

## **Preface of the editors**

The establishment of the internal market in Europe poses a special challenge to jurists. The subject and working patterns of their professional practice will be affected by fundamental changes requiring additional qualifications. While the continual observation and reception of rapidly growing materials of European Law in the proper sense is essential, there is just as much demand for far more knowledge of other European legal systems and skills in handling cases with a certain transnational content. In this respect considerable deficits can be noted in the area of legal education which is traditionally directed towards the legal system in the students' own country. Students were and are still trained mainly for work in that narrow context. Teaching and learning to cope with foreign legal systems is now as ever deplorably neglected.

Our university cooperation ELPIS, for over twenty years acting together in the endeavour to provide "European legal practice integrated studies", which is the underlying message of its acronym, has always promoted open-mindedness and cross-border experience in legal education. It was following this line that in 1996 the participating law faculties decided to carry out in a joint effort a Thematic Network Project devoted to the promotion of the European and comparative dimension of law teaching in European countries with a view to facilitating the mobility of lawyers in Europe. The extensive research activities in this framework found the support of the European Commission during a period of three years. As they came to an end in 1999 the ELPIS network was pleased to be offered the opportunity to present and discuss the main results at an international forum organized by one of its most active partner universities. It is with deep gratitude that all participants remember the wonderful work done by our colleagues in Thessaloniki, above all Professor Grammaticaki-Alexiou and her staff, in order to make the event a success.

Meanwhile, a new academic generation has grown up. Those who, as students were explored in the ELPIS law teaching project, now hopefully started a satisfying professional career. Some of their former teachers retired, as I did myself, leaving the main burden of coordinating ELPIS to my successor Professor Bernd Oppermann. But the problems we faced some years ago still seem to be the same, and the steps envisaged may be considered to be as far as ever from a solid approach towards the necessary reforms of legal education in Europe. In my view, this is true even with respect to the Bologna process, which - if applicable at all to the

peculiar needs of law students - looks more at the institutional framework of the curriculum than at its content. The continuing interest in fostering the European and comparative dimension of legal education may justify the decision to present the essential outcome of former efforts to a greater public after so many years. This publication, to which we were encouraged more than once by friends and interested colleagues, could perhaps, as I hope, also serve as a reference point for follow up research using better and more refined tools than we had to our disposal.

The book displays a data collection reflecting the main results of the ELPIS study, reproduces more or less in the original version the twelve principal academic reports delivered at the concluding conference of the project, and at the end, with contributions from the present coordinator, Professor Oppermann, and from the spiritus rector of new activities in the field of teaching methodology, Professor Pereira da Silva, it offers an outlook on later development and actual planning. With the exception of one French report all contributions are drafted in English, a language which for most of the authors is not their native language. However, as in an empirical enquiry the exact wording of questions is of utmost importance, the questionnaires are displayed in the German version which may be confronted with their English counterpart added to the data being commented here.

In the preparation of this edition record must be made of our sincere thanks to Hugh Langridge for reading parts of the manuscripts and to Frank Manthey for technical assistance.

Hilmar Fenge

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Six years ago the Faculty of Law of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki organized a conference in Sani, Halkidiki, on the topic of the European and Comparative Dimension of Law Teaching in Europe. The conference was organized within the framework of the EPEAEK Programme, an EU funded programme of the law school, aiming at the reform of legal studies, and in co-operation with the ELPIS Group, within the framework of the Socrates/European Thematic Network Programme. The general title was "International Forum ELPIS for Europe". In the Greek language „ελπίς” means hope, and in fact the conference conveyed the message of hope for a better legal education in Europe, responsive to the needs and aspirations of law students, legal educators, and legal professions. Speakers and

participants underscored that improvements cannot be made without the comparative knowledge of educational aspects of other countries and without the full utilization of modern tools and methods. In my capacity as co-ordinator of the EPEAEK Programme I believe that this publication containing the reports presented at the conference by eminent scholars from Greece and abroad may offer some constructive ideas for all those interested in legal education.

Anastasia Grammaticaki-Alexiou