

Espacios polares y cambio climático: Desafíos jurídico-internacionales. By Marta Sobrido Prieto (Ed.) (Tirant lo Blanch, Instituto Universitario de Estudios Europeos Salvador de Madariaga, Universidade da Coruña), 252 pages [ISBN: 9788491197782]

Due to their remoteness and inhospitable conditions, the two polar spaces of the Earth —Arctic and Antarctic— have traditionally been outside the interest of International Relations and, to a large extent, of the geostrategic interests of the States. Despite their undeniable similarities, they are two spaces characterized by their own and differentiating features, which has conditioned the creation of different mechanisms that serve to ensure their political governance. While Antarctica has become an authentic *global common*, regulated by a specific International regime, the Arctic remains a maritime space, albeit frozen, governed at different levels by International Law —especially the Law of the Sea—, different regional systems —particularly the Law of the European Union in some Arctic States— and the internal law of the Arctic States.

The complex process of climate change has been the factor that has most determined the entry of both spaces —but especially of the Arctic region, because of its physical and political conditions, just described— in the international arena. This also explains why since around 2008, many scientific studies have been devoted to these issues. Moreover, the number of scientific viewpoints from which they can be contemplated has given rise to what is now known as “Polar Law”.

Against this background, the collective work edited by Professor Marta Sobrido, deals with Polar spaces from an eminently legal perspective. The work is divided into three parts dedicated to I. International Law, climate change and Polar spaces (Chapters I, II and III); II. International approach to the Arctic (Chapters IV, V, VI and VII) and III. Antarctica (Chapters VIII and IX).

To carry out this challenging task, Professor Sobrido has brought together her colleagues from the Research Group of the University Institute of European Studies “Salvador de Madariaga” (IUEE) based at the University of A Coruña, who are professors of the Faculty of Law at this same university and that of Vigo. In addition to involving these colleagues, Professor Sobrido has had the propitious idea of enriching this work with the contributions of two well-known international law experts on Polar spaces: in fact, both the professor and researcher Claudia Cinelli, and her former thesis’ director, Professor Joaquín Alcaide, from the University of Seville, were among the first in Spain to address these issues. Claudia Cinelli’s continued dedication to the Arctic space is evident both in her professional background and in her specialised publications in the field. The work that I have the pleasure to review is, for the rest, the result of a conference held in October 2012 at the Faculty of Law of the University of A Coruña on the “Polar spaces and global warming: international legal challenges.”

In this review I would like to highlight, because of their novelty in the bibliography of our country, some of the contributions that are contained in the work. Thus, particularly interesting is the contribution of Professor Gabriela Oanta, which focuses on the analysis of the activity of the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea regarding Polar spaces. In the same line, another remarkable contribution is Chapter VIII, by Annina Cristina Bürgin which, from the perspective of

security and that of International Relations, analyses the role of NATO in the Arctic space. Finally, I consider the final contribution, written by José Antonio Quindimil López, on the role of Latin America in its projection towards the Antarctic continent and the role to be played there by UNASUR, to be especially original.

Notwithstanding this particular reference to these contributions with the intention of remarking on their originality in Spanish bibliography, the rest of the contributions that the work presents are very timely and constitute the general framework with which to establish the panorama and context of the work. Thus, Professor Sobrino Heredia correctly analyses the management of climate change, considered as a global common, from International Law (Chapter I). For its part, the general analysis of the Polar spaces is carried out by Professor Joaquín Alcaide (Cap.II). The editor, Marta Sobrido Prieto, contributes with a general and necessary chapter on the governance of the Arctic space (Chap. IV). Professor Belén Sánchez Ramos focuses on the most recent developments of the Arctic Council as the main political forum in the area (Chapter V). For her part, Claudia Cinelli makes an interesting comparison between the protection of the Arctic and Antarctic environments and that of the Arctic and the Mediterranean, reviewing international practice and culminating with the work of non-Arctic actors in the preservation of the Arctic environment. Finally, the experience and expertise of Adela Rey Aneiros is self-evident in Chapter VIII, which is dedicated to the protection of the Antarctic environment.

This work has been edited by Tirant lo Blanch along with IUEE itself, and is available in paper and digital format. Due to its very manageable format, the moderate length of its contributions and the specialised but accessible language it uses, it is a work of interest to any academic, practitioner and, of course, postgraduate and undergraduate students, since there are growing number of students who orient their final degree projects towards these topics of general interest and repercussion.

For all the above said, I can only congratulate my colleague Professor Marta Sobrido Prieto, for her wise and opportune idea of compiling this interesting and very useful work in Spanish language.

Elena CONDE PÉREZ
Universidad Complutense de Madrid