Editorial

With this last journal issue of the year we have reached the end of a festive year for European Company Law, as 2024 marked the twentieth year of the journals existence. The past twenty years have been a very interesting and adventurous journey with 823 contributions, 121 issues and twenty books published in the European Company Law Books series, including several new editions of books, such as the book on European Corporate Law that is now in its fourth edition.[1]

The journey started with an idea by professor Steef Bartman, at the time professor of company law at Leiden University and later at Maastricht University. His idea was to bring together academics and practitioners with a focus on European and comparative company law and start a journal focused around that topic. Bartman's aim was to create a journal with relatively concise academic articles which provides the reader with an easy insight into European developments both at the national level of the European countries as well as from a comparative perspective. Moreover, the purpose of the journal was (and is) to serve both academia as well as corporate practice. The work on the journal European Company Law was a great success and soon this success branched out to other initiatives. The collaboration amongst scholars for example led to several conferences held at different European institutes (Leiden, Utrecht, Maastricht, Uppsala, Warsaw and Rome), all hosted under the flag of the Centre for European Company Law. Next to that, there is the aforementioned book series European Company Law, which also contains several PhD-dissertations as well as handbooks on topics within the area of European Company Law.[2]

Next to Steef Bartman as editor and Cees de Groot as editorial secretary, publishing house Kluwer has been a constant factor for European Company Law. Under (currently) Kluwer International both the journal and the book series have been able to reach a large audience and receive strong support.

To mark this festive year for the journal, a book was launched in this series with the title twenty Years of European Company Law (appropriately numbered number twenty in the series).[3] It contains contributions written by regular contributors to the journal as well by editorial board members and well known authors in the area of European company law. The book covers a wide range of topics all related to European company law from European topics such as cross border and national mergers, inside information and market abuse to articles related to ESG and sustainability. The latter subject touches upon 'hot topics' in company law. These topics are well represented in the book, including contributions on Hedge Fund Activism and ESG, Corporate Purpose and Sustainable Decision-Making and contributions focused on the CSRD and CSDDD.

Over the past twenty years, there have been significant changes in the field of European and comparative company law. Firstly, twenty years ago the focus was largely on harmonization of traditional company law topics, such as takeovers and shareholder rights, and on the introduction of European company law forms, such as the SE, the European Cooperative Society and the European Economic Interest Grouping. This can also be seen in the publications in European Company Law at the time, with the first issue focusing on the EC Directive on takeover bids and the EC Prospectus Directive.[4]

In more recent years certain traditional topics, such as cross border mobility, remain interesting, and in part due to the case law of the European Court of Justice and the cross-border mobility directive there has been more advanced and

1 Adriaan Dorresteijn, Mieke Olaerts, Bastiaan Kemp, Thomas Biermeyer, Marcus Meyer-Erdmann & Tomas Arons, *European Corporate Law* (Fourth ed. 2022).
2 Such as books on Shareholders' Duties, European Merger Control, Piercing the Corporate Veil and Public Companies and the role of shareholders.
3 *Twenty Years of European Company Law* (B. Kemp & M. Olaerts eds, Kluwer International 2024).
4 S. M. Bartman, *Analysis and Consequences of the EC Directive on Takeover Bids* (European Company Law 2004-1); C. M. Grundmann-van de Krol, *New EC Prospectus Directive and the Lamfalussy Process* (European Company Law 2004).

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sophisticated harmonization in this field. At the same time, there are other topics and societal issues that transcend the traditional borders of company law. Attempts to deal with the loss of biodiversity, the search for sustainable business avenues and other global societal challenges shed new light on company law issues and require a profound rethinking of the corporate model and the role of all those involved. These topics are getting more and more attention in academic literature, and are therefore expected to receive more interest in European Company Law in the years to come.

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