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Family Reunification: International, European and National Perspectives



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Preface

It is well known that family reunification is one of the fundamental elements of international and national policies concerning the protection of immigrants' and refugees' rights. Traditionally considered as a way of legally gaining access to States, it continues to be one of the main driving causes for migration, also within Europe.

With this in mind, generally, this book is devoted to the study of the current legal framework relating to family reunification. More specifically, it contains the results of an international and interdisciplinary research project that involved scholars and academics from different disciplines who shared their legal expertise in the field of immigration and refugee law.

This project has been promoted and conducted within the institutional context of the University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt and the Association for the Study of the World Refugee Problem (AWR), an international scientific association that, since 1951, has been committed, through its research activity, to raising awareness and promoting the rights of refugees and immigrants.

This study comprises two different but related sections. The first section is dedicated to a critical analysis of the international legal standards concerning family reunification. In this context, the investigation was conducted through a multi-level approach and mainly taking into account the law and the practice of the United Nations Organization, the Council of Europe and the European Union; special emphasis, *inter alia*, has been put on the practice of several United Nations human rights treaty bodies and the jurisprudence of regional courts, such as the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The second section focuses on the national legislations, policies and practices of several European countries (Austria, Germany, Hungary and Italy). The main aim of this latter part of the study is, on the one hand, to illustrate the current state of the legal regulation regarding family reunification at the national level and, on the other hand, to assess its consistency with international obligations and European law. Last but not least, this investigation also aims to identify cases of national best practices, in the perspective of strengthening and favoring family reunification.

All contributions have been subject to scientific review.

The editors would like to express their appreciation and acknowledgments to all authors for their *pro bono* participation to the research project; without their patience, cooperation and enthusiasm for the project this book would not have been possible. Gratitude has to be extended also to the AWR, which funded the printing costs of this international research.

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