



in brief Newsletter

May 2017

'In Brief' - in greek 'en oligois' - is the monthly newsletter of the Centre of International and European Economic Law (CIEEL), edited since January 1998. The present volume of May 2017 is the first one edited in both greek and english, following the expansion of CIEEL's activities in co-operation with academic or other entities of the abroad.

CIEEL was founded in 1977 in Thessaloniki and throughout its forty years of existence it operates mainly as a research institute in all fields of European Law, Human Rights Law and International Economic Law. Further than its research and academic activities, CIEEL provides advisory support to the State and legal entities of public law in the specific sectors of Public Procurement and State Aid. The implementation of european projects, either as a co-ordinator or as a partner, is another area of CIEEL's activities. President of the Board of CIEEL is Professor Vasilios Skouris, former President of the European Court of Justice from 2003 to 2015.

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Award of the title of Doctor Honoris Causa to Professor **Alain Supiot**



On May 3, 2017 at the Ceremonial Hall of the old building of the Faculty of Philosophy, the School of Law of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki to Mr. Alain Supiot, eminent Professor of Labour Law at the Collège de France.

The ceremony started with the addresses of the Dean of the Faculty of Law, Professor George Dellios, and of the Vice Rector of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Professor Despina Klavani-dou. Professors Angelos Stergiou, Petros Stangos and Christina Deligianni-Dimitrakou gave the honors' speeches and presented the outstanding work of the Honorary Professor, referring to his contribution in the formulation of French and European social law, on his views about the philosophical and critical perception of today's society and to his engagement with dogmatic anthropology and comparative law.



In his address, the Honorary Professor encountered on his long relationship with the Law School of Aristotle University and developed the topic "Reflections on the weakening of the State".

The ceremony closed with the performance of the choir "Giannis Mandakas" of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the choral ensembles of the Department of Music Studies of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, who presented poetry of Odysseas Elytis set to music by Mikis Theodorakis.

The following day, at the Centre of International and European Economic Law (CIEEL), Professor Alain Supiot, in the context of the 'Greek-French Dialogues' organized by the French Institute of Thessaloniki, discussed with the Vice President of the European Committee of Social Rights Professor Petros Stagos, on the topic: "Is there a future for labor law?". The discussion, attended by professors, lawyers and students, was coordinated by the Secretary of CIEEL Professor Christina Deligianni-Dimitrakou.



CONFERENCE

Enhancing European Citizens' Rights

On 27 April 2017 at 'Ioannis Manoledakis' auditorium in Thessaloniki, the Jean Monnet Center of Excellence of the University of Macedonia, in cooperation with the Thessaloniki Bar Association and the Hellenic Association of European Law, President of which is the President of CIEEL Professor Vassilios Skouris, organized a conference on the topic “Enhancing European Citizens' Rights”, including two sessions, the first one in greek and the second one in english.

At the first session, presiding Professor Vassilios Skouris, Associate Professor Despina Anagnostopoulou elaborated on the evolution of EU legislation and case-law regarding European citizens' rights. Following, Associate Professor and Jean Monnet Chairholder, Michael Chrysomallis, analyzed the EU efforts to ensure the rule of law in Member States of the European Union, beyond the mechanism of Article 7 TEU. The third speaker, Associate Professor Ioannis Papadopoulos, presented the ‘European Citizens' Initiative’, stressing out its functional weaknesses, which undermine its effectiveness, and suggesting ways to overcome its inadequacies.

The second session, with Associate Professor Lina Papadopoulou as moderator, started with the presentation of Professor Miguel Gardeñes Santiago of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, who examined the crucial issue of the cross-border continuity of citizens' civil status as an essential condition for strengthening the rights of European citizens. Lastly, Lecturer Anna-Maria Consta, expressed her concerns about the European citizen's right to care for their family members, who are third-countries nationals, and whether such right tends to extend or restrict European citizens' rights in general.

The participation of the audience has been wide and interesting questions have shaped a vivid dialogue that completed this successful event.

Europe Day event



Celebrating "Europe Day" and the completion of sixty years since the signing of the Treaties of Rome, the 'Forum on exchanging ideas about national reconstruction' held on the 9th of May 2017, at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Thessaloniki, an event on the topic: "European Integration faced with New Challenges - Greece in a changing Europe".

The President of CIEEL and former President for 12 years of the Court of Justice of the European Union, Professor Vasilios Skouris, spoke about the European Union as a 'Community of values' and the crisis that the Union is facing in our times. Professor V. Skouris expressed the view that the skepticism, with which the European integration is currently being addressed, should be perceived as a healthy reaction to an organization that is vivid and evolving. At the same time, as Professor Skouris underlined, there is a strong revival of the European spirit, due to two main factors: Brexit, which is bringing together the rest of Europeans, other than British, and making them aware of the positive aspects of European integration, and the euro, which, despite its constant controversy, remains a very strong currency.

Professor Ioannis Koukiadis, former Member of the European Parliament, in the first part of his speech encountered the continuous formulation of the European identity, as the means to comprehend the problems that European Union is experiencing in the present. Professor I. Koukiadis, after referring to the remote history about the unification of Europe, he stressed that, despite the setback of the European integration due to the non adoption of a European Constitution, the Union has been fully successful in integrating many important sectors of the economy. In the latter part of his speech, he pointed out the current deficits of the European Union at the political level, where there exist no common positions on critical issues of foreign policy (immigration, Islamic fundamentalism), at the economic level, where the challenges of globalization are pressing, and finally at the social level, where the need to promote the

competitiveness of the European economy has had as side effects increasing inequality and dissolution of social cohesion.

Professor Yannis Stephanidis, elaborating on evidence from opinion polls, presented the current public opinion about the European Union and the citizens' beliefs about the European identity and institutions. Professor Y. Stefanidis stated that, citizens think about the Union more as an economic rather than as a political community and focus on its negative rather than its positive aspects. As a conclusive remark, he noted that, since the European Union is at its most critical course, there must be no complacency neither about the future of the European acquis, nor about the accomplishments of the last fifty years.

Associate Professor Spyros Litsas contemplated about the existing problems of safety and security that European Union is concerned with. He analyzed the following sub-issues related to these problems: the challenge of populism, the aging of the European population and the consequent collapse of the welfare state, the jihadist Islam, which needs to be studied further, the lack of adequate development of non-conventional energy sources and, finally, the failure of the political deepening of the Union.

The event was completed with the speech of Professor Evangelos Venizelos, Member of the Greek Parliament and former Minister, who portrayed the European Union as a "successful, original and hybrid in many aspects project". He appraised that European Union is evolving during the last sixty years is an undoubtedly positive way. However, following the 2008 crisis, which started as a financial one and turned into a fiscal one, it was questioned to a large extent the inability not only of the Eurozone but also of the economic governance of the European Union to operate efficiently in times of crisis.

Following the presentation of the speeches, an extensive and interesting debate, co-ordinated by the journalist Mrs. Christina Tachiaou, took place.



Brexit

Negotiating Directives of the Withdrawal Agreement

On 22 May 2017 the Council of the European Union, meeting in an EU27 format, adopted a decision authorising the beginning of Brexit negotiations with the UK, following the notification of its intention to leave the EU. The Council also adopted negotiating directives for the talks, based on the guidelines adopted by the European Council on 29 April 2017 according to article 50 TEU. The Commission was nominated as the EU negotiator

This first set of negotiating directives is intended to guide the Commission for the first phase of the negotiations. The purpose of this first phase is to provide as much clarity and legal certainty as possible and to settle the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. The European Council is responsible to evaluate, if sufficient progress has been achieved, and therefore if the negotiations are ready to proceed to the next phase, which will be devoted to an agreement on a future relationship between the EU and the UK. In this phase the discussion will involve issues identified as 'necessary for an orderly withdrawal of the UK', including citizens' rights, the financial settlement and the situation of Ireland, as well as other matters in which there is a risk of legal uncertainty as a consequence of Brexit.

The protection of EU and UK citizens' rights, as well as their family members', that are affected by Brexit, constitutes the first priority for the negotiations. According to the Council's decision, these negotiations should be 'reciprocal and based on equal treatment' among EU27 citizens and UK citizens and they should cover residence rights, free movement and all relevant rights (i.e. health care). Furthermore, the Council points out the need for a single financial settlement and the fulfillment of all the obligations UK undertook while being a member, as well as the covering of the specific costs related to the withdrawal from the UK. What is more, the EU support of peace, stability and reconciliation on the island of Ireland is reassured. Last but not least, the negotiations of the first phase will be conducted in a view to avoid the creation of a legal vacuum, as far as goods that are already placed on the single market are concerned.

