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Comparative Law Symposium: Is There a European Advantage in Criminal Procedure: Preface

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IS THERE A EUROPEAN ADVANTAGE IN CRIMINAL PROCEDURE?

PREFACE

*Carl M. Selinger**

This symposium issue of the *West Virginia Law Review*, entitled *Is There a European Advantage in Criminal Procedure?*, is made up of papers (in some instances considerably expanded versions of papers) presented at the program of the Comparative Law Section of the Association of American Law Schools, at the association's January 1998 annual meeting in San Francisco.

The subject of comparative United States-European criminal procedure could hardly be more timely. Some thoughtful commentators believe that public confidence in our own criminal justice system was left badly weakened in the aftermath of the O.J. Simpson case. Subsequently, following the death of Princess Diana, the public had an unusual opportunity to see the French system in action. And even more recently, there was considerable transatlantic discussion about the Louise Woodward case.

Professor Albert Alschuler, of the University of Chicago, who introduces the symposium, has written extensively and critically about United States criminal procedure. And the authors of the three papers, Professor William Pizzi, from the University of Colorado, Professor Gordon Van Kessel, from the University of California's Hastings College of the Law, and Professor Richard Frase, from the University of Minnesota, are outstanding among the new generation of comparative criminal procedure scholars.

Many members of the public clearly believe that there is much room for improvement in our criminal justice system. Are we, as lawyers, really sure that they are wrong? Is there anything for us to learn from the Europeans? Read these papers, and make up your own mind.

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