

Introduction

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The goal of the year-in-review project is to provide a thumb-nail sketch of the key developments in international law. It is intended to serve as a research tool for practitioners, academics, and students of international law to answer the simple question: what happened this year? What began as a “noble experiment” has become an institution. Almost every Committee of the Section now recognizes that one of its principal duties is to report to the legal community on the developments of the past year. This year is no exception. So voluminous were the submissions that again we were forced to publish the Foreign Law contributions in this fall issue of *The International Lawyer*. For complete coverage of the developments in 2002, I encourage you to read the summer and fall issues together.

Developments in several key European countries are highlighted in the pieces submitted by the European, Central European, and Eurasian States Law Committees. Particularly interesting is the report of the European Committee on EU Constitutional Law and the development of a constitutional treaty for Europe. Developments concerning the relationship between the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Union are also highlighted, including proposals for the EU to accede to the ECHR. The Eurasian States Law Committee outlines developments in Russia, including a new bankruptcy law, new trademark laws, and major agricultural reform. The Central European Law Committee has extensive discussions on major commercial laws in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Slovak Republic.

China's developments continue apace. Although less dramatic than in previous years, the China Law Committee outlines major developments in foreign investment, takeover law, bankruptcy, state-owned enterprises, and government procurement, among others. The report also outlines Hong Kong's intense debate over civil liberties following the passage of a law that “prohibit[s] any act of treason, secession, sedition, and subversion against the Central People's Government.”¹

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1. HK Basic Law, art. 23, available at http://www.info.gov.hk/basic_law/fulltext/index.htm (last visited Oct. 9, 2003).

The African Law Committee likewise outlines disturbing developments restricting the freedom of the press in Kenya and Niger, as well as amnesty laws in Angola, and a new “anti-terrorism” law in Uganda that imposes the death penalty for the “use of violence or threat of violence with intent to promote or achieve political, religious, economic and cultural or social ends in an unlawful manner.”²

A detailed report by the Middle Eastern Law Committee highlights attempts to combat terrorism in various Middle Eastern countries. The report also highlights commercial and foreign investment developments in Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Pakistan, and Palestine.

Developments in Canada were far more placid, with new deregulation initiatives in the transportation sector, continued tensions between Canada and the United States over softwood lumber, and new money-laundering laws that impose reporting obligations on lawyers of suspicious transactions of their clients.

Finally, the issue includes an interesting piece by the Transnational Legal Practice Committee regarding developments in GATS negotiations and the ABA approval of the Report of the Commission on Multijurisdictional Practice.

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Any comments or questions may be submitted to me. My mailing address is: Professor Roger P. Alford, Pepperdine University School of Law, 24255 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, CA 90263. My e-mail address is: Roger.Alford@Pepperdine.edu.

2. See Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2003: Africa: Uganda* (Jan. 2003), available at <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k3/africa13.html>.