Special Issue Editor’s Note

The Journal of World Energy Law & Business is pleased to present this Latin America Special Edition. Over the past decades Latin America has not played as significant a role in the global oil and gas context as it perhaps should have, where the main focus has been on the relationship between the leading producing countries, especially from the Persian Gulf, and the economic and political players from the main consuming countries, both from Western Europe and the USA.

The intention of this Special Edition is to signal that the 21st century is heralding the emergence of Latin America as the new hot spot in the E&P industry. The overall statistics show factors of growth in the world reserves map that can be translated into the key political and strategic importance of the continent, when compared with other areas of the globe.

We can highlight the growth of the proven oil reserves of Central and South America from 98.8 billion barrels in the year 2001 to 239.4 billion barrels a decade later. Although this puts the region in second place in the total world reserves per region, it is more than triple the reserve base of North America. Eleven giant fields were discovered between 2008 and 2010 in Latin America, including conventional heavy oil and non-conventional resources. In 2010, more than US$30 billion of M&A transactions were reported in the region.

Investors in Latin America’s oil and gas industry will seek to analyse risks relevant to their business structure in order to reconcile the burden with the potential of projects in each country and the specific opportunities that are available. Various comments have been made about the emergence of a new resource nationalism in the region, which has been an obvious topic of concern to those investors who view the region as a better option than other areas where political risk is even higher.

A group of co-authors who represent all aspects of the industry, regulatory bodies and academia has been chosen for this Special Edition. The papers they present discuss the recent evolution and relevant topics in the legal, economic and political framework applicable to the oil and gas industry in selected countries in Latin America, and generally.

We are also honoured and pleased to be able to preface this special edition with an introduction by the first ever AIPN President to represent the continent, Pablo Alliani.

We hope this Latin America Special Edition offers the readers of the Journal a useful framework for understanding some of the most important trends in oil and gas regulation in this, the most fascinating of all of the continents, South America.

Marilda de Sá Rosado Ribeiro

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