Editorial

Founded in 1365, the University of Vienna is not only the oldest university in the German-speaking world, but also the home of its largest law faculty. It is a unique place for teaching and research in the middle of Europe, whose law faculty prides itself on its openness for interdisciplinary and international aspects of law, and on its emphasis on combining theory and practice in legal studies. Most importantly, it is an institution that is committed to offering the best possible opportunities to young academics, based on the conviction that excellence in the academic field can only be attained by providing a stimulating and supportive environment for excellent young researchers embarking on their academic careers.

In 2016, this commitment resulted in the creation of the Vienna Doctoral Academy "Communicating the Law". The Academy is open to outstanding doctoral candidates from all areas of legal studies, and aims at training, supporting and offering new opportunities to young legal scholars who have already shown a serious commitment to legal research and whose work is of such quality that its results are worthy of international academic attention. Fellows are supported in their independent research by additional lectures and workshops, by regular peer review on various levels, and by the opportunity to establish national and international networks of colleagues at various stages of their academic careers. By bringing together doctoral candidates and established academics from different legal and related disciplines, the programme challenges its Fellows to transcend established boundaries between traditional legal disciplines and to develop a transdisciplinary perspective on legal issues.

The most tangible result of this endeavour is the University of Vienna Law Review (VLR), which is an open access publication designed to present the results of cutting-edge legal research conducted at the University of Vienna to the international scholarly community. The journal is supported by an advisory board comprising some of the University of Vienna's most renowned scholars in the legal field; however, all editorial work is done by the Fellows of the Academy. The VLR thus offers doctoral candidates a unique opportunity not only to publish their research, but in addition to gain valuable practical insights into the publication process. All articles are subjected to a rigorous process of double-blind peer review to ensure the highest standards of academic quality. The journal is currently published in English to make the texts accessible to a broad international audience, with the possibility of including other languages in due course.

The first issue of the VLR showcases its international and interdisciplinary focus. In the first article, Rosa Duarte and Clara Ifsits confront a question that is as sensitive as it is topical, ie the obligation Austria – and by extension, other European countries – may have to prosecute and punish returning ISIS fighters for the crime of genocide against the Yazidi community, both from the perspective of national public law and of international criminal law. The second article, by Sebastian Grund, deals with the Greek financial crisis and subsequent debt restructuring of 2012, and explores the possibilities and limits of enforcing sovereign debt in court. In the fourth article of this issue, Hannah Berger tackles the impact European and national legislation has on the use of toxic chemicals in the textile industry, and explores legal and extra-legal avenues of enforcing the compliance of textile producers and resellers. Finally, Maria Y. Lee confronts the thorny issue of categorisation in anti-discrimination law, proposing a solution that reconciles category-based legislation with the need for a broader and more inclusive perspective on discrimination.

New content will be added at regular intervals; we therefore encourage our readers to register for the content notification service on the VLR's homepage.

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