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Guidance documents of the European Commission in the Dutch legal order

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Preface

This PhD thesis studies how guidance documents of the European Commission come to play a role in the implementation process in the Dutch legal order. It is the product, or symbiosis of two different perspectives taken in the two master's theses I wrote before writing the research proposal for the current research. Europeanisation theory took centre stage in the master's thesis I wrote at the College of Europe in Bruges and which sought to explain and measure the impact of 'governance through European administrative soft law'. The master's thesis I wrote a year earlier in Leiden as part of the master's programme Constitutional and Administrative Law took a different view: it studied, from a legal perspective, the relationship between 'soft law' and the Dutch principle of legality.

During the writing of this PhD thesis, I balanced on the edge of different worlds. With a background in both Dutch administrative law and political science and a strong interest in European Union law, I have been able to explore each of these three worlds.

I operated in 'the world of EU law' in various ways: I attended a summer course at the European University Institute in Florence and conducted a five-month internship at the European Commission where I witnessed the issuing of numerous guidance documents and drafted a 'guide for guidance'. Since November 2015 I am a member of the board of the Dutch Association for European Union Law where I work with enthusiastic EU lawyers, and since October 2019 I am exploring the world of EU law as a member of the editorial board of the Dutch Journal for European Union Law. These experiences have allowed me to study, discuss and advance my knowledge of EU law.

My background in political science has helped me to explore the world of studying law in practice, whilst using insights from literature on Europeanisation. This led me to various courses on empirical research methods. I followed an ECPR summer course in Ljubljana on process tracing, as well as courses organised by Leiden University on qualitative interviewing and on qualitative empirical research methods. These courses and the many conversations on how to conduct qualitative research provided me with the tools to eventually make my own decisions on the methods that best suited the research question in this thesis.

Based at the Department of Constitutional and Administrative Law in Leiden, I have been able to explore the reception of EU law in the Dutch legal order from a 'bottom-up perspective'. I taught courses on Dutch administrative law and European administrative law and was given the opportunity to be involved in developing and coordinating the Summer Course on the Europeanisation of administrative law in the Member States.

Abbreviations

ABRvS	Afdeling Bestuursrechtspraak Raad van State
AG	Advocate General
CBb	College van Beroep voor het Bedrijfsleven
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
DG	Directorate-General
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
EFA	Ecological Focus Area
FMP	Free Movement of Persons
GALA	General Administrative Law Act
IACS	Integrated Administration and Control System
IND	Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst
IP	Implementation Plan
LPIS	Land Parcel Identification System
LTO	Land- en tuinbouworganisatie
MN2000	Managing Natura 2000
JRC	Joint Research Centre
PB.	Provinciaal Blad
RVO	Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland
Stcrt.	Staatscourant
Stb.	Staatsblad
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

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