



**Dear reader,**

This issue of *Juridica International* is based on the presentations made at the international conference titled ‘European Initiatives (CFR) and Reform of Civil Law in New Member States’, held in Tartu on 15–16 November 2007. However, this issue of the journal not only serves to publish the materials of the conference but also offers several other articles that, while they were not presented at the conference, are closely related to the topic of the conference.

The conference served two main objectives: first, to address the significant issues of the Common Frame of Reference (CFR) project and, second, to analyse the development of civil legislation in the new member states of the European Union and what the effect of the so-called model laws (PECL, UNIDROIT Principles, and CFR) has been here. The conference was attended by many who participated in the preparation of the Draft Common Frame of Reference, such as the Study Group on a European Civil Code’s Chairman Professor Christian von Bar and members Professor Hugh Beale, Professor Anna Veneziano, Professor Jerzy Rajski, Dr. Stephen Swann, Professor Luboš Tichý, Professor Christian Takoff, and Professor Valentinas Mikelenas, as well as, from the Research Group on EC Private Law (the Acquis Group), Chairman Professor Hans Schulte-Nölke and members Professor Thomas Wilhelmsson and Professor Fryderyk Zoll. Presentations on the development of civil law in new Member States were made by Professor Jerzy Rajski (covering Poland), Professor András Kisfaludi (Hungary), Professor Valentinas Mikelenas (Lithuania), Professor Luboš Tichý (the Czech Republic), Dr. Damjan Možina (Slovenia), Professor Kalvis Torgans (Latvia), Professor Irene Kull (Estonia), Dr. Monika Jurčová (Slovakia), and Professor Christian Takoff (Bulgaria). In addition to the above, well-known experts in the field also made presentations, among them Professor Norbert Reich and Professor Walter van Gerven. As a direct relation to the topic of the conference, the current issue of the journal also offers the reader the articles of Study Group members Professor Eric Clive, Professor Matthias E. Storme, and Professor Kåre Lilleholt, in addition to Dr. Mónika Józson’s article on the development of civil law in Romania and articles by the Estonian jurists Dr. Martin Käerdi, Dr. Margus Kingisepp, and member of the Supreme Court Villu Kõve.

One of the main conclusions drawn at the conference was that, at the present point in time, the CFR is of crucial importance mainly for those of the new Member States that are engaged in reforming their civil legislation. Yet the meaning of the CFR cannot be reduced to only being a means in the legislative drafting of countries. The CFR mainly expresses the development of the concept of civil law in Europe, and in the future the CFR should have a central meaning in the formation of a harmonised judicial area in the European Union. What added most definitely to the conference was that many representatives of the ministries of justice of the European Union’s Member States also attended. One of the major objectives of the conference was to introduce the ideas of the CFR to the representatives of the Member States; this objective was well attained. This issue of the journal also contains the paper by Dr. Norbert Csizmazia, the representative of the Hungarian Ministry of Justice who attended the conference. I would especially like to highlight the contribution made by Professor Hugh Beale, who made three presentations at the conference and, accordingly, is represented in the journal with three articles as well.

In relation to the successful organisation and realisation of the practicalities of the conference, I would also like to express my greatest gratitude, in addition to the speakers and participants, to Professor Christian von Bar and Professor Norbert Reich, whose initiative and ideas made the conference a success. Both Professor von Bar and Professor Reich are the co-editors of this issue of *Juridica International*. My gratitude also goes to Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, the University of Tartu, and the European Legal Studies Institute for financial support in the preparation of this issue of the journal.

Paul Varul