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Between politics and administration : compliance with EU Law in Central and Eastern Europe

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PREFACE

I first encountered the concept of *transposition* when I was seven. My piano teacher explained that *transposition* is the process of moving notes up or down by a constant interval so that the tune remains the same but the key (tonality) is changed.

Little did I know back then that later in life the study of *transposition* would preoccupy my days for more than four years. The context of my research on transposition, however, would not be music, but the intersection of EU politics, administration and law. In the European Union, transposition is the process of adoption of appropriate national measures with which to implement a common European directive. As removed as it is from musical transposition, transposition of EU law still resembles playing a common tune simultaneously in different tonalities. In the real world of EU governance, however, member states are often out of tune, and out of tempo. This book explores the adaptation of several new players – the former communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe – to the common EU orchestra.

The main argument of the book is that, although generally successful, the adaptation of the CEE countries to EU rules exhibits exciting variation across time, policy areas, and countries. I find that compliance with EU law is rarely a subject of heated political discussions; more often than not, it is a matter of routine bureaucratic policy-making. Nevertheless, political factors do influence the content, timing and tempo of transposition. Hence, the main title of the text – ‘Between Politics and Administration’.

This book could not have been written without the help and assistance of many individuals and organizations. First of all, the Public Administration department at Leiden University has been a superb place to work. I would like to thank all current and former AiOs and members of the department for creating a pleasant and stimulating working environment. Special words of gratitude go to Michael, Frank, Toon, and Brendan for being such wonderful officemates. I am also indebted to Michael and Frank for guiding me through the academic world in the beginning of my PhD tenure.

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My PhD research was running in parallel with the intermediate and final stages of a large inter-university NWO-supported project on the transposition of EU legislation. This fact was simultaneously a blessing and a curse for me. It was a curse in as much as I had to play catch-up with a team of bright and very motivated scholars who basically transformed the field of EU compliance studies with their research. At the same time it was a blessing because I had the rare opportunity to exchange ideas with all these scholars on a continuous basis and to learn from their experiences. I can only name here Sara Berglund, Ieva Gange, Markus Haverland, Michael Kaeding, Ellen Mastenbroek, Cees van Kersbergen, Mark Rhinard, Marleen Romeijn, and Frans van Waarden. I also benefited a lot from participating at the seminar on transposition hosted by Leiden University in 2006.

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