

Special Section



Facing Current Challenges in the European Union

It is my pleasure to introduce this special section in *Retskraft*: an academic legal journal edited by our students at the University of Copenhagen Faculty of Law. *Retskraft* allows our students to experience all aspects of research: writing original papers, editing and reviewing the work of others, and reading topical academic work following the highest professional standards. As such, the journal is a crucial asset for our faculty and our academic community. I wish to thank the editors of *Retskraft* for their continuous help and support in bringing this special section to print.

This special section was initially planned as one of the research contributions of the Jean Monnet Chair in EU Law and Politics, which I have held from 2021 to 2023. I received the chair as a precious gift from Juan A. Mayoral upon his move to the Carlos III University of Madrid. One of the aspects of this gift that I appreciated the most was the opportunity to teach the course created by Juan and coordinated with the help of Mikael Rask Madsen and Marlene Wind “The Legalization of EU Politics and International Relations”. The students in this course wrote research assignments and I had the great privilege to teach them and to supervise their research after Juan’s move to Madrid. Excellent students were invited to have their research considered for publication in *Retskraft*.

One symposium issue titled *EU Law and Politics* was published in *Retskraft* in the summer of 2022. The previous symposium issue, which I co-edited with Juan, resulted from the original research of carefully chosen students in the course. Building on this success, the editors of *Retskraft* were kind enough to let me edit a special section on a similar theme.

I will not summarize the contributions to this symposium as they are described by the editors of *Retskraft*, but I will say a few words about this project by way of introduction. Much of my work as a Jean Monnet Chair was done during the Corona pandemic. Juan and I called on the readers of our 2022 symposium to practice patience and understand that some historical processes, like the pandemic and the responses to it, take time to mature. Now the world is facing a whole new set of challenges. The wars in Ukraine and Gaza have already cost the lives of many and continue to pose a dangerous threat of further escalation. The alarming

consequences of climate change are increasingly felt all over the world. This is no longer the time for waiting, but rather a time to face the challenges of humanity, study them, and try to solve them.

Those of you who have read Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* can appreciate how easy it is to fall into an intellectual slumber and ignore all the omens of danger. The contributors to this symposium show by their personal example a better option. They can serve as an inspiration to all our students to get informed about the challenges facing the world today as a first step towards trying to resolve them.

The papers also demonstrate how both law and political science can be used as powerful tools of analysis that can help the academic community to understand better the challenges the European Union and the rest of humanity are facing. The papers prove that understanding political and strategic considerations is crucial to explaining the actions of both courts like the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union and sophisticated actors in civil society like Greenpeace. At the same time, acquaintance with the relevant legal doctrine is a prerequisite for describing the full set of political forces and constraints. In this way, this symposium, much like the overall objective of the Jean Monnet Chair in EU Law and Politics, shows the advantages and relevance of interdisciplinary research.

*Shai Dothan**

* Associate Professor of International and Public Law, University of Copenhagen Faculty of Law affiliated with iCourts – the Centre of Excellence for International Courts and Study Hub for International Economic Law and Development (SHIELD). PhD, LLM, LLB, Tel Aviv University Faculty of Law. This research is funded by the Danish National Research Foundation Grant no. DNRF105 and conducted under the auspices of iCourts, the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre of Excellence for International Courts.