
EDITORIAL

The Leiden Journal of International Law has appeared for five years now. This is the first issue in our fifth year of existence. During those years we have seen many important changes on the international scene. Looking forward, it's clear that 1992 will be another year of change.

Europe will have to take its final steps in order to complete the establishment of the European single market. There are still many obstacles, not least because all Member States still have their own perceptions of what the various structures and consequences for the sovereignty of these states will be. The importance of words comes to the fore in this respect; Member States attach different meanings to words. We only have to think of the word 'Federalism' or the 'F-word' as it became known at the Maastricht summit where it caused many discussions and in the end was dropped and did not appear in the draft treaty. Despite the many difficulties, all Member States realize that the process to a new Europe has become irreversible, although the actual future shape of the new Europe and its institutions is not yet definite. It's clear that far reaching changes lay ahead.

Outside Europe a number of states is also seeking a new structure. Under Gorbatsjov's leadership the Soviet-Union went through many changes. After the ending of the Cold War and the demolition of the Berlin Wall an uncertain period to democratization was followed by the conservative coup in August '91. The attempt to keep the Soviet states together within a federal union has failed. Here again, the 'F-word' has been removed. Now these states are slowly developing towards a commonwealth system. But it remains uncertain how the former Soviet-Union will appear on the map in the future. Many problems remain to be solved, for instance, what will happen to the Soviet armed forces, more particularly, will 'Moscow' keep control over the nuclear arsenal, and what will happen to the various arms limitation treaties between the superpowers?

For the Leiden Journal of International Law the 'F-word' means first of all following all these future changes and how they influence international law.