THE FUTURE OF FAMILY PROPERTY IN EUROPE
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Edited by
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The law relating to family property in Europe is at a key stage in its development. Unified conflict of law rules were adopted in December 2010 implementing enhanced cooperation for 14 Member States in relation to divorce, further proposals for the unification of private international law relating to matrimonial property and succession are being developed, and interest is growing in harmonisation of the substantive law itself.

The fourth conference of the Commission on European Family Law (CEFL) held in Cambridge in early April 2010 brought together around 180 participants from 32 jurisdictions in Europe and beyond to address a wide range of issues relating to the future of family property in Europe. This large and diverse group generated a stimulating discussion across the three days of the conference, prompted by the contributions of our conference speakers, most of which are produced in this volume.

The volume consists of eight parts. Part 1 contains the keynote address which began the conference proceedings given by Lord Justice Thorpe, Head of International Family Justice for England & Wales. As was fitting for a European conference taking place in the UK, Sir Mathew Thorpe’s address provoked important debate about the challenges inherent in common law and civil law jurisdictions co-operating in this sphere, a theme taken up again in Part 8, the closing remarks from the local conference organisers Jo Miles and Jens M. Scherpe. Part 2 of the book examines in greater depth the issue of matrimonial property law in Europe, Professor Pintens’ chapter providing an examination of the variety of regimes currently operating in Europe, while Professors Boele-Woelki and Jänterä-Jareborg preview the Commission on European Family Law’s own attempts to develop Principles on which the harmonisation of domestic laws in this field might be based. Part 3 takes us on to the question of party autonomy, both within and without marriage, in the marital context examining the extent to which parties are free by agreement to contract out of the default regime or remedies. Professor Dethloff’s paper surveys the treatment of marital agreements across Europe, while Professor Cooke discusses the issues from the perspective of a law reformer in England & Wales. Professor Garrison brings an American and non-marital perspective to family property, addressing the regulation of cohabiting relationships and the significance of party autonomy in that sphere. Parts 4 to 6 of the volume contain several of the papers from the conference.
workshops, in which early career researchers presented their work on three themes: the protection of older person in the law; freedom of testation and the protection of family members; and child maintenance. Part 7 collects together all of the conference papers, both from plenary sessions and workshops, from the world of private international family and succession law, including Professor González-Beifuss’s survey of European unification of private international law and Dr Dutta’s examination of the draft Succession Regulation.

The conference organisers and editors of this book are immensely grateful to a number of individuals and organisations. The conference was generously supported by funding from the British Academy, and by sponsorship from Intersentia Publishing, the International Family Law Group, Charles Russell, Mills and Reeve, and Mohr Siebeck. The editorial team were greatly assisted by the work of Emily McGregor and Peter Morris. Thanks also to the staff of the Law Faculty at the University of Cambridge, the University Centre catering team, Destination Cambridge, the host colleges, and our conference assistants, without whom the conference would not have run so smoothly.

Katharina Boele-Woelki, Jo Miles and Jens M. Scherpe
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CONTENTS

Preface ......................................................... v
List of authors ............................................. xix

PART ONE – KEYNOTE LECTURE

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF DIVORCE: ENGLAND VERSUS
THE REST OF EUROPE
Mathew Thorpe ............................................. 3

1. Introduction ............................................. 4
2. History ................................................... 4
3. The problem ............................................ 5
4. Solutions ............................................... 6
5. Domestic law reform ................................. 8
6. Transfer ............................................... 9
7. Moore v Moore ....................................... 12
8. Agbaje v Agbaje ...................................... 13
9. Applicable law versus transfer .................... 14
10. Conclusion ......................................... 14

PART TWO – MATRIMONIAL PROPERTY LAW IN EUROPE

MATRIMONIAL PROPERTY LAW IN EUROPE
Walter Pintens ............................................. 19

1. Property relations between spouses: a difference in approach between
civil and common law ................................... 20
2. Default regime ....................................... 21
2.1. Community of acquests in the Romanic legal family and in
Eastern European legal systems ..................... 22
2.1.1. Composition of the categories of property .......... 23
2.1.2. Administration of assets ......................... 25
2.1.3. Liquidation and distribution ..................... 26

Intersentia  vii
2.2. Participation systems in the Nordic and Germanic legal systems . . . 27
   2.2.1. Deferred community .................................................. 27
      2.2.1.1. Nordic legal systems .............................................. 27
      2.2.1.2. Austria ................................................................. 29
   2.2.2. Statutory compensation clause ...................................... 29
      2.2.2.1. Germany ............................................................... 30
      2.2.2.2. Switzerland ......................................................... 31
      2.2.2.3. Greece ................................................................. 32
   2.3. Separation of property .................................................. 32
   2.4. On the way to matrimonial property law and a default regime in
        the common law? ......................................................... 33

3. Marital agreements ............................................................ 37
   3.1. Private autonomy .......................................................... 37
   3.2. Form and procedure ...................................................... 38
   3.3. Binding force ............................................................... 39

4. Comparative perspectives ................................................... 41
   4.1. Default regimes ............................................................ 41
   4.2. Freedom of contract ..................................................... 44
   4.3. The quest for harmonisation ............................................. 45

INITIAL RESULTS OF THE WORK OF THE CEFL IN THE FIELD OF
PROPERTY RELATIONS BETWEEN SPOUSES
KATHARINA BOELE-WOELKI and MAARIT JÄNTERÄ-JAREBORG ............ 47

Introductory remarks ............................................................. 48
1. Preparatory results ............................................................ 49
2. The existing European and international legal framework ............... 49
3. Guiding principles .............................................................. 50
4. Cross-border relationships .................................................... 51
5. Other proposals and the CEFL .............................................. 55
6. Crucial choices and considerations ........................................ 56
7. Structure ........................................................................... 57
8. Concepts .......................................................................... 58
   8.1. Rights and duties ............................................................ 58
   8.2. Community of acquisitions ............................................. 59
   8.3. Participation in acquisitions ........................................... 60
   8.4. Marital property agreements ........................................... 61

Concluding remarks .............................................................. 61
PART THREE – FAMILY CONTRACTS – ISSUES OF AUTONOMY

CONTRACTING IN FAMILY LAW: A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE
Nina Dethloff ......................................................... 65

1. Introduction .......................................................... 67
2. Party autonomy and the consequences of divorce – Divergence and convergence ...................................................... 70
   2.1. Role of party autonomy in view of the different statutory rules –
        The traditional gap ........................................... 70
   2.2. Marital agreements in recent English case law – Narrowing of
        the gap .......................................................... 72
   2.3. Contractual freedom in Continental European matrimonial
        property law – Preconditions and limits ....................... 74
       2.3.1. Formal requirements .................................... 74
       2.3.2. Pre- and post-nuptial agreements ..................... 76
       2.3.3. General rules of contract law ......................... 76
       2.3.4. Special provisions in matrimonial law ............... 79
   2.4. Contractual freedom regarding maintenance and other financial
        consequences of divorce ....................................... 81
3. Autonomy and its boundaries – Perspectives ........................ 84
   3.1. The principle of self-determination ......................... 84
   3.2. The boundaries of contractual freedom ..................... 85
       3.2.1. Their justification ...................................... 85
       3.2.2. The requirement of special provisions ............... 87
           3.2.2.1. Procedural safeguards ......................... 87
           3.2.2.2. Judicial control .................................. 89
           3.2.2.3. Criteria for fairness – fundamental principles of
                        statutory rules as yardstick ...................... 90
               3.2.2.3.1. Compensation for marriage-related
                           economic disparities .......................... 90
               3.2.2.3.2. Consequences for party autonomy ...... 91
                     3.2.2.3.2.1. Limits on waiving
                                      compensation for marriage-
                                      related detriments ......................... 91
                     3.2.2.3.2.2. Consideration of the overall
                                      financial consequences .................. 93
   4. Conclusion ......................................................... 94
### MARITAL PROPERTY AGREEMENTS AND THE WORK OF THE LAW COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES
ELIZABETH COOKE .............................................. 95

1. Introduction ..................................................... 96
2. The Law Commission’s project on marital property agreements .... 97
3. The current law .................................................. 98
   3.1. Separation of property during marriage ..................... 98
   3.2. The law of ancillary relief .................................. 98
4. Marital property agreements: The current law in England and Wales . 102
5. Marital property agreements: The options for reform .............. 103
   5.1. A small step ............................................... 104
   5.2. Going further: The arguments for and against enforceable contracts .................................................. 105
   5.3. Enforceable contracts: The pre-conditions for validity ......... 107
   5.4. Enforceable contracts: The remaining scope for discretion .... 109
6. Conclusion ...................................................... 112

### COHABITANT OBLIGATIONS: CONTRACT VERSUS STATUS
MARSHA GARRISON ............................................... 115

1. Cohabitation and family property law: Tradition and change ....... 116
2. New regulatory regimes: How should we choose? ................... 119
   2.1. Goals and questions ....................................... 119
   2.2. Cohabitation and marriage: The same or different? ......... 120
   2.3. Contract and registration: Can choice ensure fairness? ...... 127
3. Conclusion ...................................................... 136

### PART FOUR – PROTECTION OF OLDER PEOPLE IN LAW

‘LIVING WILL’ LAW UNDER THE GERMAN CIVIL CODE
ALEXANDRA MASCHWITZ ........................................ 141

1. Introduction ..................................................... 142
2. The protection of elderly persons esp. concerning medical care .... 143
   2.1. Rights and interests ....................................... 143
   2.2. National measures ......................................... 144
3. The “living will” in Germany .................................... 146
   3.1. Historical development .................................... 146
   3.2. Legal definition ............................................ 147

Intersentia
3.3. Requirements for a binding living will ........................................... 147
  3.3.1. Capacity to consent ............................................................... 147
  3.3.2. Majority ................................................................. 148
  3.3.3. Written form .............................................................. 149
3.4. Scope of living wills ................................................................. 150
3.5. Legal effects of the living will .................................................. 152
  3.5.1. General rule: Binding ......................................................... 152
  3.5.2. Limits of the binding nature ............................................... 154
3.6. Legal effects of other statements ............................................... 156
3.7. The approach of the German Federal Court of Justice ................. 157
4. Striking a balance ................................................................. 158
5. Conclusion ............................................................................. 159
Annex: German Civil Code ......................................................... 160

THE PROTECTION OF ELDERLY FAMILY MEMBERS AND THE ROLE OF THE STATE: A FAMILY LAW PERSPECTIVE
IRENA MAJSTOROVIĆ ................................................................. 163

1. Changes in definition, the role and the function of a family ............. 164
2. Croatian legislation related to the protection of elderly people ........ 166
  2.1. The Constitution ................................................................. 167
  2.2. International agreements ...................................................... 167
  2.3. Family Act ........................................................................ 168
  2.4. Social welfare Act ............................................................. 169
  2.5. Act on the prevention of discrimination ................................... 170
3. On guardianship, maintenance and protection from family violence as particularly important areas of human rights protection of elderly people ......................................................... 170
4. Guardianship ........................................................................ 172
  4.1. General remarks ................................................................. 172
  4.2. Croatian family law legislation ............................................... 173
  4.3. The role of the state ............................................................. 175
5. Maintenance ........................................................................ 176
  5.1. General remarks ................................................................. 176
  5.2. Croatian family law legislation ............................................... 177
  5.3. The role of the state ............................................................. 179
6. Protection from family violence .................................................. 181
  6.1. General remarks ................................................................. 181
  6.2. Croatian legislation ............................................................. 182
  6.3. The role of the state ............................................................. 183
7. Concluding notes ..................................................................... 184
NON-INSTITUTIONAL CARE FOR SENIORS FROM A CIVIL LAW PERSPECTIVE. A comparative study of housing with services and adult placement in France and Germany

Eleni Zervogianni ................................................................. 185

1. Introduction ................................................................. 186
2. Specialist housing for seniors coupled with services .................. 188
   2.1. General remarks ....................................................... 188
   2.2. Specialist housing with services in Germany ................. 189
      2.2.1. Housing with general support services ................... 190
      2.2.2. Housing with major care and assistance services for dependent seniors ......................... 193
   2.3. Specialist housing with services in France ................... 194
      2.3.1. Logements-foyers ............................................. 194
      2.3.2. Résidences services ......................................... 195
   2.4. Evaluation of the results .......................................... 197
3. Adult placement .......................................................... 198
   3.1. General remarks ....................................................... 198
   3.2. Adult placement in Germany ...................................... 199
   3.3. Adult placement in France ......................................... 201
   3.4. Evaluation of the results .......................................... 204
4. Comparative conclusions .................................................. 204

CARING BY CONTRACT: CARE ARRANGEMENTS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Joëlle Long ................................................................. 207

1. Introduction ................................................................. 208
2. Converting the family home into long term care ..................... 210
3. Care arrangements for older people as a single genus ............ 218
   3.1. Common features ..................................................... 218
   3.2. General issues ....................................................... 219
      3.2.1. The competence of the frail older people .................. 219
      3.2.2. The relationship with care obligations established by the law 223
4. Conclusion ................................................................. 224
PART FIVE – FREEDOM OF TESTATION AND PROTECTION OF FAMILY MEMBERS

BALANCING INTERESTS – HOW MUCH FREEDOM OF TESTATION?
John Asland ........................................... 229

1. Introduction ...................................... 230
2. Balancing of interests under Norwegian inheritance law .............. 235
   2.1. Introduction ................................... 235
   2.2. Inheritance rights for cohabitants .......................... 235
   2.3. Inheritance with free right to dispose *inter vivos* and *mortis causa* 237
   2.4. Minimum inheritance and legitimate portion .................. 239
   2.5. Uskifte ....................................... 241
   2.6. Distribution based on needs ............................ 245
3. Conclusions ..................................... 246

TESTAMENTARY FREEDOM AND CARING ADULT OFFSPRING IN ENGLAND & WALES AND IRELAND
Brian Sloan ........................................ 251

1. Introduction ...................................... 252
2. The purposes of succession law ................................ 253
   2.1. Giving effect to the wishes of the deceased ................. 253
   2.2. The preservation and security of the family ............... 254
   2.3. The welfare of society ............................ 257
   2.4. Summary ....................................... 259
3. Family provision and caring offspring in England & Ireland .......... 259
   3.1. An outline of English and Irish succession law .......... 259
   3.2. General approach to claims by adult offspring .......... 263
   3.3. Care and the deceased’s obligations ..................... 268
   3.4. Care, conduct and neglect .......................... 271
   3.5. The significance of a promise of provision ............. 273
4. Conclusions and scope for development in the law .................. 275

PART SIX – CHILD MAINTENANCE

THE LINK BETWEEN CHILD MAINTENANCE AND CONTACT
Branka Rešetar ...................................... 279

1. Introduction ...................................... 280
2. (Non-)linking between contact and maintenance in some European legal systems ........................................ 282

Intersentia xiii
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1. German law</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Croatian law</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. English law</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4. Swedish law</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5. Comparative conclusion</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Results of interdisciplinary research</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conclusion</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PARENTAL MAINTENANCE OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS CHILDREN IN CENTRAL EUROPE: THE HIGHWAY TO HELL OR A STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN?

**Martin Kornel** .................................................................................................................. 297

Summary .................................................................................................................................... 298

1. Introduction ....................................................................................................................... 298
2. Soviet law as the new family law paradigm (1945–1963) ........................................... 299
3. Continuity with variations (1963–1989) ......................................................................... 303
4. Family law after the transition (1990–2010) ................................................................. 305
5. Are we going to hell or to heaven? .................................................................................... 308

THE PRE-HARMONIZATION AREA: A COMPARISON OF LITHUANIAN, LATVIAN AND ESTONIAN CHILD MAINTENANCE LAWS

**Gediminas Sagatys** .............................................................................................................. 311

1. Introduction ....................................................................................................................... 312
2. Historical background ....................................................................................................... 313
2.1. The period of Soviet occupation ................................................................................. 313
2.2. Family legislation after the restoration of independence ............................................ 315
3. Child maintenance law ...................................................................................................... 316
3.1. The creditor .................................................................................................................. 317
3.2. The debtor ..................................................................................................................... 319
3.3. The courts’ discretionary powers ............................................................................... 320
3.4. Forms of child maintenance ......................................................................................... 322
3.5. Minimum amount of child maintenance ....................................................................... 324
4. Conclusions ........................................................................................................................ 325
**PART SEVEN – UNIFICATION OF PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL FAMILY LAW**

**THE UNIFICATION OF PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW IN EUROPE: A SUCCESS STORY?**

Cristina González Beilfuss .......................................................... 329

1. Introduction ................................................................. 330
2. Is complexity the price that has to be paid? ................. 332
3. The relationship between European private international law and national substantive and procedural law .................. 335
4. Private international law unification and legal diversity .......... 338
5. Final remarks ............................................................. 340

**THE EUROPEANISATION OF INTERNATIONAL SUCCESSION LAW**

Anatol Dutta ............................................................... 341

1. The European succession project ..................................... 342
2. Three general questions ................................................ 346
   2.1. A monist or a dualist approach? .................. 346
   2.2. The nationality or residence principle? .......... 347
   2.3. Freedom to choose the applicable law? ...... 350
3. The scope of the future European lex hereditatis .............. 354
4. Some special issues .................................................... 356
   4.1. Protection of family members and ‘clawback’ provisions ...... 356
   4.2. Testamentary dispositions: Formal validity. ........ 357
   4.3. Testamentary dispositions: Existence, material validity, effects and interpretation ........................................ 357
   4.4. Testamentary trusts and statutory trusts upon intestacy .... 358
   4.5. Rights of the State in heirless estates and simultaneous deaths .... 358
   4.6. Administration of the estate .............................. 358
5. Interaction with neighbouring conflict rules ...................... 359
6. Annex: Selected legal materials ....................................... 361
   6.2. Hague Convention on the law applicable to succession to the estates of deceased persons of 1989 .............................. 362
# Contents

**FREEDOM OF TESTATION AND THE PROTECTION OF THE FAMILY IN PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW**

Pia Lokin .................................................. 369

1. Introduction ........................................... 370
2. The Hague Convention and the future European Regulation on Succession ........................................... 372
   2.1. The Hague Convention ........................................... 372
   2.2. The future European Regulation on Succession ................. 374
       2.2.1. Report by the German Notary Institute .................. 375
       2.2.2. European Parliament ........................................... 376
       2.2.3. The European Succession Proposal .................. 376
3. Conclusions ........................................... 380

**EU SUCESSION REGULATION: CHOICE OF APPLICABLE LAW AND PROTECTION OF FAMILY MEMBERS**

Anna Wysocka ........................................... 383

1. Introduction ........................................... 384
2. Applicable law – General rule ........................................... 387
3. Choice of the applicable law ........................................... 390
   3.1. Protection of family members by excluding the possibility to choose the applicable law .................. 391
   3.2. Protection of family members by providing an exhaustive list of laws that may be chosen by the future deceased .................. 393
   3.3. Protection of family members by limiting the implications of the choice of the applicable law by the deceased .................. 399
   3.4. Protection of family members by referring to public policy ................. 402
   3.5. Protection of family members by following special rules provided in the Member States’ private international law ................. 404
4. Conclusion ........................................... 405

**INTERNATIONAL CHILD MAINTENANCE IN EUROPE**

Philip Bremner* ........................................... 407

Introduction ........................................... 408
1. The new Hague Child Maintenance Convention ................. 410
2. The 2009 Special Commission ........................................... 413
3. Enforcement under the EU Maintenance Regulation ................. 416
4. Relationship between the EU Regulation and the Hague Convention ........................................... 417
Conclusion ........................................... 419

xvi

InterSentia
PART EIGHT – CLOSING REMARKS

THE FUTURE OF FAMILY PROPERTY IN EUROPE
Jo Miles and Jens M. Scherpe ................................. 423

1. Common law meets civil law ........................................... 424
2. Shared social and legal policy challenges ......................... 425
3. Matrimonial property and maintenance: Joint or several issues? ...... 426
4. A special domestic problem: The family home .................... 428
5. The scope for autonomy ............................................. 429
6. Private international law .......................................... 431
7. Conclusions – and the road ahead .................................. 432
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Intersentia
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xx

Intersentia
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