

Tomášek, M., Týč, V. et al.: The EU Law. Prague, Leges, 2013, 496 p.

As the EU law is becoming ever more complex, it is increasingly difficult for a textbook to strike a right balance between a text introducing only its basic principles and an overly detailed discussion of its peculiarities. The authors of a new textbook published last year – *Právo Evropské unie* [The EU Law] were well aware of it and attempted to write, in the authors' words, a "middle textbook", targeted in particular on students of Czech faculties of law. Hence, it was meant to provide sufficiently thorough theoretical background for the students, but not to go into the complexities of individual EU policies, which would require a significantly more voluminous publication. Even though some readers might unavoidably argue that certain topics were covered in too much and some in too little detail, the authors managed to fulfil their vision of a universal textbook.

The collective of authors is impressive and unique in the Czech context. The main authors, prof. Michal Tomášek and prof. Vladimír Týč, heads of Departments of European law at the Law Faculties of Charles University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno respectively. The authors comprise not only academicians from these universities, but also prominent figures associated with the EU courts, including prof. Jiří Malenovský, a Judge at the Court of Justice, prof. Irena Pelikánová, a Judge at the General Court, and Martin Smolek, the Agent for the Czech Republic before the Court of Justice. Despite the number and different background of the authors, the text is highly coherent.

The textbook consists of three blocks, each representing approximately a third of its volume: the first block deals with principal properties and structure of the EU law and the EU institutions, the second with material law and the third with EU judiciary.

As far as the first block is concerned, the complexities of the EU legal order are presented in a clear and comprehensible way, as well as its relationship with national law. The authors pay proper attention to the situation in the Czech Republic, in particular with respect to the Constitutional Court's jurisdiction, more examples demonstrating the effects of the EU law within the Czech legal order might however further facilitate better understanding of the issues discussed. Similarly, the chapter on institutional law, including not only the institutional architecture of the EU, but also its powers, liability and legislative process, is well structured and clearly presented.

The EU material law is particularly difficult to discuss in publications of this kind; firstly, the EU law covers so many areas that it is clearly not possible to tackle them all in a "middle textbook", and secondly, most of the areas are

so intertwined with national law that a complex presentation would in fact substitute textbooks on these specific fields. As far as the choice of topics is concerned, the authors distinguish between “economic” and “citizenship” related material law, and dedicate a separate chapter to each of them.

In the economic area, the text covers the four freedoms, consumer protection, tax law, public procurement, competition law, economic and monetary union and trade policy; clearly, not all the “economic” policies were covered, but the choice obviously reflects the authors’ teaching experience and it is not our ambition to question it. It is however this chapter where the reader realizes that the book was written by a numerous collective, as the level of detail varies with respect to certain topics. For example, approximately a third of the chapter is dedicated not only to the four freedoms, but also to the competition law; this however leaves relatively little space for other policies, e. g. the tax law was given 10 times less space than the competition law.

Concerning the citizenship-related material law, mainly the EU citizenship, fundamental rights and the judicial cooperation are covered. Similarly to what was mentioned above with respect to economic policies, it is extremely difficult for more authors to find the same level of detail, and some topics are inevitably discussed more thoroughly than others. However, this does not make the reading any less interesting.

The final and relatively extensive block is dedicated to the EU judiciary. The level of detail is unprecedented in Czech textbooks, and it even includes a model preliminary reference and annulment action. The quality of this part is undisputed, it is easy to read and it provides the reader with a perfect understanding of the peculiarities of the judicial process; having in mind the character of this textbook, it may however be asked whether less detail would not have been sufficient, leaving more room for the material law.

Overall, *The EU Law* provides a clearly structured, proficiently written and highly coherent textbook of European law, which is relevant not only to students, but to anybody who wants to understand the complex world of the European Union.

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