

Editorial

In this issue a great variety of topics, or better put *a number of challenges*, covering various parts of the world are addressed. This time the IJCLIR offers first of all an overview of the Asian area. Ying Zhu examines foreign direct investment and the impact of labour relations in China in the context of globalisation, followed by Hideyuki Morito who discusses the future of the Japanese pension system (both public and corporate) in dealing with the problem of a fast-ageing society. Two countries - China and Japan – that are very different but equally determined to change their old structures in order to successfully cope with the ever-changing situations.

Turning our attention then to Europe we find a challenge that is no less ambitious: European Monetary Union. After the first year of trial, Traversa and I try to assess its impact on the systems of labour law and industrial relations. While it is probably too early to come to any conclusions, it is certainly time to look at the first result of an extraordinary project: the peaceful integration of Europe, and not simply in monetary terms.

The European Union situation is covered from two other angles - actually two additional challenges. Paul Lewis looks at the impact of the Pregnant Workers Directive on the UK situation, while Tucker and Ó Móráin (high ranking officials of the UK and Irish Governments, respectively) offer very interesting comments regarding the implementation of the European Employment Strategy in their countries. Finally, Jill Murray presents us with a new dimension for developing a global discussion on labour matters.

MARCO BIAGI