

Editorial: Equality and the Labour Market

I am extremely grateful to Catherine Barnard and Simon Deakin for their invaluable contribution to this issue of the *IJCLLR* which is entirely based on the materials presented in July 2001, at the Pontignano International Conference on Comparative Labour Law. This seminar was held at the Faculty of Law of the University of Cambridge and entirely dedicated to the theme 'The Principle of Equality and the Labour Market'. I really hope that the *IJCLLR* will be increasingly seen by many colleagues as an ideal forum to collect papers presented in various scholarly events.

Catherine Barnard, Simon Deakin and Claire Kilpatrick open the list of contributions with a highly interesting article that underlines how the UK labour market continues to be characterised by occupational segregation and persistent pay inequality. The limited impact of legislative interventions in advancing measures to implement equality policies is equally emphasized by Dagmar Schiek, who covers the German perspective. He rightly considers that both part-time and fixed-term work might play an essential role in developing policies aimed at increasing female participation in the labour market.

Equality means, of course, thinking in terms of human rights, but also thinking in terms of equality in the labour market. This is the major issue developed by Rodriguez-Pinero – a father and son – who address the Spanish experience. It is also a perspective shared by Emmanuel Dockes who reflects on the French situation. His conclusions are certainly innovative. He claims that equality is far from being a constraint upon efficiency; it is rather a condition of market access. The Italian context, presented by Riccardo Del Punta and Franco Carinci, agrees with this view.

Further efforts must be made in order to make the principle of equality more effective in the labour market. In order to make this achievement more realistic non-traditional tools must also be experimented with. The European Commission should conduct surveys to assess to what extent Pillar 4 of the European Employment Strategy has been effectively implemented. It seems to me that neither Governments nor the social parties took this commitment seriously, at least so far.

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