



## Dear reader,

This fourth edition of *Juridica International* is by far the finest and most comprehensive of the series while also featuring articles with more depth and analysing power, at least I hope so. One should not undertake the publishing of an academic journal unless quality is the aim. The only thing to complain about, perhaps, is that *Juridica International* continues to be in Estonia the only outlet to summarise the current status of Estonian law.

The first special English-language issue of the journal *Juridica International* by the Faculty of Law of the University of Tartu (est. 1632) was published towards the end of 1996. That compilation of articles was primarily oriented to foreign readers and mainly reflected the ongoing and completed changes (legal reform) in the Estonian legal system of the time. The second issue concentrated on a scientific analysis of specific legal problems, a part of which reflected the current situation of European integration. The special issue of 1998 focused on Estonian applicable law and problems thereto through the Estonian Constitution in the context of European integration.

The subject matter of this edition – protection of personal rights and freedoms – is a key issue treated in a majority of its 23 articles. The editorial board of the journal feels that these issues should be of interest to other Central and East European countries and also to the developed Western democracies. We share many of the problems and therefore contribution to legal thought is always appreciated. Besides articles that analyse a certain topic in depth, one can find overviews of several areas in this *Juridica International* never before dealt with previously through the history of the journal (e.g. Problems of International Judicial Assistance from an Estonian Perspective; On the Development of Bankruptcy Law in Estonia; Church Autonomy and Religious Liberty in Estonia). Besides, treatments of subjects which continue to be topical in Estonia are offered (e.g. on the possibility of being a jurist in society), as well as major events – activities of the Estonian Law Philosophy Society. We should mention here that on 29 June 1999, the New-York World Congress on Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy (IVR) accepted the Law Philosophy Society of Estonia a member of IVR as the 45th country section. As far as we know, Estonia is the only Baltic country which is represented with its own section in IVR. No doubt, this is recognition of the development of domestic law in the post-reindependence period in which this journal has also had its role.

This fourth issue of *Juridica International* was made possible through the Iuridicum Foundation in conjunction with Interlex Legal Translations Ltd. The editorial board also wish to sincerely thank the European Integration Office of the State Chancellery who was the major financier of the project. The reader acquainted with earlier editions can see that the layout has been thoroughly changed thanks to the advertising agency Arsenal. Beginning this year, electronic versions of earlier issues are available in the Internet (<http://www.juridica.ut.ee>). The same web site also contains editions of *Juridica* since their first publication in 1993. The undersigned would like to express his thanks to all those who have contributed to the completion of this project, especially the long-term sponsor of the publication, Open Estonia Foundation, and the University of Tartu Faculty of Law.

**Peep Pruks**