

Editorial

This issue aims to address recent developments in various countries both at the European Union and the national level. It begins by looking beyond the EU to ongoing processes of reform, particularly in Russia, one of the biggest EU commercial partners, where a new Labour Code has been adopted. This important event is highlighted in the article by Olga Rymkevitch, who gives an analysis of the main innovations introduced by the code. The paper argues that in spite of appearances, the aim of the Russian legislator is not to deregulate, but to introduce re-regulation so as to adapt legal provisions to the actual workings and organisation of the labour market. Nikita Lyutov provides an analysis of the Code from the point of view of the international standards laid down by the ILO, that have had a strong influence on labour law codification. Russia's attempts to adjust its legislation to current economic needs and align it with international standards should contribute to improving its legal framework, combating unemployment and phenomena such as social dumping and the underground economy. Reform is also dealt with by Jean-Pierre Laborde, who discusses the Social Modernisation Act of 17 January 2002 in France, that placed limits on economic dismissals, provided indemnity for precarious employment, and extended the definition of sexual harassment: many of these measures are now expected to be scaled back.

The increasingly important issue of discrimination is also examined. In his article, Gregor Thüsing analyses the impact of Council Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC aimed at prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. Closely related with the issue of discrimination is the problem of atypical work, as shown by Enrico Traversa in his useful survey of cases of the Court of Justice of the European Communities. He rightly notes that discrimination against peripheral workers is often a form of gender discrimination, as most of these workers are women. Atypical work is also examined by Juan Ángel Confalonieri in his discussion of the regulation of apprenticeship contracts promoting youth employment in Argentina.

Finally, Hedva Sarfati provides a broader view of the labour market and the policy implications of changes in the welfare state in OECD

countries. As welfare states are cut back and labour forces shrink, the need to conciliate flexibility and security becomes more pressing, but the paper underlines the fact that some countries have been successful in their pursuit of these objectives.

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