This Journal deals with contract law and serves as a pan-European platform for discussion and analysis. The concept of a European Contract Law is still rather recent: the phrase was first coined in the 1990s. Since the early 2000s when this journal was created, European Contract Law has come to encompass an increasingly comprehensive body of law. There were three driving forces behind this development: the EC harmonisation of laws in the area of the internal market, a generally increased interest in comparative law discussions in contract law, and the European Commission’s Communication on European Contract Law, the Commission’s Action Plan and the Common Frame of Reference process. These developments brought about a changed climate of discussion. The foundations of contract law, examined from many perspectives and in view of various national legal systems and an increasing number of disciplines, are currently being discussed in great detail in the European arena. In 10 years contract law may be the first area of European private law to be regulated in a fully fleshed out European Code.

European Contract Law comprises diverse areas of the law such as sales, standard contract terms, distribution chains, marketing practices, research and development agreements, contract law copyright aspects, financial and investment services contracts, insurance contracts and e-commerce as well as non-discrimination within and beyond labour law and more generally, important aspects of labour contracts and other symbiotic contracts.

The importance and breadth of the field and the methods and questions involved are such that ERCL has established itself as the specialised European journal in this area. Since 2004 the standard of information and discussions on this platform have been consolidated: ERCL discusses the body of law in three sections: articles, case law, and literature on EC Contract Law. This takes place mainly in book reviews and, in addition, contains short sections on the most recent EC legislation, sectoral developments, national developments and other news. The Review focuses on existing law at the EC level and all rules influencing the formation, content and execution of contracts from default rules to regulation, from marketing aspects to the content of contracts, from consumer

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(and also labour) law to general contract law. The Review is open to a variety of approaches and provides the opportunity to read traditional 'dogmatic' explanations of the upcoming and existing law, assessments through comparative law studies as well as economic analysis and discussions of the philosophical foundations and major structural features. The Review is and has been the site of intense discussion of proposals for codification or, more generally, systematisation and comprehensive development of contract law at the EC level. The European Contract Law Code is too realistic an option and much too important not to be thoroughly discussed as transparently as possible with as many competing ideas and approaches as possible. Several special issues have followed this process in great detail. The journal is meant to help in establishing a functional market of ideas in one of the core areas of private law and one of the most important areas of European private law. ERCL is the journal covering this large body of law and the modern solutions to the problems encountered.

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