

## Foreword

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When we try to sketch the intellectual coordinate system of our new legal periodical, *ELTE Law Journal*, several important dates may come into our mind, especially 1667, 1990 and 2004.

The Faculty of Law of Eötvös Loránd University was established in 1667, almost 350 years ago. This is the oldest institution of this kind in Hungary and has preserved its leading role and academic excellence over the centuries. No other Hungarian Faculty of Law has a longer uninterrupted record, and it ranks well among the most venerable of Central Europe's law schools in terms of distinction. This is the tradition and legacy which certainly determines our work in the future too.

In 1990, the collapse of communist dictatorship and the former socialist block, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the crisis in the state-controlled economy and the regained freedom created not only a new political and economic situation in Hungary but also brought new legal challenges: the historic task of creating a firm system of rule of law and providing the modern legal infrastructure for a smoothly functioning market economy. The first part of this mission was completed; the "revolution through law" – as the late President of the Republic, *Ferenc Mádl*, referred to the sweeping changes – was successful. However, the fine-tuning and maintenance of this system requires further attention and independent reflection from scholars as well. As the classical proverb warns us, eternal vigilance is the price of freedom.

As a result of the transition, the European dream has come true as well. In 2004 – after long years of careful preparation – Hungary voluntarily joined the European Union. The tide of EU rules has reached the Hungarian legal system - even beyond the impact of the approximation of laws in the EU. Hungarian law has to be interpreted very often in the context of European rules.

These dates – 1667, 1990, 2004 – and the related events clearly symbolise our main goals: launching a new legal periodical which is based on the tradition and outstanding quality of our University, offering a forum for studies reflecting the problems of contemporary law in modern democracies and devoting special attention to the European and international dimension of legal development. In other words, *ELTE Law Journal* sets out to contribute to the free movement of legal ideas in the European legal space and to support the full re-integration of Hungarian legal science into the mainstream of legal thinking.

The establishment of *ELTE Law Journal* is part of a broader strategy of internationalisation, too. Our Faculty maintains wide-ranging international relations, primarily with universities in Europe, and is proud to be involved in educational and research projects with similar institutions abroad. In recent years we have placed special emphasis on consolidating ties with universities in neighbouring countries to promote intensive regional cooperation in legal education. We are proud to announce that in September 2013 the Faculty launched Hungary's first LL.M. programme in European and International Business Law. These efforts are backed by a new generation of colleagues at our Faculty, many of whom completed their PhD or LL.M abroad.

Remembering the incipient stage of this journal, and the months and days filled with many challenges, the Editorial Board would like to express its special thanks to Diána Mecsi, Krisztina Stump and Balázs Tőkey for their commitment to their work that proved invaluable to the Editor in Chief.

The very first issue of ELTE Law Journal starts strongly, publishing papers with a characteristic cross-border approach: Balázs J. Gellér presents his thoughts on the changing faces of human dignity in criminal law in a comparative study. Helmut Koziol offers a paper on harmonising tort law in the European Union, while Kurt Siehr has written on the Unidroit Convention of 1995 and unclaimed cultural property without provenance. Both professors are honorary doctors and professors of Eötvös Loránd University.

Nóra Chronowski and Erzsébet Csatlós meditate on the interface between International Law and Hungarian courts, András Koltay delivers an analysis on protecting the reputation of public figures in the European legal systems and our young colleague Kinga Timár reviews a number of arbitration laws and rules while investigating the relationship between the parties and arbitral institutions.

With the abundant wealth of legal ideas reflected by this short overview, the editors launch ELTE Law Journal, asking for the benign interest and support of our dear readers.

Budapest, 6 December, 2013.

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