illustrate the increased role of international law in conflicts and war. A civil war appears to be no longer regarded as an entirely internal problem, beyond the competence of international organizations. This is also illustrated by the presence of the United Nations Peace Keeping Forces in Yugoslavia. The international community seems to take an active part in the attempts to appease and end this terrible conflict.

Reflections upon the role of international law in this conflict differ. One author thinks that the international community has failed to establish peace, whereas another regards its activities as a sign of the increased importance of international law. The *Leiden Journal of International Law* hopes to be a forum for these differing opinions, and at the same time to inform its readers about them, recognising that present-day conflicts and crises in the world are of crucial importance to the role of international law in world politics.