

■ PREFACE

Harald Eberhard & Konrad Lachmayer

Accountability, Constitutional Reform and Minority Rights

In our second issue of 2008, we once more offer a broad range of topics. At the outset we attempt to mark out the parameters of constitutional reform. Beyond this very special perspective we also go into more general questions of international constitutional law.

Peter Slominski deals with a core element of democracy in a multilevel system of constitutions: Accountability. From a political science perspective he analyzes what lessons can be learned from an interdisciplinary approach. Thereby, he mainly focuses on the different levels of EU law.

The second article is an introduction to Austrian Federal Constitution. Anna Gamper had designed a comprehensive roadmap about the different aspects of Austrian Constitutional Law in a comparative perspective. Her focus particularly lies on aspects like the degree of flexibility of constitutional law with regard to possible amendments and the functional aspects as well as the interaction of the basic principles of the Austrian Constitution.

The recent reform of Austrian Constitutional Law and its framework is illustrated by the article of Harald Eberhard and Konrad Lachmayer. At the beginning of this year an important amendment of the Austrian Constitutional Act (B-VG) was set into force (BGBl I 2008/2). The act is the first result of a committee on constitutional reform which has taken up its work in early 2007. The article analyzes the amendment and its implications of this first step of constitutional reform in Austria and highlights also the historical perspective of this process.

In the rubric "Constitutional Developments in Austria" we want to deal with a special aspect of fundamental rights in Austria: Minority Protection. After some introductory comments of Joseph Marko, different aspects and recent developments, especially with regard to the jurisdiction of the Austrian Constitutional Court, are analyzed by the articles of Michaela Salamun, Valerie Leskovar, Marianne Pasterk-Reisinger and Alexander Klingenbrunner.

Last but not least, we would like to draw your attention to two books on fundamental rights: "Liberty and the News" by Walter Lippmann on the one hand and "Poverty and Fundamental Rights: The Justification and Enforcement of Socio-Economic Rights" by David Bilchitz on the other hand. Henn-Jüri Uibopuu and Gregor Heißl give us insights into these recent publications in the field of International Constitutional Law.

Happy reading!

Harald Eberhard & Konrad Lachmayer