Introduction: The Labour-Environment Nexus - Exploring New Frontiers in Labour Law*

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This special issue is the result of a scholarly dialogue in which the guest-editors and the article contributors engaged in the context of the international symposium "The Labour-Environment Nexus: Legal Perspectives and Beyond". The special issue contributes to the existing labour law literature on the labour-environment nexus by charting new territory and populating this emerging field of inquiry within labour law — a field which provides fertile ground for re-examining established concepts and boundaries within our area, exploring its relationship to and interaction with other disciplines, and its transformative potential. After presenting the background to this special issue, and setting out some key research questions for the debate, the guest-editors provide an overview of the main issues addressed in the articles, concluding with an outline for a future research agenda in the field of the labour-environment nexus.

Keywords: labour law, environment, just transition, sustainable development, sustainability

1 AN EMERGING FIELD IN LABOUR LAW

Since its early conceptualization and the publication of an influential edited volume in 2013,¹ the field of environmental labour studies has reached maturity and visibility across several social science disciplines. Critical scholars in sociology, political science, economics, history, geography and anthropology have engaged in a vibrant debate about patterns and trajectories to deconstruct the idea of labour
What this special issue is about

1. Why should labour law be concerned with environmental issues?
2. How does labour law interact with the environment crisis?
3. How does the environmental crisis affect labour law and working conditions?
4. How can labour justice and environmental sustainability be reconciled?
The papers

1. Simon Deakin
   - Ania Zbyszewska and Flavia Maximo
   - Elise Dermine

2. Sandra Fredman
   - Ana Gomes, Anil Verma and Dieric Guimarães
   - Belén Olmos Guipponi

3. Frances Flanagan
   - Tonia Novitz
   - Sergio Canalda Criado

Key messages and claims

- Rebalance production and reproduction
- Decolonize labour law
- Rethink labour law beyond productivism
- Regressive effects of climate policies and rising inequalities across different axes
- Ensure inclusion and protection of different groups of vulnerable workers
- Rethink the idea of a just transition
- Recognise the imperative of fossil fuel cessation and the inequality of bargaining power of actors involved
- Include labour concerns in human rights litigation on climate change
- Guarantee effective workers’ voice and participation in corporate restructuring towards climate neutrality
The goals of this webinar

1. To present, discuss and disseminate the main findings of the special issue
2. To emphasise and reflect on the implications of such findings for unions and industrial relations institutions
3.1.3. Building an economic model based on the ‘sustainability first’ principle and fighting inequalities in Europe and globally must be the ETUC’s priority. Sustainability means thinking holistically in a way that bases the economy on respect for the planet and on social justice. The Europe we want must deliver a social-ecological transition that answers environmental change with social progress. This requires a change in our economic model moving away from the current focus on growth and consumption. It means directing the economy and employment towards achieving sustainability, equality, well-being and the collective good.
Skills for labour and environmental justice

Online course (MOOC)
8 January - 18 February 2024