

EDITORIAL FOREWORD

A variety of wide-ranging comparative studies make up this second issue of Volume 5 of *The International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations*.

The first contribution, which presents the results of a study carried out under the supervision of Danièle Meulders and Bernard Tytgat, of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, continues our coverage of the important developments in new forms of work throughout Western industrialised economies, and complements the articles contained in Issue 1 of this Volume. The authors trace the trends towards various "atypical" employment forms within the European Economic Community, and look particularly at recent developments in part-time employment, temporary employment, and homeworking, together with a variety of tendencies towards unsocial or variable working hours. As well as presenting quantitative data on these developments, the authors indicate the results of attitude surveys amongst workers subjected to these forms of work. There is also consideration of the role played by in-company training courses for young persons – often in the context of youth employment training schemes instigated by national governments. The authors draw a number of pessimistic conclusions about the success of various initiatives attempted in this area. Finally, some important criticisms are levelled at the adequacy of present methods for the compiling and making available of statistical data in relation to the issues under consideration, while an all too familiar conclusion is offered about the extent of vulnerability (particularly in relation to discrimination against female workers) suffered by workers in so many of these "atypical" forms of employment.

Anatolij Dovgert's study of conflicts of law rules as they affect the entry into and operation of international employment contracts is a revised version of the author's submission for the Diploma awarded by the *International Seminar for Comparative Labour Law and Social Security*, held annually at the Attila József University, Szeged, Hungary, under the technical direction of Professor László Nagy. It is a particular pleasure for this journal to publish work produced for the *International Seminar*, to whose successful activities so many members of our distinguished International Advisory Board regularly contribute.

Finally, the wide-ranging theoretical contribution of Martin Vrankin, focussing upon the issue of "autonomy" in labour law, picks up some of the issues emerging out of the important debates about the nature and role of "Labour Law", currently emerging from the specialist literature. Having looked at differing perceptions of "autonomy" in civil law and common law systems, the author finds no overriding necessity for a general "separation" of labour law matters from other issues dealt with by the legal systems, but perceives a significant "challenge" for labour law in the 1990s to discover "a new balance".

No doubt, accounts and analysis of the tendencies towards any such "new balance" will make up much of the future content of this journal.

A.C.N.