

G. Alfredsson, T. Koivurova (eds. in chief), D. Leary, N. Loukacheva
(spec. eds.), *The Yearbook of Polar Law* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff
Publishers, 2010)

The symposium is now an established annual affair with the first three held in Akureyri and the fourth scheduled in September 2011 in Nuuk, Greenland. Although the symposia continue to provide rich fodder for the yearbook, submissions are encouraged from all scholars in pertinent areas of research. Submissions are subject to double-blind peer review.

The Yearbook has attracted some of the best known experts in their respective areas. A subjective selection of the most noted will always be unfair in such a distinguished field, but scholars of international law will recognise, besides the editors, established experts Malgosia Fitzmaurice, Nigel Bankes and Asbjørn Eide.

The Yearbook of Polar Law responds to the growing strategic and economic importance of the Arctic and Antarctic regions. The Arctic is changing rapidly, not only geophysically in response to climate shifts but also geopolitically as human technology and security issues give it new social meanings. Where the Yearbook departs from other Arctic and Antarctic scholarly publications is that it approaches the challenges of the polar regions principally from a *legal* standpoint. Nevertheless, studies in these areas require almost invariably an interdisciplinary approach: one cannot assess continental shelf claims under the Law of the Sea Convention without a basic grasp of geography; climate change governance without scientific evidence; nor indigenous peoples' self-determination claims without anthropological and historical knowledge.

In contrast to the Polar Law Textbook which is intended as an introduction to Polar Law, the Yearbook is aimed at academics and policy makers already established in their respective areas of expertise.

The second volume includes a new "recent developments" section as well as relevant book reviews. What it lacks that was valuable in the first is an overall review of the symposium and the conclusions and recommendations of its participants. That overall review provided an excellent - and gentle - introduction to the sometimes highly technical and specialist

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papers that follow, in the manner of an introductory chapter in an edited collection of essays. In it, key general issues were identified, including climate change; human rights; new commercial activities at the Poles; shipping challenges; threats to native species; environmental governance; peace, security and dispute settlement. Then specific pressing issues were highlighted: management and protection of at-risk species; a more proactive approach by the International Maritime Organization in identified areas; the need, if any, for new laws, treaties and processes; and living marine resources management. States were advised of areas requiring immediate attention, such as: implementation of existing law; mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change in cooperation with indigenous peoples of the North. Long-term issues were noted: namely, climate change and environmental governance. Finally recommendations from the symposium's participants were recorded, aimed towards academics *vis á vis* needed research and states *vis á vis* needed action. This summary gives context to the rest of the articles and allows the reader to go on to read any one of the individual contributions with the bigger picture in mind.

While all the articles in the two published volumes could easily have found homes in alternative fora - specialist journals on the law of the sea, environmental law, natural resource law, dispute settlement, human rights, arctic studies as well as general international law and social science volumes - the *Yearbook of Polar Law* is, as its title indicates, the first journal to draw together all these fields with a specific focus on the Polar Regions. By tying together all these related fields in one publication, it gives scholars, policy makers and stakeholders the opportunity to form a more holistic view of the challenges facing the Polar Regions.

At 156 Euros per volume, the *Yearbook* is presumably aimed at institutional subscribers: law school libraries, governmental institutions and research facilities; principally those focussed on the Arctic and Antarctic. This is a little unfortunate as these perspectives from the Poles are informative not only to specialist researchers at the World's ends, but for people all over the World facing challenges such as climate change, resource management, territorial disputes and indigenous claims. One can only hope that, price notwithstanding, the *Yearbook's* contents will nevertheless reach the wide audience that they merit.

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