

Editorial

This issue represents a sort of *bridge between the scientific community and the world of policy makers* in the field of labour law and industrial relations. It is the first experiment of combining the points of view of scholars and of those who work at the technical level for their Governments. More precisely, three colleagues of mine (Seifert, van Voss and Foote) at the university level, plus three colleagues (Borstlap, Pedersen and Chozas) who sit with me on the Employment and Labour Market Committee (ELC) of the European Union. If you like, this is an issue which reflects the dual activity of my present life: an academic who temporarily also works at the technical level for his national Government and at the EU level.

Despite the difference in backgrounds, I was pleased to discover that there is a lot of convergence in the following articles. Seifert brilliantly analyses the changing role of collective bargaining in Germany - its development from an instrument for improving working conditions towards one of promoting job creation. This is exactly the perspective covered by the contributions on the Danish, Dutch and Spanish situations prepared by three top-ranking officials of the Ministries of Labour who sit on the ELC, representing their Governments. I asked them to discuss those aspects of their respective Governments' National Action Plans for Employment (NAPs) where the responsibility of the social partners is of particular importance in implementing the employment chapter of the Amsterdam Treaty. The results are three articles which do not necessarily reflect the views of their Governments, but may be considered 'quasi-official'.

The 'Documentation and Comment' section this time contains two short contributions on a couple of well-known issues. Temporary (agency) work in the Netherlands and perspectives in the area of labour-management co-operation in the US. Both van Voss and Foote are very accurate when focusing on these two well identified problems, while not neglecting to refer to the general environment which presently characterises the two countries.

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