Preface

This book is the joint effort of two colleagues who continue to be fascinated by the collapse of communism in 1989 and the developments that it triggered in the vast region of Eastern Europe and the successor states of the Soviet Union. The transition to a fully-fledged market economy embedded within a democratic order proved difficult, and the journey is far from over for many of the countries involved. For scholars working in the humanities and social sciences, including within the discipline of International Relations (IR), this is grist for the mill (or, as the Germans would say, *gefundenes fressen*).

The authors have wanted to write a book about the relations of the European Union (EU) with post-socialist countries for some time. They have also wanted to explore the role that the EU was able to play in the implementation of the comprehensive reforms that were needed. Although some of these reforms have been successful, others have met with outright failure. Researching how and why these often-unexpected outcomes have come about of some reforms has been a fascinating challenge for research. It is the authors' hope that, in addition to informing readers on this topic, this book will be a source of joy to them.

Writing a book is often regarded as a solitary activity. On the contrary, it is a shared mission that requires the indispensable input of many different people. First, the authors would like to thank Mark van Kranenburg, Anastassia Konobrodska and Anjeza Llulla for their outstanding assistance in helping them uncover relevant EU documentation. They are also extremely grateful to the colleagues in the Department of International Relations at the University of Groningen (Netherlands) for their critical feedback and comments. At times, they merely provided a space for listening, but their very presence has been truly inspiring. In particular, the authors would like to mention Malcolm Campbell-Verduyn, Clara Egger, Greg Fuller, Menno Kamminga, Marek Neuman, Senka Neuman-Stanivukovic, Lukas Linsi, Saliha Metinsoy, Gerda van Roozendaal and Herman Voogsgeerd. They would also like to thank the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of the Johns Hopkins University in Bologna, Italy. In addition to providing a fruitful and hospitable academic and research environment, the faculty and staff of SAIS Europe have vigorously promoted the research for the book by providing an excellent platform for debate. The authors are particularly grateful to Amina Abdiuahab, Ludovica Barozzi, Heather D'Ann Kochevar, Justin O. Frosini, Mark Gilbert,

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Many others have obviously been highly supportive in the making of this book. It is impossible to mention all of them. The preface of a book is often full of many admissions of guilt to loved ones, given that the demands of writing often prevent authors from meeting their duties at home. Such breach of duty undoubtedly applies to the authors of this book as well. In this case, however, gratitude and apologies will have to be shared at the dinner table.

Nienke de Deugd and Herman W. Hoen,
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