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At national level, it is widely recognised that labour law is an autonomous discipline which comprises elements of contract, tort, criminal and commercial law as well as constitutional law. It has been impossible to imagine the recreation of such a national understanding of labour law at the European level. European labour law has a curious character. It is patchy in its coverage of rights. At its heart, European labour law suffers from an equivocal purpose within the EU's framework. Article 3 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) commits the EU to establishing both "a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress" and "combat[ing] social exclusion and discrimination, and ··· promot[ing] social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations [and among Member States]". Since the 1980s, the EU institutions have adopted a number of Directives which regulate working conditions in the single market but some core institutions of labour market regulation are excluded from EU competence. Since the turn of the century, soft forms of coordination and new instruments of governance, such as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), have become the of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in 2000, and its later embedding in EU law through the Lisbon Treaty.

European labour law is the product of interactions of various actors operating at different levels including the EU legislature, the European Commission, the Member States, private organisations (including employer and worker representatives) and the Court of Justice of the European Union. There is an inevitable tension between these different interest groups and the economic and social priorities which they represent. This translates into a persistent asymmetry between European social and market integration. While there is a common core of rules at a European level which make up European labour law, these rules are generally implemented differently in individual Member States (due to the laws often being in the form of Directives) European labour law can only be fully understood within the context of each individual national labour law system. Scholars of European labour law must also be scholars of national labour law.

Jaspers, Pennings and Peters' edited collection draws out these different dynamics inherent in European labour law. Underpinning all of the chapters is a recognition that tensions exist between the actors involved in the adoption and regulation of European labour law; between the national and EU levels; between poorer and richer Member States; and between the aims (social and economic) that European labour law are meant to achieve. This comes out particularly clearly in the chapters that address posted workers. The book stands out for managing to untangle these different tensions and for presenting a comprehensive overview of the subject. It is a welcome addition to the existing legal literature. Other textbooks dedicated specifically to European labour law stem from the early 2010s while more up-to-date books cover European labour law as part of a general introduction to, and overview of, EU Law, and are therefore not as detailed as this collection. The book also covers areas of European labour law—social security and occupational health and safety—which are sometimes marginalised by English-language textbooks in the field. For students and scholars familiar with EU Law and with a general understanding of labour law, this book offers an accessible introduction to the subject while also providing novel perspectives on the topics for those interested in advanced study.

The book contains nine chapters—most co-authored by two well-established scholars—covering a range of topics, including the free movement of (posted) workers and applicable social security law (Ch.2) equal treatment (Ch.3); the regulation of atypical forms of employment (Ch.4); collective bargaining in EU law (Ch.5); the restructuring of companies (Ch.6); workers' participation in business matters (Ch.7) and occupational health and safety and working time (Ch.8). Chapter 9 brings the

different subjects together and considers the future of the discipline. Other areas of labour law, commonly included in a domestic labour law textbook, such as unfair dismissal, are excluded for an obvious reason: the EU lacks competence Each chapter works as a standalone contribution, but a common approach, which focuses on the material scope of the relevant EU law provisions and their factual and political context, ensures continuity and structure across the book. The chapters' primary focus is on the substantive European law relevant to employment relationships rather than broader social policy considerations. Thus, new forms of governance are mentioned but their impact on national labour law systems is not analysed in detail. The book complements the vast (legal and political science) literature on social policy and new forms of governance in this regard.

The legal analysis is situated within a broader international law framework and relevant instruments of the Council of Europe (the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter) and the International Labour Organisation are included where they have had an impact. Particularly in the sphere of posted workers, the book is to be commended for including a robust analysis of the interaction between EU regulation of the subject and the rules of private international law.

The authors across all chapters draw on their national labour law expertise to frequently provide concrete and relevant examples of how European labour laws have affected different Member States. This help readers to understand the varied character of European labour law and the inherent legal uncertainty which that brings. For example, workers who avail themselves of art.45 TFEU to move to another Member State are granted equal treatment under art.7 of Regulation 492/2011 in respect of social advantages. In Ch.9, Pennings gives examples of how different Member States (Sweden, the UK and the Netherlands), driven by domestic political considerations, have restricted access to social advantages for EU workers in different ways while paying lip service to the spirit of the regulations. The effect is that free movement of workers is impeded and those workers who do move face legal uncertainty. Such examples, seen within the context of the tensions which have underpinned European labour law since its inception, lead Pennings to conclude that European labour law is lacking a much-needed motor to drive its development forward. While European labour law is not dead (as others have suggested: K. Ewing, "The death of social Europe" (2015) 26(1) Kings Law Journal 76), the subject's future depends on continuous attempts to resolve the tensions which impede its development. This book's main contribution in that regard lies in providing a methodical, detailed and up-to-date analysis of the law and the ways in which the law requires reform.

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