

# Latest Issue of “Rabels Zeitschrift”

The latest issue of the **Rabels Zeitschrift** (Vol. 73, No. 4, October 2009) is a special issue on the occasion of the 60th birthday of *Professor Jürgen Basedow* and contains the following articles:

- **Dietmar Baetge:** Contingency Fees – An Economic Analysis of the Federal Constitutional Court’s Decision Authorising Attorney Contingency Fees – the English abstract reads as follows:

*In Germany, until recently, contingency fees were prohibited. In December 2006, the legal ban on contingency fees was declared unconstitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht). Implementing the Court’s ruling, the German legislator, in 2008, legalised contingency fees on a limited basis. This paper attempts to analyse the Constitutional Court’s decision from an economic vantage point. The main constitutional reasons given to justify the legal ban on contingency fees are translated into economic terms and further elaborated. Points of discussion include the problem of moral hazard between the lawyer and the judge on the one hand and the lawyer and his client on the other. A third question dealt with in the paper is the extent to which contingency fees may influence the efficient allocation of resources. The paper concludes that access to the instrument of contingency fees should not be limited to poor clients but also extended to affluent persons.*

- **Moritz Bälz:** Japan’s Accession to the CISG – the English abstract reads as follows:

*On 1 July 2008 Japan, as the 71<sup>st</sup> state, acceded to the United Nations Convention on the International Sale of Goods (CISG). As of 1 August 2009, the most important convention in the field of uniform private law will thus enter into force in Japan, leaving Great Britain as the sole major trading nation not yet party to the convention. The article examines the complex reasons why Japan did not accede earlier as well as why this step was finally now undertaken. It, furthermore, offers an assessment of the importance of the CISG for Japan prior to the accession and the impact to be expected from the convention on the reform of the Japanese Civil Code which is currently under way. Finally, it is argued that Japan’s accession nourishes the hope that the*

*CISG will spread further in Asia, thus not only extending its reach to one of the world's most dynamic regions, but also opening up opportunities for a future harmonisation of Asian contract law.*

- **Friedrich Wenzel Bulst:** The Application of Art. 82 EC to Abusive Exclusionary Conduct – the English abstract reads as follows:

*The article addresses recent developments in the application of the prohibition of abuse of dominance in EC competition law. The European Commission has published a communication providing guidance on its enforcement priorities in applying Art. 82 EC to abusive exclusionary conduct of dominant undertakings. Under this more effects-based approach which focuses on ensuring consistency in the application of Arts. 81 and 82 EC as well as the Merger Regulation, priority will be given to cases where the conduct in question is liable to have harmful effects on consumers. After a brief introduction (section I), the author outlines the main elements of the communication and illustrates how the Commission's approach to providing guidance in this area has evolved since the publication of its 2005 discussion paper on exclusionary abuses (section II). The author then addresses the scope of the communication against the background of the case law on the Commission's discretion (not) to pursue cases (section III). The central concept of the communication is that of »foreclosure leading to consumer harm«. Against this background the author discusses, in the context of refusal to supply abuses both in and outside an IP context, the operationalisation of the criterion of harm to consumers (section IV) before concluding (section V).*

- **Anatol Dutta:** The Death of the Shareholder in the Conflict of Laws – the English abstract reads as follows:

*The death of the shareholder raises the question how the law applicable to the company and the law governing the succession in the deceased shareholder's estate have to be delimited. This borderline becomes more and more relevant against the background of recent jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in Centros, Überseering and Inspire Art concerning the freedom of movement of companies in the Community. On the one hand, as a consequence of this jurisprudence the laws governing the company and the succession often differ. On the other hand, the ECJ's jurisprudence might further blur the*

*boundaries between the laws governing companies and successions. The article tries to draw the border between the relevant choice-of-law rules. It comes to the conclusion that the consequences of the shareholder's death for the company and his share are subject to the conflict rules for companies (supra III.). More problematic, though, is the characterisation of the succession in the share of the deceased shareholder. Some legal systems contain special succession regimes for shares in certain private companies and partnerships. The article argues (supra IV.) that the succession in shares has to be dually-characterised and subjected to both, the law governing the company and the succession. Yet clashes between the applicable company and succession laws are to be solved by giving precedence to the applicable company law. The precedence of company law should be clarified by the legislator – by the German legislator when codifying the conflict rules for companies and by the European legislator when codifying the conflict rules for successions upon death (supra V.).*

- **Franco Ferrari:** From Rome to Rome via Brussels: Remarks on the Law Applicable to Contractual Obligations Absent a Choice by the Parties (Art. 4 of the Rome I Regulation)
- **Christian Heinze:** Industrial Action in the Conflict of Laws – the English abstract reads as follows:

*The introduction of a special conflicts rule for industrial action in Art. 9 Rome II Regulation can be considered as a felicitous innovation of European Private International Law. The application of the law of the country where the industrial action is to be taken or has been taken is founded on the public (social) policy concerns of the country where the action takes place and will therefore, in general, obviate the need for any enforcement of this country's strike laws by means of the ordre public or as internationally mandatory provisions (at least as far as intra-European cases are concerned). The major drawback of Art. 9 does not derive from the rule itself but rather from its restriction to »non-contractual liability«. Article 9 Rome II Regulation may therefore designate a substantive law applicable to the non-contractual liability for the industrial action which is different from the law applicable to the individual employment contract (Art. 8 Rome I Regulation) or a collective labour agreement. This may be unfortunate because the industrial action will*

usually have consequences for at least the individual employment contract (e.g. a suspension of contractual obligations) which might be governed by a different law (Art. 8 Rome I Regulation) than the industrial action itself (Art. 9 Rome II Regulation). Possible conflicts between these laws can be resolved by extending the scope of Art. 9 Rome II Regulation to the legality of the industrial action in general, thus subjecting any preliminary or incidental questions of legality of industrial actions to Art. 9 Rome II Regulation while applying the *lex contractus* to the contractual consequences of the action.

- **Eva-Maria Kieninger:** The Full Harmonisation of Standard Contract Terms - a Utopia? - the English abstract reads as follows:

*The article discusses the proposal for a consumer rights directive of October 2008, in which the European Commission suggests to move from minimum to full harmonisation of specific areas of consumer contract law. The article specifically examines whether full harmonisation of the law relating to the judicial control of unfair contract terms, even if politically desirable, will be feasible in the context of non-harmonised national contract law. Examples are presented for cases which were decided differently by national courts on the basis of divergent rules of general contract law. The article discusses whether the Draft Common Frame of Reference (DCFR) can be used by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and the national courts as a common yardstick to measure the unfairness of a contractual term. Two problems present themselves: one is the question of legitimacy because, until now, the DCFR is no more than a scientific endeavour which in part rests on the autonomous decisions of its drafters and does not merely present a comparative restatement of Member States' laws; second, the DCFR makes excessive use of the term »reasonableness« so that, in many instances, its ability to give guidance in the assessment of the unfairness of a specific contract term is considerably reduced. The question of legitimacy could be solved by an optional instrument which could be chosen by the parties as the applicable law.*

- **Jan Kleinheisterkamp:** Internationally Mandatory Rules and Arbitration - A Practical Attempt - the English abstract reads as follows:

*This article treats the impact that internationally mandatory rules of the forum state may have on the effectiveness of arbitration agreements if the claims are*

*based on such internationally mandatory rules but the parties had submitted their contract to a foreign law. The specific problems of conflicts of economic regulation are illustrated and discussed on the basis of Belgian and German court decisions on disputes relating to commercial distribution and agency agreements. European courts have adopted a restrictive practice of denying the efficacy of such tandems of choice-of-law and arbitration clauses if there is a strong probability that their internationally mandatory rules will not be applied in foreign procedures. This article shows that neither this approach nor the much more pro-arbitration biased solutions proposed by critics are convincing. It elaborates a third solution which allows national courts both to reconcile their legislator's intention to enforce a given public policy with the parties' original intention to arbitrate and to optimize the effectiveness of public interests as well as that of arbitration.*

- **Axel Metzger:** Warranties against Third Party Claims under Arts. 41, 42 CISG - the English abstract reads as follows:

*The United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG) provides two regimes for warranties against third party claims. The general rule of Art. 41 establishes a strict liability rule for all third party claims not covered by Art. 42. Article 42 limits the seller's liability for infringement claims based on intellectual property. A seller under the CISG warrants only against third party intellectual property claims he »knew or could not have been unaware« at the time of the conclusion of the contract. In addition, his liability is territorially restricted to claims based on third party intellectual property rights in the countries contemplated by the parties at the conclusion of the contract. This article provides an overview of seller's warranties under Arts. 41 and 42. It examines, more specifically, whether the limited scope of seller's warranties for third party intellectual property claims is efficient and whether it is expedient from a comparative law perspective. Under a traditional economic analysis of law approach, the party who can avoid third party claims most cheaply should bear the risk of infringement claims. This will often be the seller, especially if he has produced the goods or has specific knowledge of the industry. But it may also occur that the buyer is in the superior position to investigate intellectual property rights, e.g. if the buyer is a specialized player in the industry and the seller is a mere vendor without specific knowledge in the field. Article 42 allows an efficient allocation of the risk by the court. The*

party charged with the risk, be it seller or buyer, should not only warrant against third party rights he knew but also for those he could have been aware of after investigation in the patent and trademark offices of the relevant countries or through other resources. Such a duty to investigate may also exist with regard to unregistered rights like copyrights. A strict interpretation of the seller's (or buyer's) duty is in accordance with international standards. Seller's warranties are strict liabilities rules in many countries with an exception in case of bad faith on the part of the buyer.

- **Ralf Michaels:** Rethinking the UNIDROIT Principles: From a law to be chosen by the parties towards a general part of transnational contract law – the English abstract reads as follows:

1. The most talked-about purpose of the UNIDROIT Principles of International and Commercial Contracts (PICC) is their applicability as the law chosen by the parties. However, focusing on this purpose in isolation is erroneous. The PICC are not a good candidate for a chosen law – they are conceived not as a result of the exercise of freedom of contract, but instead as a framework to enable such exercise. Their real potential is to serve as objective law – as the general part of transnational contract law. 2. This is obvious in practice. Actually, choice of the PICC is widely possible. National courts accept their incorporation into the contract; arbitrators frequently accept their choice as applicable law. However, in practice, the PICC are rarely chosen. The most important reason is that they are incomplete. They contain no rules on specific contracts. Further, they refer to national law for mandatory rules and for standards of illegality and immorality. This makes their choice unattractive. 3. The nature of the PICC is much closer to that of the U.S. Restatement of the law. The U.S. Restatement becomes applicable not through party choice but rather as an articulation of background law. Actually, this describes the way in which the PICC are typically used in practice. 4. This use as background law cannot be justified with an asserted legal nature of the PICC (their »law function«). Rather, the use is justified insofar as they fulfill two other functions: the »restatement function« (PICC as description of a common core of legal rules) and the »model function« (PICC as model for a superior law). 5. From a choice-of-law perspective, such use cannot be justified under traditional European choice of law, which designates legal orders, not incomplete codifications, as applicable. 6. By

contrast, application could be justified under U.S. choice of law. Under the governmental interest analysis, the PICC could be applicable to situations in which no state is interested in the application of its own law. Their international character qualifies the PICC for the Restatement (2d) Conflict of laws. Finally, for the better-law theory, according to which the substantive quality of a law is a criterion for choice of law, the PICC are a candidate insofar as they perform a model function. 7. In result, the PICC are comparable to general common law or the *ius commune*, within which regulatory rules of national, supranational and international origin act like islands. 8. Altogether, this results in a complex picture of transnational contract law, which combines national, international and non-national rules. The PICC can be no more, but no less, than a general part of this contract law.

- **Hannes Rösler:** Protection of the Weaker Party in European Contract Law – Standardised and Individual Inferiority in Multi-Level Private Law – the English abstract reads as follows:

*It is a permanent challenge to accomplish freedom of contract effectively and not just to provide its formal guarantee. Indeed, 19th century private law already included elements guaranteeing the protection of this »material« freedom of contract. However, consensus has been reached about the necessity for a private law system which also provides for real chances of self-determination. An example can be found in EC consumer law. Admittedly, this law is restrained – for reasons of legal certainty – by its personal and situational typicality and bound to formal prerequisites. However, the new rules against discrimination are dominated by approaches which strongly focus on the protection of the individual. It is supplemented by national provisions, which especially counter individual weaknesses. The autonomy of national law can be explained by the different traditions with regard to »social« contract law in the Member States. The differences are especially apparent regarding public policy, good faith or breach of duty before or at the time of contracting (culpa in contrahendo). They form another argument against the undifferentiated saltation from partial to total harmonisation of contract law.*

- **Giesela Rühl:** The Presumption of Non-Conformity in Consumer Sales Law – The Jurisprudence of the Federal Court of Justice in comparative

perspective – the English abstract reads as follows:

*The Law on the Modernisation of the Law of Obligations has introduced a large number of provisions into the German Civil Code. One of these provisions has kept German courts particularly busy during the last years: § 476. The provision implements Art. 5 III of the Consumer Sales Directive and provides that any lack of conformity which becomes apparent within six months of delivery of the goods is presumed to have existed at the time of delivery unless this presumption is incompatible with the nature of the goods or the nature of the lack of conformity. The presumption has proved to be difficult to apply in practice: the German Federal Court of Justice (Bundesgerichtshof; hereinafter BGH) alone as issued eight – highly controversial – decisions. And numerous articles, case notes and commentaries have analysed and criticised each and every one of them. It is therefore surprising to see that both the BGH and the German literature refrain from exploiting one very obvious source of information that might help to deal with § 476: comparative law. Even though Art. 5 III of the Consumer Sales Directive has been implemented in all Member States except for Lithuania nobody has endeavoured to analyse its application in other countries to this date. The above article tries to fill this gap and looks at § 476 from a comparative perspective. It finds that courts across Europe apply the provision in the same way as the BGH regarding the exclusion and the rebuttal of the presumption. However, regarding the scope of the presumption, the BGH stands alone with its strict interpretation. In fact, no other court in Europe refuses to apply the presumption in cases in which a defect that occurs after delivery might be the result of a basic defect present at the time of delivery. The article, therefore, concludes that the BGH should rethink its position regarding the scope of the presumption and refer the next case to the European Court of Justice.*

- **Jens M. Scherpe:** Children Born out of Wedlock, their Fathers, and the European Convention on Human Rights – the English abstract reads as follows:

*Unlike in many European countries, only a father married to the mother will automatically have parental custody (elterliche Sorge) in Germany. A father not married to the mother is effectively barred from obtaining parental custody unless the mother agrees, and there is not even the possibility – unlike e.g. in*



*England – for the courts to interfere with the mother’s decision, cf. §§ 1626a, 1672 BGB. The legal rules are based on the – somewhat questionable – assumption that the mother’s motives for refusal of parental custody are based on the welfare of the child. The German statutory provisions have been challenged unsuccessfully in the German Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht; BVerfG). However, the BVerfG voiced some doubt as to the premises upon which these rules rested and has demanded that further development be monitored closely. The vast majority of German academic authors also doubts the constitutionality of § 1626a BGB and are in favour of reforming the law. The matter is now the subject of a case pending at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), Zaunegger v. Germany, in which the applicant claims, inter alia, that his right of respect for family life under Art. 8 ECHR is being violated. In previous cases, McMichael v. United Kingdom and Balbontin v. United Kingdom, challenges of Scots and English law on parental responsibility for fathers not married to the mother have failed. This article critically analyses the legal rules in England and Germany and, based on the differences between them and the relevant case law of the ECtHR, suggests that the Court will find that the German rules are indeed in breach of the European Convention. The article concludes with suggestions for reform.*

- **Wolfgang Wurmnest:** Unilateral Restrictions of Parallel Trade by Dominant Pharmaceutical Companies – Protection of Innovation or Anti-competitive Market Foreclosure? – the English abstract reads as follows:

*The elimination of cross-border barriers to trade as means of encouraging competition in the single market lies at the heart of EC-competition policy. Limitations of parallel trade were therefore treated as restrictions of competition. With regard to the pharmaceutical sector the merit of such a competition policy has been called into question. It is said that the unique features of the market for pharmaceuticals, namely the existence of price regulation at the national level for prescription medicines, makes parallel trade socially undesirable as it does not foster real price competition and undermines investment in R&D to the detriment of the consumer. Hence, unilaterally imposed restrictions of parallel trade by dominant producers, such as supply quota systems, should not be regarded as a violation of Art. 82 EC. This article discusses the legal and economic arguments in favour of a policy shift in light of the recent case Lélos v. GlaxoSmithKline. In this case the European Court of*

*Justice (ECJ) has held that a pharmaceutical company in a dominant position cannot be allowed to cease honouring the ordinary orders of an existing customer for the sole reason that the customer engages in parallel trade, but that Art. 82 EC does not prohibit a dominant undertaking from refusing to fill orders that are out of the ordinary in terms of quantity in order to protect its commercial interests. It is argued that the ECJ was right in denying pharmaceutical companies a general right to limit the flow of pharmaceutical products by unilateral measures as the pro-competitive effects of parallel trade are greater than often assumed.*

- **Nadjma Yassari:** The Reform of the Spousal Share under Iranian Succession Law – An example of the transformability of Islamic law – the English abstract reads as follows:

*It is generally held that Islamic law is a static system of rules, unable to accommodate change. This is especially thought true of family and succession laws that are firmly rooted in a religious foundation. Nonetheless, one can observe in the last decades how active the Iranian legislator has been in reforming its family laws, with the result that a number of traditional provisions have undergone remarkable changes. Most recently, the Iranian Parliament ventured into the field of succession law by amending the inheritance portion received by the surviving wife, which so far had been limited to movables. Under the new regulations, she takes her portion also from immovable property. The previous limitations placed on the inheritance portion of the widow have no base in the Koran, the primary source of Islamic shi'i law, and were deduced from another primary source of law, notably the traditions of the twelve Imams. This article examines the religious foundations of the inheritance rule on the spousal share, its codification in the Iranian Civil Code and the proposed amendments by the Iranian Parliament. It shows how the Iranian Parliament by emphasising another interpretation of the sources has been successful in changing a rule that has prevailed in Iranian law for over 80 years. Without doubt, this reform is a significant step towards the harmonisation of the widow's inheritance share and the elimination of the harsh economic consequences of the rule as it stood. Beyond this effect however it can also be taken as an illustration of the way legal development can be set within an Islamic framework. Moreover, it shows that it is ultimately the intrinsic structure of the sources of Islamic law and the methods by which law*

*is deduced from them that makes reform possible.*