BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES

DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF LAW

Labor Law: Between Continuity and Transformation

Associate Professor Phd. Radu – Ștefan PĂTRU

Bucharest

- 2026 -

The habilitation thesis, titled **Labor Law: Between Continuity and Transformation**, is structured in three parts, in accordance with the Guidelines for Preparing the Habilitation Thesis issued by the National Council for Attesting Titles, Diplomas and University Certificates.

The first part, titled **Scientific, Professional, and Academic Achievements Subsequent to Obtaining the Doctoral Degree**, outlines the key professional and scientific achievements attained after acquiring the doctoral degree in law.

An analysis of the scientific activity reveals a coherent research trajectory focused on examining the fundamental institutions of labor law.

The work Collective Labor Contracts and Agreements, published by Hamangiu Publishing House in 2014, serves as the starting point; in it, I explored the aforementioned legal institutions in depth, as well as others regulated for the first time by the Romanian legislator—such as various agreements, conventions, and understandings concluded by the parties based on the principle of mutual recognition.

The findings of my post-doctoral research were published as a monograph by Wolters Kluwer Publishing House, titled The Exercise of Collective Rights of Employees/Workers in Romanian Law.

In doing so, I sought to identify the origins of workers' collective interests within labor relations and to trace their evolution—from the moment they first garnered the legislator's attention and received statutory recognition to the present day—while also considering potential future developments amidst the transformations characterizing contemporary society, driven primarily by technological progress.

The aforementioned monograph confirms the growing interest in researching collective labor relations through a comprehensive approach that describes the current situation while also looking toward the future evolution of labor relations.

In my Labor Law Course published by Universul Juridic Publishing House, I analyze the key institutions of both individual and collective labor law, focusing on specific elements that lend a unique character to the research—namely, the status of foreign workers, atypical contracts, and the role of new technologies in labor relations.

These aspects highlight another research focus: the protection of employees and workers within labor relations.

In this context, I also address issues regarding the constitutionalization and Europeanization of law in general—and labor law in particular—noting a contribution that has been pivotal to my professional and academic career: the book chapter titled Relations between the Constitutionalization and the Europeanization: On the Example of Personal Rights and Matrimonial Law – Romanian Experiences, published by Brill Nijhoff in 2025.

Another research direction involves analyzing how labor law interacts with other branches of law—particularly civil law—with a focus on the autonomy and independence of labor law within the Romanian legal system.

I have presented the results of this line of research in published course materials as well as in a chapter included in an edited volume published by the international publishing house C.H. Beck Verlag (Poland).

The title of the aforementioned chapter is: Controversies regarding the relationship between Civil law and Labour law in the Romanian legal system, in Rafał Szczepaniak (Ed.), Problemy Pogranicza Prawa Cywilnego / Boundary Problems of Civil Law, Wydawnictwo C.H. Beck Warszawa, 2022.

The transformation of employment relationships driven by mobility, digitalization, and new technologies constitutes a key pillar of my scientific research, given the significant role new technologies play in labor relations.

In this context, analyzing essential legal instruments—such as Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 (known within the European Union as the AI Act) and Directive (EU) 2024/2831 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 on improving working conditions in platform work—has been a priority in my research.

These analyses go beyond the mere text of the law; they also examine case law from EU Member States, which has shaped potential protective measures for workers performing tasks involving new technologies.

The second part, titled **Directions for the Development of a Scientific and Academic Career**, addresses future scientific and academic activities.

This part is structured in two sections: in the first, I analyze the evolution of my academic career—including the process of obtaining the habilitation—highlighting the vocational commitment characteristic of professors who reach this professional milestone; in the second, I outline future research directions, as follows:

1) The development of labor law in the context of digitalization and artificial intelligence

2) Artificial intelligence and the employment relationship

3) Algorithmic management and worker protection

4) Collective rights in the digital economy

5) Occupational health and safety in the context of new technologies

Beyond these specific directions, I intend to maintain a consistent presence in legal scholarship by publishing textbooks/treatises, monographs, and articles in specialized journals—both domestically and internationally—thereby upholding the tradition I have honored throughout my twenty-year academic and scientific career.

At the same time, a priority is to continue participating in conferences and European projects related to labor law.

The third part contains **the bibliographic references associated with the habilitation thesis**.