

# EDITORIAL

*Our readers will have noticed that the last few issues have been blocked with important international events. At the same time, they will understand that priority had to be given to the Aarhus Convention, because of the international interest in its model character, which meant putting other things on the backburner – for example, the report on the Antarctic Treaty Meeting (on page 230). This issue now gives us some breathing space, and we can include a report on the other aspects of the Aarhus Ministerial Conference (see page 220).*

*Another article concerns the conclusions of the UN Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements (see page 214), and describes a situation where serious reforms are really necessary. It is highly important that the UN, and the international community as a whole, get these reforms right. But you will see that we are rather sceptical regarding the possible results of these proposals.*

*We have not yet covered the report and recommendations by the Independent World Commission on the Oceans (IWCO), but intend to do this after contact with those responsible in Lisbon. We understand that the Commission is recommending the creation of independent global bodies to ensure impartial monitoring of the seas, including a World Oceans Affairs Observatory.*

*As Editors, we are not only interested in giving detailed information on events of interest to our readers and presenting good articles, but are also trying to follow what is published elsewhere; not just to observe developments as such, but to pick up on the emerging trends. It is therefore encouraging to see that the number of people (especially in Latin America), who believe that most legal instruments and their provisions are only worthless paper, have decreased, and that the number of those recognising importance of law as the fundamental basis, is growing. Simultaneously, there is an increasing acknowledgment of the need for implementation.*

*This is especially positive for lawyers who, it is sometimes claimed, do not have their feet firmly on the ground. We know that the legal and organisational infrastructure is one of the main components to transform experience, technical and scientific knowledge, into practice. If the political will is there, this makes it easier for us to promote compliance regimes.*

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*Ministers and high-level officials from nearly 100 States will meet in Rotterdam on 10 September, to sign the UN Convention on trade in hazardous chemicals and pesticides, agreed last March. The Convention will make mandatory the existing voluntary procedure of Prior Informed Consent, now used by more than 150 States. A report is planned for the next issue.*

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*We are sometimes rather concerned that the time which elapses from the day we conclude the issue and its final delivery to the readers is, in spite of modern technology, still too long. Rest assured, we are doing everything in our power to improve on this situation!*

*- Wolfgang Breyer -*

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