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Book Review

Labour Law Status of Port Workers **ISBN 978-953-7722-71-5**



In December 2025, ZIRS d.o.o. published a book (manual) by Professor Marinko Đ. Učur, PhD entitled *Labour Law Status of Port Workers*. The publication comprises 217 pages in B5 format. In addition to the preface, introduction, extensive bibliography, list of contributions and the author's dedication, the book includes five chapters in which the author examines the specific characteristics of employment relationships in port work.

Numerous changes across all areas of social life, including legal relations in general, are reflected employment relationships of port workers, which are clearly distinguished from other forms of employment. This differentiation arises from the

specific nature of the port as an employer, the particularities of concluding employment contracts, the mobility of port workers during the course of the employment, the content of the employment relationship itself, and the methods and organization of port work. Port activities are carried out using modern port technologies within technologically equipped port facilities, including port warehouses, crane systems and container terminals. Increased occupational risk, the complexity of work processes and the use of heavy machinery make strict compliance with safety standards essential, requiring the systematic application of occupational safety measures and the mandatory use of appropriate personal and collective protective equipment.

The aim of the book is to clarify the normative framework governing the labour relations of port workers, identify problems in the application of relevant legal regulations and propose scientifically grounded solutions for their improvement. To achieve this objective, the author examines and analyses the labour law status of port workers in six comprehensive, logically structured and thematically interconnected sections.

In the first part, *Introduction*, the author outlines the basic research hypotheses and objectives, emphasizing the importance of regulating the employment relations of port workers in seaports. Particular attention is given to the Labor Act as a general legal framework governing employment relations, alongside the need for special regulations that take into account the specific nature of port work.

The second part, entitled *Framework and Basis of the Project*, provides an overview of the regulations and institutions responsible for governing the employment relations of port workers. This section establishes the legal and organizational foundation for further analysis of the specific aspects of the employment status of port workers. It also explains the fundamental concepts on which the study is based, such as the place of work, seaports, port activities, transport, traffic, and navigation. These concepts are examined not only from a legal perspective, but also in terms of their functional and organizational roles within the port and transport systems.

The third part of the book, *Specificities (Peculiarities) of Port Work and Port Workers: A Conceptual Approach*, is devoted to an analysis of the distinctive characteristics of port and transport work in seaports. The author considers port work through the lens of port operations and the organization of work processes, as well as the broader seaport working environment, including its relationship to the sea as both a transport route and a natural resource. Special emphasis is placed on work organization, safety measures and occupational health protection, highlighting the increased and specific risks to which port workers are exposed. The author therefore underscores the necessity of ensuring an adequate level of worker protection, both through an appropriate normative framework and its consistent implementation in practice.

The fourth part of the book, entitled *Collective Labor Law and Interest Disputes*, focuses on mediation and arbitration in collective labour disputes, as well as other mechanisms for resolving conflicts between trade unions and employers. Depending on their legal nature and the subject matter, the author distinguishes between legal

and interest disputes. Particular emphasis is placed on strengthening the protection of workers' privacy and dignity and on ensuring a higher level of legal and social security in employment relations. In this context, the rights of workers and employers to associate, agreements between works councils and employers, and the role of workers' assemblies as instruments of collective protection and stabilization of employment relations are thoroughly examined.

The fifth part of the book, entitled *Collective Agreements and Other Autonomous Acts of the Employer*, analyses collective agreements as autonomous normative instruments that regulate working conditions from the establishment to the termination of employment. Special attention is given to a collective agreement in a seaport, with a focus on provisions governing occupational safety and health protection in the specific and high-risk port environment. This section also examines work regulations and internal organizational rules of ports as instruments of internal standardisation that, in addition to organizing work processes, prescribe safety procedures and preventive measures. The author analyses collective agreements and work regulations with particular emphasis on the rights and obligations of port workers in the field of occupational safety, highlighting their role in improving workplace safety, preventing occupational risks and ensuring a higher level of legal security for employees.

The sixth part of the book, entitled *Regulation and Implementation of Occupational Safety and Health*, is the most extensive section of the monograph and is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the normative, organizational and practical aspects of occupational safety and health protection in the port environment. The author examines the occupational safety system through three interconnected dimensions: regulation, implementation and supervision. Particular attention is given to national laws and bylaws, as well as to internal employer regulations that define obligations in the field of occupational safety. This section is grounded in a detailed analysis of occupational safety regulations using a seaport as a case study, thereby linking theoretical considerations with practical applications. Such an approach provides valuable insight into the actual implementation of prescribed measures, including risk assessment, work organization, employee training and the use of technical equipment and personal protective gear. The author also evaluates the compatibility of the national regulatory framework with European Union and international occupational health and safety standards. Further analysis focuses on the practical application of prescribed measures, including work organization, training of workers, the use of technical resources and personal protective equipment, and preventive procedures aimed at reducing occupational risks. The section concludes with an examination of supervision mechanisms for occupational health and safety, emphasizing the responsibility of employers and competent authorities. The protection of workers' health and safety is highlighted as a fundamental prerequisite for the sustainable and safe functioning of the port system. This chapter concludes with an overview of occupational injuries in seaports.

The book (manual) *Labour Law Status of Port Workers* by Prof. Marinko Učur, PhD represents a significant and valuable contribution to Croatian legal scholarship,

particularly in the field of labour and maritime law, as well as in a broader interdisciplinary context encompassing occupational health and safety, work organization, and transport systems. The author analyses the specific features of port workers' employment relationships in a systematic and methodologically sound manner, taking into account their legal, economic, and technical dimensions, as well as the inherently risky and organizationally complex nature of port work.

Although the book primarily focuses on the Croatian legal system, its conclusions and recommendations extend beyond the national context and may be relevant and applicable in other countries with developed maritime and port sectors. The work's particular value lies in its treatment of contemporary and socially significant issues, such as occupational health and safety, collective labour relations, and the application of European and international standards, which gain a growing importance in the context of globalization and the intensification of international trade.

Rather than remaining at the level of purely theoretical analysis, the author supports his arguments with concrete examples and practical recommendations, offering clear guidelines for improving the labour status of port workers and enhancing the effective application of legal regulations in practice. As such, the book achieves dual value – as a scientifically relevant study and as a practically applicable manual – and can be highly recommended to scholars and students, as well as legal practitioners, social partners and decision-makers in the fields of port operations and the maritime economy.