

EDITORIAL

We had already completed this issue two weeks ago, but postponed publishing it as we wished to bring a cover photograph and a special tribute to Dr. Abdulbar Al Gain (Saudi Arabia), who died recently and who was one of the two ICEL Executive Governors. However, as the promised laudatio from H.H. Prince Fahd has not yet arrived, this – together with our own appreciation – will be published in the next issue.

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There is perhaps not a single reader of EPL who would not confirm what the group of experts who drafted Montevideo III acknowledged (see page 117): that compliance internationally and enforcement nationally have the highest priority in the sphere of environmental law. Against this background, we hope that the laudable first judgment handed down by the EU Court to fine a country 20,000 Euros a day for its failure to halt the disposal of dangerous waste, will not be the only such decision in the near future. We shall report on the background to this first decision in the next issue.

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The French Environment Minister has stated that during the French Presidency of the European Union from July onwards, France will press for the creation of a World Environment Organisation.

Our last issue carried the most detailed report ever published in EPL on the negotiations surrounding a GA resolution – in this case 53/242 – where the problems involved in such an undertaking were clearly illustrated. We are convinced that ideas based on good intentions alone are not helpful unless they are also based on a sound appreciation of what can actually be achieved – and without speculating on a change in the UN Charter, a very unrealistic prospect at the moment.

The necessary conditions for achieving far-reaching change are also becoming increasingly more difficult, due to the many institutional structures already in existence, striving to protect their own vested interests.

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Following the above-mentioned UN General Assembly Resolution 53/242 (for complete text see vol. 29/5, pages 250-251) and the resulting Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council – the so-called Global Ministerial Environment Forum – we have prepared a report for the next issue on the results from Malmö.

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Surprising for us was the decision of the International Whaling Commission to clear the way for a ballot next year that could set the stage for a resumption of limited commercial whaling. A report on the results of the latest round of the IWC is scheduled for next time.

10 July, 2000

- Wolfgang Breyer -