

## Editors' Foreword

This Spring 1992 issue of Volume 8 of the *International Journal* heralds major changes. It is the first edition of the Journal to be published by Kluwer Law and Taxation Publishers. Furthermore, it welcomes a new Editor in Chief, in the person of Dr. Lammy Betten, of the University of Utrecht in The Netherlands, who joins the Founding Editor in taking responsibility for a much-enlarged and significantly wider-ranging quarterly content.

These fundamental changes in the organisation and production of the *International Journal* take place at the same time as Labour Law and Industrial Relations have taken centre stage in the debates over the form and direction for European Community social policy. The Maastricht Summit, and especially the agreements on social policy signed subsequent to that meeting, revealed quite clearly the tensions within and between the Member States of the European Community, while, at the same time, underlining a particular direction chosen by an emerging "Europe of the Eleven".

Much has recently been written in the popular press about the alleged "isolationist" stance adopted by the United Kingdom government during the Maastricht negotiations over social policy, but, as MANFRED WEISS points out in his contribution to the debate, such a narrow concentration tends to obscure the true progress made in the social field within the framework of the Protocol on Social Policy. Professor Weiss considers the new procedures for Community-level social legislation, and takes issue with the apparent absence of clear concepts and coherent thinking on European social policy which he suggests is revealed by the content and structure of the Maastricht agreements in this field.

A challenging critique of the whole Social Chapter and its place in the international legal order is then provided by CATHERINE BARNARD, who, taking note of the United Kingdom position, questions the extent to which one Member State can validly remain an "outsider" in the face of a "Europe of the Eleven", and regrets the precedent set by British opting-out of the Maastricht provisions.

In stark contrast to the close attention paid to the momentous events which have been witnessed at Maastricht, little notice appears to have been taken of the designation of 1992 as European Year of Health and Safety at the Workplace. In looking at some of the reasons why the area of occupational health and safety demands much greater consideration by Labour Lawyers and industrial relations specialists, FRANK WRIGHT traces the development of European-level policy in this field, and considers the regulatory structures currently being erected in the context of the Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights of Workers and the associated Commission Action Programme for implementing that Charter.

In the DOCUMENTATION AND COMMENT section, not only are the texts of the Maastricht Agreements on social policy reproduced, but so, too, are the important new ILO Convention No.172, together with its associated ILO Recommendation No.179, as well as amended Articles 23-29 of the European Social Charter, as agreed at the 1991 Turin Conference of the Council of Europe.

Finally, the international CASE LAW section looks at the distressing problems relating to the protection of children and young persons in international Labour Law, while the DIARY section draws attention to the 9th World Congress of the International Industrial Relations Association, together with two of the most important Summer Schools taking place during 1992.

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