and commercial problems of postal service, deliver studies and reports and elaborate standards.

**International Bureau:** It is directed by a Director-General and serves as the central administrative organ of liaison, information, consultation and coordination organ for the postal administrations of the UPU members.

**Consultative Committee:** the youngest UPU body established in September 2004 by the 23rd Universal Postal Congress. Comprising 25 members, it consists of external postal stakeholders (delivery service providers, trade unions and → NGOs representing mail customers), giving them a voice in the deliberations of the UPU.

**IV. Perspectives**

The UPU has proved to be an effective planning and clearing office for global postal services. Its biggest challenge is at present the structural change of postal items, the reduction of letter post items through the increase of e-mail letters with the corresponding decrease of revenues through postage fees, as well as their shifting into the sector of telecommunication. In this technological and economic situation it is the main task for the UPU to develop together with the ITU and other international organizations adequate solutions for the organizational and economic problems linked to these technological changes (cf. *UPU 2004*).

In this context, the UPU has actively participated in the second part of the ITU World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in Tunis (Tunisia) in November 2005, in presenting a seminar on the role of postal services in the information society (www.upu.int/upu_information_society/en/index.shtml), where the UPU emphasized the important role the postal services are able to play in developing effective global networks for the diverse electronic services. Thus the UPU contributes through its work towards making connections in and between developing countries’ communities more effective through the postal sector and towards reducing the “digital gap”, i.e. the backlog of the developing countries with regard to the access to the Internet, which exists in some fields, while in other the developing countries have already made progress: as of 2005 32% of the industrialized countries and 43% of the developing countries offer Internet access, 29% and 26%, respectively, offer electronic mail services, 82% and 49%, respectively, offer online postal services (cf. *UPU 2005*). All in all, this represents quite some success for the UPU, which former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan underlined: “... [T]he UPU has become one of our most valuable, yet largely unheralded, forums of international cooperation and exchange.” (quoted in: *UPU 2008*)

*Helmut Volger*


**Internet:** Homepage of UPU: www.upu.int; UPU Constitution and UPU General Regulations: www.upu.int/acts/en/constitution_general_regulations.shtml

**Use of Force, Prohibition of**

Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter (→ Charter of the UN) provides a comprehensive prohibition of the use of force. Article 2 (4) states that members shall refrain “in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.”

The prohibition of the use of force belongs to the fundamental provisions of
modern public international law (→ International Law and the UN). The International Court of Justice (→ ICJ) considers in its Nicaragua Judgment (Case concerning Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua vs. US), Judgment of 27 June 1986, ICJ Reports 1986, 14, 98ff.) the prohibition of the use of force to be part of customary international law. Furthermore the majority of writers on international law, as well as the practice of states, accept the prohibition of the use of force as being part of *ius cogens*. Hence the prohibition of the use of force is valid not only between UN member states, but among all states. However, on the domestic level the validity of the prohibition is not accepted, for example in non-international armed conflicts.

In comparison with the League of Nations Covenant (→ League of Nations) and the Briand-Kellogg Pact, Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter prohibits comprehensively the use of force or the threat of force. Therefore the use of armed force “short of war” as well as even the threat of force are included. But “force” as defined by Article 2 (4) refers – according to the prevailing view – only to military force. Not only the direct use of force is prohibited, i.e. the open incursion of regular military forces into the territory of other states or cross-border shooting into that territory, but also the use of indirect armed force (*Randelzhofer 1994*), for example through the establishment and acceptance of unofficial bands organized in a military manner, such as irregulars, mercenaries, or rebels on its own territory to be used for violent acts against a third state or the support of terrorist acts in foreign countries. In particular developing countries and the socialist states tried to extend the prohibition of the use of force also to economic and political force, e.g. embargoes on imports, blocking of bank accounts, etc. But the majority in the community of states does not accept this concept.

According to the UN Charter exceptions to this absolute prohibition of the use of force are – apart from the now obsolete → Enemy State Clauses – only allowed in two cases: individual or collective self-defense (Art. 51 UN Charter), and collective enforcement measures of the United Nations according to Chapter VII of the UN Charter within the system of → collective security.

In addition to this the governments of several countries have on various occasions expressed their view that the use of force in order to protect their nationals abroad would be a further exception to the prohibition of the use of force. Examples are the forcible protection action by Belgium for Belgian citizens in the Congo in 1964, Israel’s forcible freeing of hostages at Entebbe (1976), similar US attempts in Iran (1980) and Panama (1989), Germany’s evacuation by plane of 120 persons from 22 nations (among them 20 Germans) from Tirana (1997) under fire. Beside attempts to qualify a threat to their nationals abroad as an armed attack requiring self-defense (Art. 51 UN Charter), the states argue that the prohibition of the use of force must not restrict their right to protect their nationals, including the use of force if necessary, especially in cases of violation of → human rights of their nationals. But this opinion involves the danger that it may be misused for the enforcement of other interests, and may erode the prohibition of the use of force. Accordingly the state practice concerning the evaluation of an intervention for the protection of own nationals differs, so that there is no corresponding rule of customary international law justifying this state behavior as an exception to the prohibition of the use of force.

After the prohibition of the use of force was infringed several times in the era of the East-West Conflict within the framework of the blocs (cf. for example the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine), at the beginning of the nineties the hope arose after the collective action against the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait that the prohibition of the use of force could now become the guiding principle of the community of states (“New World Order” of US-President Bush). Since then international politics have been charac-