

Laudatio ad Silvana Sciarra

Colleagues in the Labour Law Research Network and friends, it is a great honour for me to have been given the role of conferring and celebrating the Achievement Award for which Professor Judge Silvana Sciarra has been so justly selected. It is a choice made by the Selection Committee which has been welcomed by the members of the Labour Law Research Network to an extent equalled only by our approval of the other award to Professor Manfred Weiss, about which and about whom you will hear from Nicola Smit very shortly.

Time is too short for a full chronicle of Silvana Sciarra's life and achievements, and in any case it is important to avoid any possible sense of epitaph which would be seriously premature, but here are a few key points.

Her career development reads like an itinerary of some of the great university cities of Italy, and eventually Europe and North America too. She was and is a child of Bari, where she took her law degree, writing her dissertation under the supervision of Professor Gino Guigni, and taking up her first teaching position there.

I think it would be fair to say that Professors Gino Giugni and Bill Wedderburn were the two labour law scholars who most influenced Silvana's intellectual development; but she quickly acquired her own authentic voice in legal scholarship as she progressed through the various grades of professorship at the University of Siena, becoming a full professor there in 1986.

Then there were the famous years as the Professor of Labour Law, and for a time as Head of the Law Department, at the European University Institute in Fiesole and afterwards at the University of Florence itself; and those tenures have been interspersed with Visiting or External Fellowships or Professorships at UCLA, Warwick, Columbia, Cambridge, Stockholm, Lund, Rome and University College London.

Throughout these posts and postings and the challenges and vicissitudes of family life, Silvana has created and maintained a constantly impressive output of books, articles, and public lectures. Rather than attempting to catalogue them, I will point out their most significant qualities. I think that of all the Italian labour law scholars, she was among the very first to become accustomed to writing in English and to addressing her work to a truly international audience.

Her work has always been very innovative in its choice of subject-matter, for example in her work on franchising, which I found immensely useful when starting to consider the links between labour law and the law of work more generally. She has always been keenly aware of the importance of European labour law, and a very significant contributor to the development of its human and social rights dimension, via the European Social Charter, and the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights, and, in a different sense, through the jurisprudence of the Strasbourg Court and the Luxembourg Court.

Selection among so rich a scholarly output is bound to be invidious, but at the risk of being so I should nevertheless like to concentrate attention for a moment on an especially valuable aspect of Silvana's work, namely her enormous talent for creating and running innovative projects of research and writing. I should like to single out the results of two such projects; firstly, the symposium volume which she edited on *Labour Law in the Courts*, and the second on *Public Services and Citizenship in European Law – Public and Labour Law Perspectives* which came out of a symposium at the EUI in which I was also involved. It was a moment in my own intellectual life in labour law which I look back upon with real nostalgia for the gathering of ideas which Silvana was bringing about at the EUI.

Perceptive as you all are, you will probably have detected where all this is tending, or trending as some of our younger colleagues might possibly say. While I do not want to suggest that the whole of Silvana's career has been heading towards its present culmination – and still less that she designed it so – we can with hindsight see the in all this makings of her present eminence and the way in which all roads have led to Rome. There is the international reputation, but one which is firmly grounded in Italian law. There is the enduring interest in the law in the courts, and the gradual turn towards public law. We were all hugely greatly impressed by Silvana's recent elevation to being one of the Judges of the Corte Costituzionale della Repubblica Italiana ; but should we in retrospect have been surprised? I suggest not.

There is, moreover, a good reason why the international fraternity of labour law scholars should have been especially excited by this development. One of our constant aspirations as labour lawyers is to contribute to the constitutionalisation of labour law. I only need to invoke the fact that we are all the guests of the Sinzheimer Institute to remind you of this. This is a baton which every foot-soldier of labour law

carries in her or his knapsack, in terms of ambition at least. Few of us manage to realize this aim, but Silvana seems to be on a high road towards doing so. I hope that the Award which we are conferring today will join the Honorary Doctorates awarded to her by the Universities of Stockholm and Hasselt in encouraging her along that path and recognizing how far she has already travelled along it.