

MODERNISING CIVIL LIABILITY LAW IN EUROPE, CHINA, BRAZIL AND RUSSIA

Non-contractual liability, stemming from damage accountably caused to another, has been the subject of the PETL and DCFR-VI European reform initiatives. Gert Brüggemeier, however, proposes alternative reforms which, instead of trying to overcome the differences between civil law (delict) and common law (torts), are restricted to civil liability. The focus is on the grounds of accountability, and stricter forms of liability are at the fore. Quasi-strict enterprise liability is introduced to fill the lacuna between personal fault and forms of strict liability. A commentary is included on recent legislation on civil liability in China, Brazil and Russia to demonstrate how these large countries try to come to grips with the challenges of 'risk society'.

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MODERNISING CIVIL LIABILITY LAW IN EUROPE, CHINA, BRAZIL AND RUSSIA

Texts and Commentaries

GERT BRÜGGEMEIER

Foreword by
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FOREWORD

It is characteristic of the author of this book, Gert Brüggemeier, to design and present comprehensive reviews of legal subjects, mainly in the law of liability, and this has been at the centre of his academic work. In his research, he combines the past with the present and the future, and discusses national, European and global law in conjunction with each other. He had an early interest in the Europeanisation and transnationalisation of laws, exploring the divergences and convergences of legal cultures and mentalities, linking liability, insurance and social security and, beyond that, law and economics.

For a description of the author's research activities, see the preface to the *Liber Amicorum Gert Brüggemeier* (A. Colombi-Ciacchi, C. Godt, P. Rott and L. J. Smith, eds. (Berlin: Nomos, 2009), 7–8).

The present work displays the same comprehensive approach. After presenting a Draft Bill of his own on civil liability laws, the author combines this with two European reform proposals and links them to three recent legislative codes from outside the EU (China, Brazil, and Russia). In the Draft Bill, he combines basic assumptions of the past (fault liability for wrongful conduct) with basic developments in the present (enterprise, professional and States, stricter and strict liability) and develops a middle ground between the (French) general clause approach and the (German) enumerated-interest approach. He stresses the importance of the method of judicial application and development, supplementing the instrument of legislative norm making.

It is only in one area that the author does not take such a comprehensive approach. That is where he chooses to focus on the civil law of delict and does not try to develop all-embracing principles that would be valid for both the civil law of delict and the common law of torts. Such a general approach, mainly between the French, German and English legal systems, is applied, for example, in the casebook *National, Supranational and International Tort Law* (W. van Gerven, J. Lever and P. Larouche, eds. (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2000)), *but* in a totally different context. The purpose of a case or sourcebook is indeed to assemble materials from



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different legal systems, both civil and common law, to demonstrate to readers, especially law students and law teachers, the similarities and dissimilarities between the main legal orders, and to familiarise them with these differences. This is particularly important in EU Member States, where transborder relations are manifold and the mutual understanding of different legal mentalities is the essence of education. However, such an all-embracing effort is not, or not entirely, appropriate when it comes to designing a common draft of legislation that requires homogeneity of sources and uniformity in outcome. In such a situation, like the one dealt with in this book, it would have been precocious, and practically impossible, to depart from a large variety of European sources in constructing an entirely coherent and consistent Draft Bill, and, moreover, to place it in a remarkable transcontinental perspective, as the author intended to do and has done.

A preface is not destined to give an overview, but to emphasise what, in the prefacer's view, is essential in the book. Taking account of what is mentioned above, such an essential point is, in my view, how the author – by comparing and describing various components from national and transnational, European and transcontinental laws – recognises the most striking feature of contemporary legal systems: their pluri-national origin and, even more importantly, their multi-level composition within the European and international structure. Allow me to develop this point a little more. The plurality of laws in a multi-layered context leads to the increased necessity of finding and applying principles - such as precedence and the 'Solange' exception,* conformity of interpretation, subsidiarity and efficiency – enabling multi-level legislators, certainly within a structured entity such as the EU (but also China, Brazil and Russia), to distribute the normative function between levels of regulation, that is, to devise, so to speak, a new kind of conflict of law, now containing not only reference rules for (horizontal) multi-lateral but also (vertical) multi*level* situations. The work recorded in this book will be of great help in the devising of such principles of inter-normativity. Indeed, although the author, as he indicates in the foreword, is 'notoriously sceptical of European initiatives to unify private law' - and rightly so - he has undertaken the difficult task of working out a model bill of liability

^{*} BVerfG, 29 May 1974, BVerfGE 37, 271 – *Solange* 1; BVerfG, 22 October 1986, BVerfGE 73, 339 – *Solange* 11.



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law, not just with elements drawn from a purely European context, but also from 'abroad', in order 'to contribute to the ongoing transformation process of the modern law of delicts/torts and to participate in the designing of a modern civil liability law for the twenty-first century'. It is a major merit of this book that it allows the reader to make acquaint-ance with the law of delict in the Chinese, Brazilian and Russian civil codes, and to place the European proposals in a much broader perspective Another advantage is that it is the work of one person – not a team effort – who has a coherent view of what the law of delict should be, and has, during his academic life, acquired a vast and coherent knowledge of civil liability laws around the world.

Walter van Gerven, Leuven





PREFACE

Although notoriously sceptical of European initiatives to unify private law, the idea to create a model bill on civil liability law arose when I served as a legal consultant to the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress in China from 2006–9. The Committee was engaged in drafting an Act on civil liability law as book VIII of the new Chinese Civil Code. In the meantime, Dr Zhu Yan from Renmin University, Beijing, spent one year under my mentorship as German chancellor fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Germany. His research project involved modelling a Draft Bill of a Chinese law of delict: so, I was dragged into it! We organised a one-year international seminar at the law faculty of Bremen University. I drafted a continental European law-based model bill on liability law, which drew extensively on the legal experiences of Western industrial societies during the last century. Zhu Yan added the Chinese aspects. We published this Draft Bill, together with a commentary and translations of the Bill's text in other languages, in Germany (Entwurf für ein chinesisches Haftungsgesetz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) and in China (中国侵权责任法--学者建议稿及其立法理由,北京大学出版社, 北京 2009). In December 2009, the Standing Committee passed the Act on the Law of Delict of the People's Republic of China; and it came into force on 1 July 2010.

With the Chinese legislative process finished, this English publication aims to address a broader international audience. This goes back to the original intention of the 2009 book: to contribute to the ongoing transformation process of the modern law of delict/torts and to participate in the designing of a modern civil liability law for the twenty-first century. Therefore, the Chinese particularities have been removed from the book. The text of the Draft Bill has been slightly revised; and the commentary has been thoroughly rewritten. Part 2 now contains the two European proposals for a modernised civil liability law: Principles of European Tort Law (PETL) and Book VI of the Draft Common Frame of Reference (DCFR). These serve as the main sources of reference and critique



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throughout the commentary of the Draft Bill. Part 3 contains sections of additional materials on the non-contractual liability of the recent codifications of three important non-European states – China (2009), Brazil (2002) and Russia (1996), with short commentaries. Their law of delict is generally neglected in the current EU-centred legal discussion in Europe and its accessibility is sometimes difficult. But all three private law regimes have two things in common. On the one hand, they are modelled on the Romano-Germanic civil law of delict, i.e. they are embedded in the legacy of nineteenth-century civil law and are still open to further European influence. On the other hand, in the final analysis, they are non-European, i.e. they are quintessentially Chinese, Brazilian and Russian. That makes them unique, but also provides a ground for mutual learning.

The subject-matter of this book is non-contractual liability stemming from damage accountably caused to another. This slightly modified definition is taken from the heading of Book VI of the academic Draft Common Frame of Reference. Unlike the two European endeavours (PETL and DCFR-VI), which intend to harmonise and modernise noncontractual liability law by combining the civil law of delict and the common law of torts, this reform proposal remains rooted in civil law. It does not aim to overcome the differences between civil law and common law by creating a 'new' (hybrid) body of law, for which even an appropriate name is missing. Here, we deal with the civil law of delict and not with law of torts. That is why recent Brazilian, Chinese and Russian legislation is under additional consideration here. Nevertheless, the principles and concepts developed in this book may also serve as a source of inspiration for common law tort discourse, especially for reconceiving the innominate tort of negligence. Finally, notwithstanding this, the term civil liability law has been coined instead of law of delict because 'delict' is historically bound to individual fault liability. Today, fault is just one ground of accountability, alongside others, in the field of non-contractual liability law; and its relevance is still shrinking. Multiple forms of no-fault liability have come to the fore, next to functional equivalents to liability law, such as social security. To this extent, this civil law reform initiative operates under the heading of liability law.

Gert Brüggemeier, Bremen



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I thank Ms Leslie Rose for the permission to reprint parts of her English translation of the Brazilian Civil Code, published by Renovar, Rio de Janeiro. Mr A. Pittrich from Sellier European Publisher, Munich, sent me the electronic version of book VI of the DCFR, and from Mr T. Thiede, European Group on Tort Law in Vienna, I received the electronic version of the PETL; thanks to both individuals and institutions. The parts of the Chinese and Russian civil code have been taken from the official government websites.

I am very grateful to the persons who, at different times during the long process of the making of this book, helped to bring different parts of the text into readable English: Eric Engle, Carol Forrest, Monika Hobbie and Rory Brown. The very final linguistic check was made by Patrick O'Callaghan, Newcastle. To his loyalty I owe a lot. Finally, I thank Walter van Gerven, Leuven, for writing a flattering preface. Antje Kautz, once again, made an excellent job of producing the final manuscript for the publisher. I thank her for being so skilful and reliable.

I dedicate the book to Zhu Yan, Beijing, who initiated the whole project.

Gert Brüggemeier, Bremen, September 2010

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ABBREVIATIONS*

ADHGB Allgemeines Deutches Handelsgesetbuch

ABGB Allgemeines Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (General Civil Code of

Austria) of 1811

AC Law Reports, Appeal Cases

AcP Archiv für die civilistische Praxis

All ER All England Law Reports

ALI American Law Institute

ALR Allgemeines Landrecht für die Preußischen Staaten (General

Law of the Prussian States) of 1794

ArbG Arbeitsgericht (Labour Court of First Instance)
ARS Arbeitsrechtliche Sammlung (Labour Law Reports)

Art./Arts. Article(s)

BAG Bundesarbeitsgericht (Federal Labour Court)

BAGE Sammlung der Entscheidungen des Bundesarbeitsgerichts

(Reports of the Decisions of the Federal Labour Court)

BB Der Betriebs-Berater

BG Bundesgericht (Federal Court of Switzerland)

BCC Brazilian Civil Code

BGB Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch von 1896/1900 (German Civil Code)
 BGBl. Bundesgesetzblatt (Austrian/German Federal Gazette)
 BGE Sammlung der Entscheidungen des schweiz. Bundesgerichts

(Reports of the Decisions of the Swiss Federal Court)

BGH Bundesgerichtshof (German Federal Court of Justice)
BGHZ Sammlung der Entscheidungen des Bundesgerichtshofs in

Zivilsachen (Reports of the Decisions of the Federal Court in

Civil Cases)

BVerfG Bundesverfassungsgericht (German Federal Constitutional

Court)

BVerfGE Sammlung der Entscheidungen des Bundesverfassungsgerichts

(Reports of the Decisions of the Federal Constitutional Court)

BW Burgerlijk Wetboek (Civil Code of the Netherlands)

Cal. L Rev. California/California Reports
Cal. L Rev. California Law Review

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^{*} Law journals are in italics.



XXIV LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Cass. Cour de Cassation (French Supreme Court)

Cass. ass. plén. Decision of the Plenary Division of the Cour de Cassation Cass. civ. Decision of a Civil Division of the Cour de Cassation

C. civ. Code Civil (French Civil Code)
CCRF Civil Code of the Russian Federation
CDC (Brazil) Consumer Defence Code

CEO Chief Executive Officer

Ch. Law Reports, Chancery Division

ch. chapter

ChinALL Chinese Act on Liability Law

Cir. Circuit Court (US Federal Court of Appeals)

CLP Current Legal Problems

CMLR Common Market Law Reports

CML Rev. Common Market Law Review

Colum. L Rev. Columbia Law Review

COM Document of the European Commission
Const. RF Constitution of the Russian Federation
CPA (Russian) Consumer Protection Act 1992
DCFR Draft Common Frame of Reference

De Paul L Rev.

De Paul Law Review

Diethylstilbestrol

Diss.

Dissertation

DJT Deutscher Juristentag (German Lawyers' Convention)

EBLR European Business Law Review

EC European Community

ECHR European Convention of Human Rights

ECJ European Court of Justice
ECtHR European Court of Human Rights

ECR Reports of the Decisions of the European Court of Justice and

of the European Court of First Instance

ed./eds. editor(s)

Edin. LR Edinburgh Law Review

edn Edition

EEA European Economic Area
EHRR European Human Rights Reports
ERPL European Review of Private Law

EU European Union

Exch Law Reports, Court of Exchequer (1865–75)

F. Federal Reporter

FAS Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung

FAZ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

fin. final version



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

XXV

Ga. Georgia/ Georgia Reports

gen.ed./eds. general editor(s)

GG Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1949

(German Federal Constitution)

GPCL (Chinese) General Principles of Civil Law

GS Großer Senat (Plenary Division of a German Federal Court)

HAVE/REAS Haftung und Versicherung/Responsabilité et Assurance

HL House of Lords

HR Hoge Raad (Dutch Supreme Court)

ICLQInternational and Comparative Law QuarterlyIECLInternational Encyclopedia of Comparative Law

Journal of Environmental Law I Environmental L IBlJuristische Blätter (Austria) J Comp. L Journal of Comparative Law J Consumer Policy Journal of Consumer Policy JurisClasseur Périodique **ICP JETL** Journal of European Tort Law J Legal Stud. Journal of Legal Studies **IPIL** Journal of Personal Injury Law

jur. Jurisprudence

JuS Juristische Schulung

JZ Juristenzeitung

KI Kritische Justiz

KritV Kritische Vierteljahresschrift für Gesetzgebung und

Rechtswissenschaft

LGDJ Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence

LQR Law Quarterly Review

LR Law Reports

MJ Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law

MDR Monatsschrift für Deutsches Recht

MLR The Modern Law Review

Motive Zum Entwurf eines Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuches für das

Deutsche Reich

n. footnote

NE North Eastern Reporter
NGO non-governmental organisation
NJB Nederlands Juristenblad

NJW Neue Juristische Wochenschrift (1947-)

NuR Natur und Recht

NY New York/New York Reports

NYUL Rev. New York University Law Review

NZV Neue Zeitschrift für Verkehrsrecht



XXVI LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

No/no numero

OJ L/C Official Journal of the European Union (Legal Acts series/

Communication series)

OLG Oberlandesgericht (Austrian and German Court of Appeal)

OR Obligationenrecht (Swiss Code of Obligations)

P Pacific Reporter

p. Page

PEL Liab. Dam. Principles of European Law: Non-Contractual Liability Arising

out of Damage Caused to Another

PETL Principles of European Tort Law

pp. Pages

PQA (Chinese) Product Quality Act
PRC People's Republic of China
QB Law Reports, Queen's Bench

RG Reichsgericht (German Imperial Court –1945)
RGZ Sammlung der Entscheidungen des Reichsgerichts in

Zivilsachen (Reports of the Decisions of the Imperial Court in

Civil Cases)

RSRSR Russian Socialist Soviet Federated Republics

RvdW Rechtspraak van de Week (Dutch Weekly Law Reports)

s. section

SCR Supreme Court Reports (Canada)

SE South Eastern Reporter

StGB Strafgesetzbuch (German Penal Code)

trans. translator(s)

UKHL Reports of the Judgments of the House of Lords (for the United

Kingdom)

v. versus

Va. L Rev. Virginia Law Review VersR Versicherungsrecht

vol./vols. volume(s)

Washburn LJ Washburn Law Journal
WLR Weekly Law Reports

WPNR Weekblad voor Privaatrecht, Notariat en Registratie

ZEuP Zeitschrift für Europäisches Privatrecht ZSR Zeitschrift für Schweizerisches Recht