

ACTIVE AGEING AND LABOUR LAW

Contributions in honour of
Professor Roger Blanpain

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FOREWORD

This book is dedicated to professor Roger Blanpain. It is offered to him at the occasion of his 80th anniversary.

It deals with active ageing and labour law. For the European Union, “active ageing means growing old in good health and as a full member of society, feeling more fulfilled in our jobs, more independent in our daily lives and more involved as citizens”. For labour law, it covers a wide variety of issues, such as age discrimination in recruitment and selection, seniority rules, pay and working conditions, or modern concepts such as work-life-balance, involving working time regulations and adjustments made for older people in order to allow them to stay on the labour market. This book has a focus on Europe, both the European Union as well as the member states. However, in the tradition of Blanpain’s school of thought, a global perspective is used including a perspective from the United States.

The European Union has declared the year 2012 as the “European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations”. The year is intended to raise awareness and to stress the positive contribution that older people make to society. This book examines the role that labour law can play in contributing to the agenda of active ageing. It also aims to gain insight on how the active ageing agenda can contribute to the development of labour law.

It is evident that the title of this book, “active ageing and labour law”, is deliberately chosen. There is not only the challenging context mentioned above, but it also seems that Roger Blanpain manages to combine these terms ‘in real life’.

First of all, it is well-known that Roger Blanpain is an ‘active’ person. His activities have a very wide scope. He is known as a teacher, writer, motivator, moderator and debater in the wide labour law community. His energy has boosted many labour law scholars and his academic production is legendary. The number of his books, articles, papers and students is countless and still counting. He made great contributions to the scholarship of labour law.

Secondly, Roger Blanpain can be seen as a lively representative of ‘labour law’. He is not only a great presenter and defender of labour law (and industrial

relations), but he has ‘lived through labour law’ by assuming all kinds of roles on the labour market: student, trainee, assistant, professor, employee, employer, civil servant, emeritus. Most of the time, he has been a unique combination of those functions. But above all, he is and will remain forever, a professor.

Thirdly, one may wonder whether the term ‘ageing’ is really applicable to Roger Blanpain, although, for sure, there is the unavoidable biological factor and a calendar on which we can count the days. But Blanpain’s attitude and spirit have something of an eternal youth. He remains an active labour market participant in high gear. The word ‘retired’ has not yet found recognition in his agenda and, most likely, it never will. Old and young students enjoy his teaching and age will not be a real matter of distinction for him. Instead, creativity and additional value are Blanpain’s most preferred reference points.

It is this combination of professor Blanpain’s uniqueness and characteristics as well as the major challenge of active ageing, in Europe and the world, that inspired us for this book. We hope, in this way, to have brought honour to a great master and a great friend.

Frank HENDRICKX
9 November 2012

ABOUT PROFESSOR ROGER BLANPAIN

Roger Blanpain (° 5 November 1932) is Professor Emeritus of the Faculty of Law of the University of Leuven, Belgium. He has been a visiting professor at the Universities of Florida, Georgia (USA), Illinois (USA), Insead (France), Kentucky, Michigan State (USA), Paris (France), and Sophia (Japan). He is a professor at the Law School of the University of Tilburg (the Netherlands) where he teaches international and comparative labour law, globalisation and international labour law. He is also a visiting professor at the University of Modena (Italy). He is a member of the Flemish Royal Academy (1992–). He has been Dean of the Leuven Faculty of Law (1984–1988) and is Past President of the International Industrial Relations Association (1986–1989), former member of the Belgian Senate (1987–1989) and Honorary President of the International Society of Labour and Social Security Law (2000–2003). He is a doctor *honoris causa* of the University of Szeged, Hungary (1997). Professor Blanpain has been the editor of the *International Encyclopaedia of Labour Law and Industrial Relations* since 1975 and is the general editor of the *International Encyclopaedia of Laws*, the *Bulletin of Comparative Labour Law* and of the book *Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations*.

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