Acknowledgements

I dedicate this book to Professor Ingrid Opdebeek for her support, encouraging words and above all her kindness, which have made my work so much more agreeable.

Thanks are due to the various other academics with whom I have had interesting debates on the topic of autonomous public bodies, and especially to Professor Pierre-Olivier de Broux, Professor Patricia Popelier, Professor Richard Rawlings, Professor Steven Van Garsse and Professor Sjoerd Zijlstra.

Thanks also go to the reviewers appointed by Edward Elgar and to the series editors for their useful comments and suggestions.

Thanks to my colleagues at the University of Antwerp, for making the university such a pleasant working environment for me, and to my friends who have supported me throughout the process.

My husband, Cedric, himself a lawyer, often volunteered to hear my arguments and ideas before I put them on paper. I thank him for his honest opinions and for being the wind beneath my wings in all my endeavours.

My parents and other family members (especially Bobonne Kiel, Ata, Tiny, Vincent and Caroline) deserve my sincere gratitude for offering me the opportunities to pursue my dreams and for their continuous belief in me.

Finally, with this book, I hope to honour my grandmother, Tie Van Cappellen or Bobonne Kampelaar, who passed away a week before I finished this manuscript. May she rest in peace.