

A Decade of Polar Law (adapted from the Preface of the 10th Volume of the Yearbook of Polar Law)

*Adapted by Joëlle Klein**

The Yearbook of Polar Law is a compilation of articles, statements, and current developments in the field of polar law. Now surpassing a decade in publication, the Yearbook represents an important annual contribution of scholars to the. The 10th volume includes statements from the 10th Polar Law Symposium held in Rovaniemi in September 2017. Hosting over 115 participants from diverse regions, the conference underscored the continuous and increasingly global relevance of polar law. In that year, the Master in Polar Law program at the University of Akureyri in Iceland also concluded its first decade. Several significant and noteworthy activities during this decade of polar law also include: the publication of three polar law textbooks edited by Natalia Loukacheva and published by the Nordic Council; the serial electronic publication of Current Developments in Arctic Law by the Northern Institute for Environmental and Minority Law (NIEM) at the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi, Finland; and the thematic network on Arctic law established under

the auspices of the University of the Arctic (UArctic).

Finally, a new series, Studies in Polar Law, has been established with Brill | Nijhoff publishers. The series, with Editors-in-Chief Gudmundur Alfredsson and Timo Koivurova, will publish monographs and collected works devoted to the legal regimes applicable to the Arctic and the Antarctic. The series' inaugural volume, Human and Societal Security in the Circumpolar Arctic, edited by Kamrul Hossain, Jose Miguel Roncero Martin and Anna Petrétei, was published in September 2018, and the series editors look forward to book proposals for subsequent volumes.

The relevance of polar law as a cross cutting theme is also demonstrated by its expansion as a normative and technical term. Initially, 'polar law' brought together the terms Arctic law and Antarctic law. Today, polar law even incorporates the Third Pole, thus including a third regional component. The two terms, Arctic law and Antarctic law, have of course existed for a long time.

However, the use of 'polar law' is more accessible for cross-referencing and comparative approaches to substance, procedures and institutions in relation to climate change, the environment, natural resources law, the law of the sea,

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and governance. Moreover, a search for the term 'polar law' on Google now brings up a multitude of entries referring to education, research, publications, conferences, intergovernmental instruments and so on, at the global, regional, sub-regional, national and local levels.

The main themes of the Polar Law Symposia and of the Yearbook have so far been the rights of indigenous peoples, environmental law, climate change, the law of the sea, maritime law, natural resources, local and national governance, as well as regional and international cooperation. As represented in the 10th volume of the Yearbook, two new themes have emerged as leading topics: the role of China in the Polar Regions, and digital security. The application of the term is broadening, and it will be interesting to observe the continued growth of scope and breadth of issues that polar law will encounter in the years to come.

Peaceful cooperation between polar actors in all regions has been consistent and reliable, and despite potentially

worrying signals in relation to unsettled disputes and increasing military build-up, a peaceful trend will hopefully continue. With this in mind, and in light of the numerous positive developments mentioned above, the continued relevance and status of polar law over the next ten years is promising. Forthcoming Polar Law Symposia will be held in Hobart, Australia (2019), and Kobe, Japan (2020). The future of polar law is bright, and its continued growth is anticipated and encouraged. The 10th Volume of the Yearbook of Polar Law is now available for purchase via Brill | Nijhoff publishers: <https://brill.com/view/title/54621>, the 11th Volume of the Yearbook of Polar Law will be published in 2020, and the 12th Volume of the Yearbook of Polar Law will soon be accepting articles for submission.

Original Preface:

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