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1. Message from the President

Dear ESIL Members,

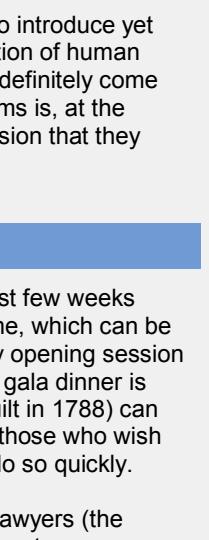
Our society continues to develop its activities, reinforce its visibility and strengthen its relationships with various partners. In this light, I trust that you personally will enliven and expand the activities of the Society. This newsletter provides information about our new ventures, the 'ESIL Lectures' series and the 'ESIL Reflections' online publications. We encourage your involvement in these activities, as well as in the other activities of the Society.

Editorial Board

Massimo Iovane (Napoli) and Geir Ulfstein (Oslo)

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The Society's Interest Groups continue to increase in number and in membership, and you are all welcome to contact the groups' convenors to become more involved in any of the existing groups. A full list of the groups can be found on our website. If there isn't a group that reflects your interests, please consider setting up a new one.

Moreover, the Society is consolidating and adding to its network of partners. As institutional members of ESIL, publishers and academic institutions are afforded opportunities to publicise their activities and to be present at scientific events of the Society. We thank them for their partnership.

We have also established links with sister societies, such as our long-held relationship with the American Society of International Law (ASIL). This particular partnership has facilitated the organisation of various joint events in Europe and the United States. This year, ESIL co-sponsored two sessions and participated in the organisation of other events during the ASIL Annual Meeting held in Washington on 3-6 April 2013. I would like to thank Anne Peters and Lauri Mälksoo for their contribution in this context, as well as the President of ASIL, Donald Donovan, and the Executive Director of the Society, Elizabeth Andersen, for making the collaboration possible.

In addition to this partnership, we have links with other regional societies in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

I have also written to various national societies of international law in Europe as well as the national branches of the International Law Association to extend offers of collaboration, in particular to publicise their activities and organise joint events. Should you have any other suggestions for strengthening scientific debate in Europe in the area of international law, I would be most grateful if you could let me know.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Amsterdam at the Research Forum, where the Executive Board will be discussing, among other things, ESIL's future meetings in Vienna (2014) and Oslo (2015). A short General Assembly will be held during the Amsterdam meeting, to which you are all warmly invited.

Best regards,

Laurence Boisson de Chazournes

President of the European Society of International Law (ESIL)



2. Guest Editorial

Towards an International Law of Victims?

Veronika Bilkova—Charles University in Prague

Ignored by international legal regulation for a long time, victims – individual victims of various wrongdoings – have been more and more frequently able to find their way into the system. In recent years, a range of instruments has been enacted granting protection, and special rights, to victims of violent crimes, victims of terrorist attacks, victims of genocide, victims of gross violations of human rights, victims of ... other categories may easily be added. So spectacular has their entry been that the question arises of whether a new international law of victims is emerging.

And if this is so, as I personally believe, we may further ask what the nature of this new law is and what normative content it could have. These are the issues I would like to touch upon in this editorial, while also drawing attention to some of the drawbacks of the whole process.

Most of the instruments dealing with victims, especially the most recent ones, speak about "victims" (human) rights". This bespeaks a tendency to treat victims as a special category of (human) rights-holders. The legal basis of this status remains, however, unclear. Are the victims' rights secondary rights stemming from the violation of primary human rights? Are they part of those primary rights? Or is there an autonomous status of "victim", on a par with other protected statuses (those of children, disabled persons, etc.) and entailing a set of victim-specific rights? The last option seems to reflect the content of the legal instruments in the most adequate way, epitomizing what Bassiouni described as a turn from the concept of responsibility to that of human and social solidarity. It may be argued that the creation of a uniform status "victim" is unrealistic due to the plurality of legal regimes applicable to various categories of victims. Yet even a cursory survey of these regimes shows that the plurality is one of formal instruments more than one of substantive legal norms.

In fact, the core (human) rights of victims – all victims – are rather well identified. They encompass, as a minimum, the right to effective access to justice, the right to compensation as well as, arguably, the right to assistance and the right to information. I do not assert that all these rights are well established under international law. The edifice of an international law of victims is still "under construction". However, the "bricks" to be used to build this edifice have already been selected and brought to the construction site.

Should we aspire to build this construction in the first place? Do we truly want to introduce yet another group of special rights-holders? Is there not a risk of further fragmentation of human rights? Whether or not we are able to answer all these questions, the time has definitely come to ask them. And also to contemplate whether the new international law of victims is, at the moment, more of a real-world project that scholars are describing or an ideal vision that they want, rightly or wrongly, to impose upon the reality...

3. 2013 Amsterdam Research Forum

Next week, the 5th ESIL Research Forum will convene in Amsterdam. In the last few weeks some changes have been made in line-up of speakers. The updated programme, which can be found at <http://www.esil2013.nl>, features 15 panels, 4 semi-plenaries, a plenary opening session with Andreas Paulus and Anne Orford, and a plenary concluding roundtable. A gala dinner is offered at the spectacular Koepelkerk. The Conference venue (Felix Meritis, built in 1788) can accommodate more than 250 persons. A limited number of places are left and those who wish to attend the Research Forum and have not yet registered are encouraged to do so quickly.

The Research Forum will explore the different roles exercised by international lawyers (the international lawyer as a judge or arbitrator; as a legal adviser, counsel or diplomat; as an academic, researcher, or teacher; and as a domestic lawyer). Each of these roles may come with different discourses and conceptions about how the making, the application, the interpretation, the enforcement, and the systematization of international law is carried out.

Videos of some sessions will be available on the ESIL website shortly after the event.

4. ESIL Reflections

ESIL Reflections offer a unique forum for members (and occasionally non-members) to publish reflections on current developments in international legal practice, scholarship and theory. The articles should be reflective - and go beyond the description of a particular point of international law. In terms of form, Reflections should not be written like a law review article but should be relatively short (between 1000 and 2000 words), fast paced, reflective but still entertaining papers, with an op-ed-ish style, that would cut to the chase and would be able to offer a fresh angle on something important quickly, effectively, and with style. They are meant to foster discussion and reflection between ESIL members and international law scholarship more generally - in Europe, but also beyond.

The society aims to speed-up publication of Reflections. Members are encouraged to submit proposals for topics to André Nollkaemper at p.a.nollkaemper@uva.nl.

5. ESIL Lecture Series: New Lectures Available

The web-based ESIL Lecture Series hosts broadcasts of presentations on international law topics held at partner institutions, enabling the presentations to reach a wider audience of ESIL members and non-members alike. The lectures are hosted on the ESIL website here:

<http://www.esil-sedi.eu/node/288>

And also on a dedicated YouTube channel here:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/ESILchannel?feature=3Dwatch>

Four lectures have been uploaded in recent months:

1. 'International Law and Contemporary Challenges: Which Role for the ICJ?', an Interview with Bruno Simma, former Judge at the International Court of Justice, 10 September 2012, University of Oslo

2. 'Histories of International Law and Empire', Professor Anne Orford, Melbourne University, 23 January 2013, University Paris 1 (Panthéon-Sorbonne)

3. 'Discourse Theory and International Law: An Interview with Professor Jürgen Habermas, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, February 2013 (text of the event, no video)

4. 'The True Nature of International Law' by Professor Philip Allott, 11 March 2013, University of Cambridge

The ESIL Executive Board Committee responsible for the lectures is comprised of Carlos Esposito, Luis Hinjojosa and Ralph Wilde, with the input of ESIL President Laurence Boisson de Chazournes.

We welcome proposals from members to have their events considered for inclusion in the ESIL Lecture Series. Please see the guidelines at the following link which explain the procedure for having a proposal considered: <http://www.esil-sedi.eu/node/288>

6. SSRN Conference Paper Series

ESIL has a SSRN Conference Paper Series which features papers presented at various ESIL research events. They are available on the [ESIL website](#) as well as the [Social Science Research Network \(SSRN\)](#). SSRN is devoted to the rapid worldwide dissemination of social science research and is composed of a number of specialized research networks in each of the social sciences, including the legal scholarship network. SSRN is the biggest online publication possibility for academics with wide visibility, since it is providing free access to full papers.

The ESIL SSRN Conference Series helps authors to disseminate their work widely and reach broader audiences. All papers presented at ESIL Events can be submitted to peer-review for publication in the SSRN Series. Papers must be submitted no longer than one month after the event and should be sent to Anne Aaken (anne.vanaaken@unisg.ch). The papers should be written in either French or English (with an English abstract) and have a length of approx. 20 pages. The Editorial Committee consists of Nico Krisch, Anne van Aaken, and Mario Prost.

7. ESIL/ASIL Joint Symposium - November 2013

The International Environmental Law Interest Groups of the European (ESIL) and American (ASIL) Societies of International Law are delighted to announce that their first Joint Symposium will take place on 22-23 November 2013 at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. The Conference theme is 'The Changing Nature of International Environmental Law: Evolving Approaches of the United States and the European Union'.

A [Call for Papers](#) - including a full theme statement - is available on the ESIL website. The deadline for submitting abstracts is [Wednesday 15 May 2013](#).

More information about this joint event will be available soon on the ESIL and ASIL websites.

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