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SPECIAL ISSUE INTRODUCTION

IMPACT OF NEW MARITIME TECHNOLOGIES AND DEVELOPMENTS ON TRADE LAW AND REGULATION

The maritime sector is the backbone of international trade. Yet the two are often treated in legal scholarship as two different disciplines. That is shortsighted. Indeed, as the journal in more recent times has embraced the interlocking fields of private international trade law and public international trade law, this *Special Issue* seeks to turn the spotlight on the challenges on the oceans which have an impact on the outworking of international trade law, as traditionally understood.

There are four articles in this Special Issue.

There are two articles which examines the impact of law on the use of maritime waters in specific localities. First, **Rangel's** article considers the energy resources in Venezuelan waters in the light of the current and continuing shifting legal environment. The work studies how international law (especially law of the sea) and commercial contracts must find a way to navigate the trade-related challenges involving Venezuelan and its neighbours. Secondly, **Karan's** work is more concerned with maritime trade routes – one of the most critical in recent times is the Turkish Strait which connects the Mediterranean with the Black Sea. His focus is on the use of autonomous vessels or ships guided and navigated by AI in this area of the sea given the datedness of the Montreux Convention.

The use of marine resources, especially marine genetic resources, which is becoming a matter for trade regulation. **Kocabiyik's** article addresses how the recent Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (or more commonly called the BBNJ Agreement) which was adopted on 19 June 2023 might be properly implemented to ensure an equitable sharing of marine genetic resources. He further reasons that there is a place for artificial intelligence to aid the proper implementation of the BBNJ Agreement at ground level.

Last but not least, the issue of data protection law impacting on the shipping industry and in turn on international trade arrangements is explored by **Chiang**. This article is quite wide reaching – the observational targets are the EU and Taiwan data protection regimes. The choice of these trade centres with strong maritime links is important. An takeaway from this chapter is how standard contractual clauses on data sharing or transfers could be applied to ensure that in the shipping of goods using large scale computing systems which process a great amount of data could be executed without detracting from the operators' data protection obligations.

Although understandably with an issue like this the linkage between the different articles is difficult to achieve, it is of great prominence that all these articles demonstrate how

the shape of international trade and the content and processes of our international trade law system must be more multidisciplinary in approach. That is even more acute when new technologies and new challenges from the oceans and shipping are emerging.

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