

Foreword

by the editors

In recent years, numerous states have adopted laws attributing responsibility to businesses for non-compliance with human rights and environmental standards throughout their global supply chains. Examples are the UK Modern Slavery Act, the French *Loi de Vigilance*, the Dutch *Wet Zorfplicht Kinderarbeid* and the German *Lieferkettensorgfaltspflichtengesetz*. These initiatives are aimed at holding corporations accountable for their abuses abroad, in particular in developing countries. They are, thus, an expression of the global “human rights and business” movement.

Similar attempts to foster corporate responsibility in global supply chains have been undertaken at the international and European level: The United Nations Human Rights Council is working on a multilateral treaty on business and human rights and the Commission of the European Union (EU) adopted a proposal for a directive on corporate sustainability due diligence in February 2022. Numerous instruments promoting “soft law” due diligence standards may be added to the list.

Both national and international initiatives raise important questions under international and European law, to which this special issue of the ZEuS is dedicated. The idea for this special issue arose at the end of last year. In November 2021, a conference on “Supply Chains Responsibilities – New Challenges under European and International Law” was successfully held at the Europa-Institut in Saarbrücken, Germany. One week before, a workshop on “Supply Chains (Responsibilities) in the Raw Material Sector”, organised by the *Arbeitskreis Rohstoffrecht* of the *Deutsche Vereinigung für internationales Recht*, took place in Heidelberg, Germany.

With the purpose of sharing the insights of these two events with our readers, we decided to invite the speakers to contribute to this issue. In the aftermath, further articles dealing with different legal questions related to global supply chains joined the project. Today, we are delighted to present the result of this project. This special issue contains eleven articles dealing with supply chains responsibilities from a multitude of different angles under international and European law. We wish you a pleasant and stimulating reading!

