

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Open Forum on p. xiii is a new feature, prompted by a question from **Ellen Schaffer**, *Librarian* at the *International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea*: would it be appropriate to put an announcement in the *Journal* to reach as large an audience as possible? Her inquiry had already been posted on *INT-LAW*, but she needed to reach colleagues who did not have access to, or, for other reasons, did not subscribe to this listserv.

Introduced as an experiment, the **Open Forum** aims to serve as a place where *IJLI* readers in an informal way can reach other members of the *Association* in matters of general interest. The feature may become an occasional one, or completely disappear, depending on you, our reader. Everyone is invited to post news items, questions and comments. The future will tell, if this dialogue box will fill a need and become permanent.

The content of the current issue is devoted to legal research: starting in Switzerland, the global tour goes via Northern Europe, ending up in the Far East, in China. The contributions all serve as guides to legal research in six foreign jurisdictions, but each one is structurally as different and distinct from the other, as the countries and cultures they reflect.

The Swiss legal research guide, which opens volume 29, is published thanks to **Mirela Roznovschi**, *International Reference Specialist* at *New York University Law Library*. With the upcoming *20th IALL Course* in Lausanne this Fall in mind, Mirela generously offered to share an article she just had acquired for the web, which she thought would be the appropriate foundation for members planning to attend this conference. Mirela is known worldwide as an expert on foreign and international law research online, and is also contributing editor to *LLRX.com*, the free web journal on research and technology issues for the legal community.

With law degrees from both Switzerland and the United States, the author, **Fridolin Walther**, is professionally comfortable on both sides of the Atlantic. He teaches legal research on the Internet as well as national and international civil procedure at the *Institute for Swiss and International Civil Procedure and Private International Law of the University of Bern*. Fridolin

is also an active participant in web discussions, is the publisher of a widely used website, and is the author of numerous articles in print as well as on the web. Fridolin encourages users to print out and link to his guides freely for educational and non-commercial use at www.civpro.inibe.ch.

It is difficult to find a more authoritative person to write about the online legal information systems in the Scandinavian countries than **Suzanne Thorpe**. Fluent in the languages, she has studied in both Denmark and Sweden. Now the *Associate Director for Faculty, Research and Instructional Services* at the *University of Minnesota Law Library*, Suzanne is directly involved in collection building and in the exchange program for both faculty and students that the Law School has been administering for the past 20 years in partnership with *Uppsala University Faculty of Law* in Sweden. A scholarship in 2000 allowed her to travel and gather information on the current status of electronic legal information in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. We are the beneficiaries of her exhaustive report which also describes the history of various Scandinavian governmental and private efforts in the development of electronic legal information. The appendices, starting on p. 59 will be particularly helpful for researchers to keep on reference.

The Estonian legal bibliography of items in foreign languages is a cooperative effort. **Maia Ruttu**, *Information Specialist* in the *National Library of Estonia's Centre for Information Services for Members of Parliament*, is responsible for the compilation, and **Giina Kaskla**, *Parliamentary Archivist* with the *National Library of Estonia* and a frequent *IALL* participant, has edited the bibliography which consists of a selection of foreign language entries extracted from the major annual publication *Bibliographia Iuridica Estonica*. Estonian law professor **Peeter Järvelaid** puts the bibliography in its historical perspective by describing how his country managed to survive and retain its quasi-independence, despite the many years of Soviet occupation.

Joan Liu aims in her article to supplement existing bibliographies on Chinese legal materials and to provide an analysis and prognosis of the state of Chinese legal information in the digital age. Joan is *Head of Acquisitions and Serials and Research Liaison on Chinese Law* at *New York University School of Law* in New York City and she also manages the Chinese legal resources website at <http://www.law.nyu.edu/library/chinalaw>. Her article, just as that of Fridolin Walther, will be kept up to date on the above-mentioned *LLRX.com*.

Finally, in mentioning Ellen Schaffer above, I also want to draw non-U.S. members' attention to the opportunity of applying for the generous *Schaffer Grant* to attend the Annual Meeting of the *American Association of Law Libraries*, as announced on page xiv.

Marie-Louise H. Bernal