Preface

The main purpose of this book is to address the issue of precarious work in Europe, where the proliferation of new types of employment without the whole spectrum of rights associated with the standard employment relationship has engendered considerable labour market fragmentation and social polarisation. Precarious work, such as in the ‘gig economy’, poses unique challenges to the European social model of secure employment and decent social protection. To address these challenges, we seek to analyse the reasons for the spread of precarious work in various countries in Europe, to explain the different types of precarious work and to make proposals to address this phenomenon through improved labour regulation and practice.

Having developed the concept for the book, a group of leading scholars in the field of international and comparative labour law came together at an international seminar held in Lodz in March 2017. Following a stimulating exchange of ideas at Lodz, a followup seminar was held in Lund in April 2018. These seminars contributed to improving our comparative understanding of precarious employment and offered insight into the potential methods of regulation needed to address it at European and national level.

As editors, we are very grateful to the contributors for their commitment to the book at an early stage and for following up by producing excellent chapters in good time for publication. Thank you all for your ideas, inspiration, collaboration and camaraderie.

We are grateful to Professor Zbigniew Góral who suggested the topic and strongly supported the organisation of the Lodz seminar. We wish to thank Dr Anna Piszczek and Dr Marcin Mielczarek for their invaluable involvement in preparation and coordination. We are grateful to Professor Mirosław Włodarczyk for his invaluable support, and also the Rector of the University of Lodz, the Dean of the Faculty of Law and the Administration of the University of Lodz. We wish to express our gratitude to Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych (the Polish Social Security Institution) for their financial support for the event.

We owe special thanks to Professor Annamaria Westregård for organising the seminar in Lund, and to Forte – the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare, for their financial support for this event. We would like to thank the University of Lund for their support and hospitality.

We are grateful to Edward Elgar Publishing for their excellent guidance and work on the book, and especially our Senior Commissioning Editor, Ben Booth, and Assistant Editor, Amber Watts, for commissioning the book and seeing its potential at a very early stage.

Finally, Professor Jeff Kenner would like to place on record his gratitude to his coeditors, Dr Izabela Florczak and Dr Marta Otto, for being the driving force behind the project and its timely delivery.

Izabela Florczak, Jeff Kenner, Marta Otto
Lodz and Nottingham
December 2018