

# Annual Report 2020



think.

ISRAEL *and* INTERNATIONAL LAW



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The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation is a *charitable trust* under Dutch law. Donations are gratefully accepted at

IBAN: **NL 15 INGB 0007 8215 39**  
BIC (SWIFT code): **NLINGB2A**

ING Bank, The Netherlands



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## Chairman's message

As for many organisations, 2020 was an unusual year for *thinc*. Some of the planned international events had to be cancelled, most notably the Summer School 2020 in Israel, but the team has quickly made the switch from onsite seminars to online webinars and worked with full force to extend the achievements of the recent years.

The website has been upgraded and more than thirty articles, blogs, commentaries, briefing papers and reports by internationally renowned lawyers were published on the website. *'The Hague Statement of Jurists on the Israel-Palestine conflict'* was translated into Finnish and is now available in six languages.

In the coming year(s) the team will focus on four strategic projects in the fields of research, education, EU/Israel relations and the International Criminal Court. These are areas where *thinc*. can make a difference and contribute to change.

*thinc*. is a non-profit organization that has no political affiliation and does not receive government subsidies. To enable the development of *thinc*. as an independent think tank we have launched the 'Friends of *thinc*.' initiative in Q4 2020. The objective is to engage people who are willing to make a multiple-year financial commitment to support *thinc*. By year-end 2020, thirty Friends from around the world have signed up. We will continue the 'Friends of *thinc*.' campaign as a matter of existential importance in the coming years.

G.M.C. Cremer Eindhoven

Chairman of the Supervisory Board

# 1. Report of the Board

*The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation* (abbreviated: *thinc.*) is a non-profit organization established on 24 May 2017. The statutory seat of *thinc.* is The Hague.

The goals of *thinc.* are to promote international peace and security, friendly relations among nations and the peaceful resolution of disputes based on the principles of justice and international law - in accordance with the UN Charter.

We currently focus on the State of Israel, the Jewish people, the Palestinians and the mutual relations with the Arabic/Muslim countries. In the second half of 2020 we have witnessed the emerging of the Abraham Accords which signify a positive change in the relations between Israel and its “neighbors”, and which can potentially have a huge impact on foreign policies towards Israel worldwide.

Our objectives are (i) to promote UN principles and values in the interpretation, development and application of international law, and (ii) to contribute to the understanding of the interaction between international law and political decision-making.

*thinc.* endeavors to realize its goals *inter alia* through

- researching international law and the establishment and support of expert networks in this area,
- publications and online information provisioning,
- setting up training programs in the field of international law and diplomacy,
- organizing seminars and conferences,
- consulting.

Based on these objectives *thinc.* can be characterized as a think tank that focuses on the research of international law and its application within international politics.

The Board has convened four times to discuss the development of the organization, the strategy for the period 2021-2022 and, especially, the prioritization of activities, staffing and financing. We are pleased to report that in December Prof. Robbie Sabel (Hebrew University) has joined our Academic Advisory Board.

*thinc.* enjoys the so-called ‘ANBI status’. This is a non-profit tax designation as *charitable trust* in the Netherlands, issued by the Tax Office in accordance with the general tax laws (Uitvoeringsregeling Algemene Wet Rijksbelastingen 1994). The coveted ANBI status is issued to organizations which meet the stringent ANBI criteria.

Our ANBI status entitles donors to certain tax benefits in the Netherlands; the Management Team is currently engaged with authorities in other countries to obtain equivalent status in other donor jurisdictions.

### ACTIVITIES IN 2020

Most energy has been invested in research, publications and the organizing of lectures and webinars.

#### **Research and Publications**

The research and pertaining publications focused on four topics:

- (i) the potential “annexation” of (parts of) the West Bank by Israel;
- (ii) the request of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to affirm jurisdiction so that she can start an investigation into the “Situation in the State of Palestine”;
- (iii) the proceedings at the European Court of Justice regarding (a) the EU Product labeling policy concerning products from Judea and Samaria, which should be considered as discriminatory of the State of Israel, and (b) Ritual slaughter, which should be considered as a threat to the freedom of religion, and discriminatory of Jews and Muslims living in Europe;
- (iv) research aimed at the creation of a balanced academic publication about international law, Israeli-Arab relations and the Israel/Palestine conflict.

International law experts from the *thinc.* network have submitted an *amicus curiae* to the ICC regarding the “situation in Palestine” and published *inter alia* five articles, fifteen blogs, six commentaries and two reports on the *thinc.* website.

We have published six Newsletters addressing actual topics and/or special subjects to more than 1400 subscribers.

The extended edition of *‘The Hague Statement of jurists on the Israel-Palestine conflict’* was translated into Finnish.

123 copies of the book *‘Israel on Trial’* by Dr. M. de Blois and A. Tucker were either sold or presented to (prospective) relations.

Our Senior Fellow, Dr. C.D. Wallace has written a publication on the occasion of the Centenary of the San Remo Resolution (25 April 1920): a total of 400 copies were ordered and distributed by partner organisations.

#### **Lectures and webinars**

During the year we have switched from onsite to online events due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Matthijs de Blois and Andrew Tucker have given multiple lectures, *inter alia* in connection with the Centenary of the San Remo Resolution (April 1920).

Webinars about the status of Jerusalem under international law and the “situation in Palestine” case pending before the ICC were organised in cooperation with the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem in Serbia and Christians for Israel Australia, respectively.

In December we hosted a webinar about the EU Product labeling policy with speakers from Israel and the European Parliament. This webinar was attended by participants from Europe, Israel and the USA.

### COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had little impact on our work. Almost all onsite events have been cancelled, however, many of these events could go ahead online without significant loss of content. A positive side-effect is the reduction of time and money spent on travelling. On the other hand, the personal contact is sorely missed as we are a relatively small group actively fighting against lawfare.

## 2. Future

In 2021 *thinc.* will focus its activities on (i) four strategic projects, including the development of an online course, (ii) (online) publishing and conferences, and (iii) engaging more international law academics in our research activities.

### ACTIVITIES IN 2021

#### Research and publications

In 2021 we will be working on four strategic projects:

- A. *Cases, Materials and Commentaries* – a research project started in 2020, leading to a balanced academic publication about international law, Israeli-Arab relations and the Israel/Palestine conflict. This publication will enable courses to be offered at universities and other institutions around the world, in which the position of Israel, the Jewish people and the Israel-Palestine conflict are placed in their appropriate legal, historical, political and religious context.
- B. *The EU, the Middle East Peace process and international law – a review.* This research project will result in a report on the evolution of the relationship



between European countries and Israel under international law since 1967. We will analyse the way international law has been applied to Israel, and make recommendations on the role of international law in the development of a sustainable EU foreign policy towards the conflict.

- C. *International Diplomacy, Law and Security in Arab-Israel Relations* – educational project. Building on *Cases, Materials and Commentaries* we are developing a modular, multi-disciplinary on-line course for diplomats, policy advisers, law students and legal practitioners. The curriculum will be supplemented with a one-week onsite program module in Israel. The project will be executed in cooperation with the Inter-Disciplinary Centre (IDC) Herzliya, the largest private university in Israel.
- D. *International Criminal Court (ICC): the “situation in Palestine”* – special project. We will continue to play an active role in seeking to prevent that the ICC will investigate or prosecute Israeli leaders for so-called war crimes in Palestine.

### **Seminars and conferences**

New webinars are planned about *inter alia* the proceedings at the ICC regarding the “situation in Palestine“, the Abraham Accords and the future of the Two-state Solution. Some of these webinars may transform into onsite seminars as soon as COVID-19 permits. The events will be organized in cooperation with local/regional partners and sponsors where possible.

We intend to organise a conference in The Hague for international lawyers, jurists and diplomats about the role of international tribunals vis-à-vis the Israel-Palestine conflict as soon as COVID-19 permits.

### **Engagement**

We will continue to engage high-profile international legal experts in an advisory capacity. On working level, we will invite legal academics to participate in our projects and we will encourage the *thinc.* network to publish articles on our website and in international journals.

### **Educational program**

Besides the development of the online course in cooperation with IDC Herzliya we will explore the possibility of organising a Winter School in Israel for international law and international relations students.

## 3. Organisation

Name: Stichting The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (*thinc.*)

Statutory seat: The Hague

Email address: [info@thinc.info](mailto:info@thinc.info)

Web: [www.thinc.info](http://www.thinc.info)

Fiscal nr (RSIN): 857611112

Chamber of Commerce nr (KvK nr): 68830084

*thinc.* is a registered **ANBI** (*charitable trust*) in The Netherlands.

Bank Account Number (IBAN): NL15 INGB 0007 8215 39

### GOVERNANCE

The governance structure of the foundation comprises a Supervisory Board and a Management Team. The Supervisory Board consists of Mr. G.M.C. Cremer Eindhoven and Mr. M. Malotaux.

The Management Team consists of

- Mr. G.M.C. Cremer Eindhoven – Chairman of the Supervisory Board
- Mr. P.J. Hoogendoorn – Director
- Mr. A.E.L. Tucker – Program Manager

Board members are appointed for a period of five years and can subsequently be reappointed.

### OPERATIONS

The Program Manager conducts research and makes proposals for the research, publications and educational programs to the Board. He is assisted by the Senior Fellows, the Academic Advisory Board and members from the *thinc.* network. They conduct research, write papers and lecture at events.

The daily operations, projects and events are managed by the Director.

The Management Team is assisted by the Academic Advisory Board, consisting of Prof. G. Rose (Wollongong University, Australia), Prof. R. Sabel (Hebrew University, Israel) and Prof. Dr. L. Thio (National University of Singapore).

In August, Mrs. A.R. Schlechter (Univ. of Vienna) joined the team as Research Associate on part-time basis.

*thinc.* has appointed two Senior Fellows: Dr. M. de Blois and Dr. C.D. Wallace.

The Director, Program Manager and Research Associate are financially rewarded. All other Board members, Advisors and Senior Fellows work on a voluntary basis, their expenses are reimbursed.

## 4. Financial statement

### BALANCE SHEET PER 31 DECEMBER 2020

Assets		Liabilities	
Books	€ 5.472	Equity	€ 72.338
Accounts receivable	€ 12.974	Accounts payable	€ 2.974
Liquidities	€ 57.597	Accrued liabilities	€ 731
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 76.043</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 76.043</b>

### INCOME STATEMENT

Income 2020	
Margin book & report sales	€ 1.380
Donations	€ 89.909
Grants	€ 8.300
Other income	€ 11.976
Gross income	€ 111.565
Operating costs	€ 81.896
<b>Net income</b>	<b>€ 29.669</b>

### OPERATING COSTS

Operating costs 2020	
Research projects	€ 40.401
Seminars and lectures	€ 4.237
Salary costs	€ 26.594
IT and Office support	€ 7.816
General costs	€ 2.848
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 81.896</b>

The costs of Research projects include the costs of project management. The costs of Seminars and lectures include the expenses of *thinc.* staff, communication and guest speakers.

## 5. Budget 2021

The budget for 2021 reflects the planned activities outlined in Section 2. In order to provide quality work, qualified staff and expert advice will be hired on a limited scale for research and project management.

Income		Expenses	
Donations	€ 130.000	Research	€ 84.000
Project grants	€ 40.000	Education	€ 43.000
Lectures & seminars	€ 4.000	Network development	€ 8.000
Books and Reports	€ 1.000	Management & support	€ 29.000
Consulting	€ 2.000	Office	€ 13.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 177.000</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 177.000</b>

Signatures,

G.M.C. Cremer Eindhoven  
Chairman

P.J. Hoogendoorn  
Director