

Editorial

This issue of the *Journal* covers a range of topics that we believe our readers will find both stimulating and highly relevant to recent developments in labour law in an international perspective, starting with the paper by Manfred Weiss presented at the conference on Enlargement and Industrial Relations held in Modena on 9-10 October 2003. The author gives a wide-ranging analysis of the systems of IR in the current Member States and those in the acceding countries, arguing that EU enlargement is a great challenge as well as a good chance for both as it represents a mutual learning process.

Reinhold Fahlbeck takes as his starting point the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights to examine the vexed question of religious rights in the workplace, noting that the balancing of competing issues such as religious freedom and gender equality at work is a most delicate matter. The distinction between the right to religious belief and manifestation of religion is key to dealing with such conflicting rights. In his perceptive analysis of cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights, the author offers a critical reading of recent cases also in the courts in various national systems, in particular Germany, Switzerland and Turkey.

Konstantinos Magliveras reports that in Greece no specific legislation on sexual harassment in the workplace has yet been adopted, giving rise to the need to assess the level of protection under existing legal provisions. The author discusses recent decisions by the Greek courts, and concludes that existing provisions do not offer adequate protection against sexual harassment at work.

In his paper on the scope of collective bargaining laws, Guy Davidov proposes extending provisions in this area to all those, including self-employed workers, suffering a significant democratic deficit or economic dependency in working relations. The author defends the view that such an extension of rights can be achieved without infringing competition laws protecting consumer welfare.

Still in connection with collective bargaining, in her discussion of the cross-industry voluntary agreement concluded on telework, Ann Branch looks at the latest developments in the open method of coordination. To what extent can the implementation of Community labour law obligations be entrusted to collective bargaining by the European social partners? And what are the shortcomings of voluntary agreements? In this

connection the author quite rightly points out that in the new Member States the social partners and sectoral-level bargaining continue to play a limited role. She also underlines the need for clarity in the use of terms such as 'agreement'.

In this issue Robert Rebhahn concludes his authoritative survey of comparative labour law in Europe, casting light on the considerable differences in employees' representation and participation beyond information and consultation on general matters.

In the Documentation section, Giovanna De Lucia and Silvia Ciuffrini report on the role of bilateral bodies in the artisan sector in Italy, where small and micro companies play a vital role in job creation. These bodies provide not just a forum for social dialogue in a sector where the level of employee protection is at times problematic, but also a model for the joint administration of resources for such purposes as training, redundancy, civil protection measures in the event of natural disasters, and company restructuring.

Finally, this issue includes a review of Roger Blanpain and Michele Colucci's *European Labour and Social Security Law Glossary*, that the reviewer considers to be an invaluable asset for both scholars and practitioners.

OLGA RYMKEVITCH
MARLENE SCHMIDT
MICHELE TIRABOSCHI