Preface

The *Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe* provides the reader with standard handbook information on voting behaviour, cabinet formation, electoral and constitutional arrangements in 13 Central and East European countries from 1989–90 and onwards. But it is not just a handbook in the conventional sense of that term. The country-specific chapters have political cleavages as a common theme, and the handbook thus offers in-depth analyses of the changing cleavage structures in Central and Eastern Europe since the breakdown of communist rule. In the introductory and concluding chapters, the three editors make an attempt to apply a macro-level perspective to the process of democratic consolidation in the region.

The second edition of the *Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe* is based on the same concept as its predecessor, and many of the contributing authors are familiar from the 1998 version of the handbook. Their respective contributions have been updated, and in many cases rewritten completely on the basis of the current state of knowledge. Two separate authors – professors Zdenka Mansfeldová (Prague) and Kevin Deegan-Krause (Detroit) – now cover the Czech Republic and Slovakia in two separate chapters, and three new countries – Croatia, Serbia and Moldova – have been added to the long list of post-communist countries included already in the first edition of the handbook.

The successful completion of this book project must be attributed to the contributing authors. The editors want to avail themselves of this opportunity to thank all the contributing authors for their dedication and perseverance. The editors are also indebted to the Tercentenary Fund of the Swedish National Bank and to the universities of Bergen and Örebro for providing funding for an authors' meeting in Örebro in February 2003. The editors also remain indebted to the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) and Professor Hans-Dieter Klingemann at the Science Center in Berlin (WZB) who helped pave the way the first edition of the handbook.

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