

Max Planck Encyclopedia of European Private Law, edited by Jürgen Basedow, Klaus J. Hopt, Reinhard Zimmermann, and Andreas Stier, published 2012 by Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2 volumes, 2,024 pages



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The **Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law** in Hamburg is dedicated to performing foundational research and promoting the transfer of knowledge in the fields of comparative and international private law and business law. Apart from analysing the differences and similarities of legal systems encountered in both Europe and throughout the world, scholars at the Institute also explore the interaction of private regulation, national legislation, supranational law and international treaties. In an increasingly unified Europe and in view of the process of both globalisation as well as of the resulting internationalisation of law, this is a task of great academic and practical significance.

The Institute maintains one of the world's most extensive collections of legal literature in private law, broadly conceived. The more than 500,000 volumes held by the library form the basis of the academic research conducted by the Institute's staff members as well as the approximately 1,000 guest researchers who travel to the Institute each year from all over the world.

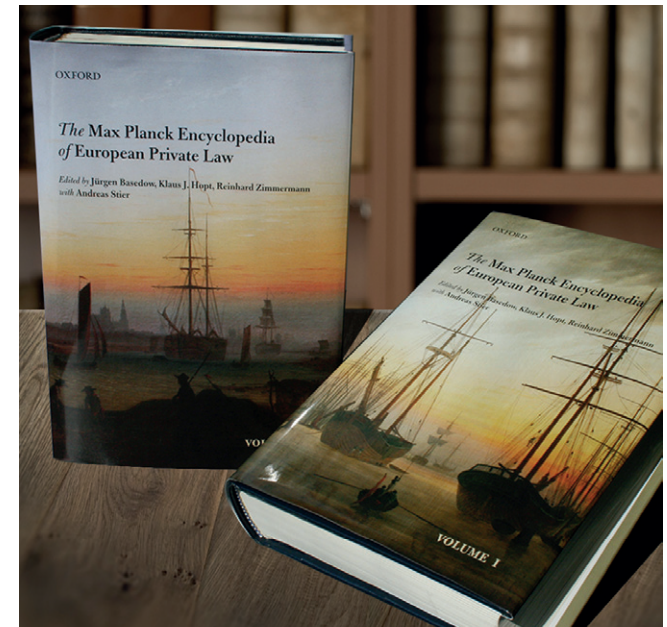
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Max Planck Encyclopedia of European Private Law



RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Europeanisation of Private Law

The emergence of European private law constitutes one of the most significant developments in the modern legal landscape. The legislature of the EU has, however, primarily limited itself to short-term considerations driven by the politics of the day. As a result, the framework of regulations that has been promulgated in the past two decades is fragmentary and fails to demonstrate a systematic or comprehensive concept.

Information and materials in many relevant areas can at present be found only in relatively inaccessible, specialised literature. Moreover, a comprehensive methodical and scholarly consideration of the field is lacking.

The Role of Research in a Context of Increasing Legal Unification

Given this situation, it falls upon legal scholarship to gather European private law in its entirety in order to lay a solid groundwork for a later systematisation. Among other key components, achieving this aim requires an analysis of the historical foundations in comparative perspective.

With the goal of comprehensively gathering and structuring the information accumulated in the field of European private law and making it available to the European legal community, the scholars of the Hamburg Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law have set themselves the task of creating a core reference work.

Realisation of the Project

In a cooperative effort which involved over 120 authors and was coordinated by an editorial team assembled specially for this purpose, the material was researched and organised in the form of keyword entries. The project was thus able to build upon earlier publications of the editors which had been independently completed in their respective fields of legal research.

The project saw the involvement of researchers from all branches of the Institute as well as the participation of former members of staff and external scholars closely associated with the Institute, including former judges of the European Court of Justice.

Orientation for Scholarship and Practice

The project, in the first place, led to the publication of the *Handwörterbuch des Europäischen Privatrechts** in 2009. In 2012 Oxford University Press released the **Max Planck Encyclopedia of European Private Law**.

More than merely a translation of the earlier German version, the Encyclopedia stands as an independent work tailored to the background of international readers. Consistent with the format of an encyclopedia, the two-volume work comprises close to 500 alphabetically organised keyword entries. In view of the complexity of the material, these entries are supplemented by numerous references to acts of legislation, case law of international and European courts and academic literature. Thus, the work will serve as a compass not only for legal scholars but also for practitioners and legislators.

*Handwörterbuch des Europäischen Privatrechts, 2 volumes, 1,991 pages, edited by Jürgen Basedow, Klaus J. Hopt and Reinhard Zimmermann, with Martin Illmer, published 2009 by Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen.

“The advancing unification of private law in Europe requires foundational work of a historical as well as comparative nature. The creation of a systematic body of European law is otherwise unimaginable.”

Reinhard Zimmermann

“The European process of regulation is extensively shaping the legal landscape of the Member States. Today, every legislative project of significance is influenced by EU law.”

Jürgen Basedow

“Much of today’s economic news can only be fully understood against the background of the increasing legal integration of the internal market.

A consideration of the European big picture has become essential”

Klaus J. Hopt