

Preface

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea entered into force on 16 November 1994, thus bringing to a positive end the international efforts to elaborate a new and comprehensive regime for the law of the sea. Even after the end of the Third U.N. Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1982 the universality of the Convention was at stake until the international community expressed its collective will to cooperate in order to overcome the stalemate in the ratification process.

On the occasion of its 70th anniversary and with a view to analyzing and assessing the recent modifications brought about to the regime on the law of the sea, the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law held an international symposium on topical law of the sea issues in Heidelberg from January 26 to 28, 1995. This gathering of experts addressed the topic "The Entry into Force of the Convention on the Law of the Sea: A Redistribution of Competences Between States and International Organisations in Relation to the Management of the International Commons?". The Symposium, which was generously supported by the German Research Foundation and the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Studies, brought together scholars, diplomats, public servants and others experienced in the law of the sea. It was the intention of the organizers of the Symposium to provide an occasion for the mutual exchange of information and to enable the participants to engage in a fruitful dialogue on the basis of the various backgrounds involved. Although the law of the sea regime comprising the Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Implementation Agreement seems by now to have found universal acceptability, its implementation into national law may still evoke new areas for further dialogue. Thus, the regime on the law of the sea should not be seen as a static order but rather as an evolutionary process designed to meet the needs of changed circumstances and findings.

The present issue of the *Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht* comprises the reports given by all speakers and commentators during the Conference, a number of written contributions prepared for this event, as well as the statements made by the participants at the Round Table on 28 January 1995. The papers presented were modified in the light of the discussion they had received. In consequence, it was felt unnecessary to reproduce the whole discussion.

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