

The concept of soft law has intrigued legal researchers for many decades. It is a concept that is perhaps most often associated with international law, though even the origins of the term are uncertain. Soft law is also a factor in the autonomous and supranational legal order of the European Union - though the EU is much more known for its 'hard' legislative competence and even a tendency to 'overregulate.' Meanwhile, the status and relevance of - and various actors' reliance on - EU soft law is far from being a simple issue. In her monograph, Petra Lea Láncoš undertakes to provide a thorough and multifaceted analysis of EU soft law.

The monograph starts by taking stock of existing research on the subject, clarifying that there is a definite need for a systematic examination of EU soft law. But why adopt soft law in the first place? The author answers this difficult question by analysing the underlying strategies of adopting non-binding norms in the EU. The author gives insight into how Member States, EU legislative bodies, and the CJEU use soft law, providing illustrative examples predominantly from the field of media law. CJEU case law is analysed further in light of the practical effect of soft law, where the bottom line of the Court's approach seems to be that measures that are not legally binding cannot be regarded as having no legal effect at all. This view partly overlaps with the 'spectrum approach' also mentioned in the monograph. The author devotes considerable attention to the peculiar phenomenon of what she calls 'directive-like recommendations', which, regardless of their non-binding nature, often proclaim a desire for implementation. In her case study, she investigates the Hungarian legislative approach to these measures, an added value in particular for non-Hungarian researchers. This is followed up in the chapter dealing with the use of EU soft law in the Member States, offering an overview of the 'reception' of soft law in specific policy fields such as competition policy.

This monograph is a welcome addition to the relatively scarce research on EU soft law, and can be recommended to anyone who wishes to immerse themselves in the subject. With a firm grip on both theory and practice, Petra Lea Láncoš' work can be useful for academics and practitioners alike.

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PETRA LEA LÁNCOS

THE MANY FACETS OF EU SOFT LAW

Petra Lea LÁNCOS: The Many Facets of EU Soft Law