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**Special Theme: International Law Themes in Latvian
Universities and Beyond**

Editorial Note

*Ineta Ziemele**

Volume 24 of the Baltic Yearbook of International Law, the articles for which were received in 2025, features research on international law and international affairs being undertaken at Latvian universities. Researchers at the *Riga Graduate School of Law*, the *University of Latvia*, *Rīga Stradiņš University* and the *Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences* have successfully contributed to this volume. It is notable that a number of Latvian researchers have contributed their collaborative work with researchers outside Latvia to this volume and that the volume also features international research on themes which are of particular relevance to the region, notably the Russian Federation's aggression towards Ukraine in a technology driven epoque.

It is striking that the contributions included in this volume, taken as a whole, strongly represent the story and identity of the Baltic States in international normative processes over a considerable time. In terms of history and theory of international law, the article by Jānis Grasis about Friedrich F. Martens, whose 180th birthday was commemorated in 2025, and the articles by Elīna Sintija Lapiņa and Jāzeps Gribusts regarding elements consolidating and strengthening the international legal order showcase the tradition in, and position of, the Baltic States. They emphasise that international law is important and that, despite major challenges, the role of those actors who believe in the rule of law, is more important than ever.

At the same time, the experience in the Baltic States shows that the democratic world cannot be naive. There are many regimes in the world which want to undermine the world order, as it has evolved since 1945, and this issue has to be dealt with properly. There are many cases in the judicial practice of Latvia and others that are internationally relevant to Latvian based litigation, where the principle of self-defending democracy has been the key to searching for the right balance between the protection of individual rights, on the one hand, and the interests of a democratic society, on the other. The analysis carried out in their articles by Inese Freimane – Deksne and Viktorija Soņeca, respectively, will be of great interest to a wider audience around the world. The story

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of the Baltic States in international law shows the message that justice remains a value that the world should strive to achieve and that international law ought to be applied to achieve justice. It is not surprising that the work on calculating the damages that Latvia suffered during the Soviet occupation is on-going and that the issue of submitting a claim for these damages against the Russian Federation has not been taken off the agenda in Latvia. The article by Ieva Miļūna is part of this on-going work.

Finally, the articles on artificial intelligence in different international legal contexts by Vija Kalniņa, Iris Shkelzen Berisha and Irēna Liepiņa, and Qadri Nasir show not only that Latvia has a strong scientific base in the field of artificial intelligence, but that questions are also being asked as to how this technology can affect relevant legal notions, and their practical use in justice systems and global governance. Cyberspace and the digital capital therein, among others, is the new reality. The article by Liene Neimane on money laundering and crypto-asset transactions tackles but one legal question that comes up in this space, while the questions posed by Yaroslav Halieiev in the context of cyberspace and the Russia-Ukraine war, deals with the notion of cyberattacks on military objects. These articles provide an insight into the way that challenges to established notions in international public and private law through the new opportunities available in cyberspace or enabled by artificial intelligence, are addressed by scholars in Latvia and elsewhere, contributing to global academic reflection.

The volume concludes with highlights about the state practice of the three Baltic States which are relevant to the application and development of international law. These reports enable a world-wide audience to follow the voice of these three States in international normative processes.