Preface

The Research Handbook in International Economic Law provides a broad survey of issues in the regulation of international economic activity. Our primary goal in producing the book is to provide an up to date and accessible survey of the law and policy issues in each area. Each of the authors is an expert in his or her field, and each chapter offers both a survey of the state of the law and an analysis of current issues. Several chapters are devoted to the regulation of international trade, evidencing the extent to which international cooperation in that area has outstripped most others. Other chapters discuss international investment, commercial law, tax, finance, competition policy, intellectual property, environmental law, telecommunications, and private dispute settlement.

Individually the chapters offer thoughtful and sophisticated discussions of these individual areas. Collectively they illustrate the wide range of strategies that have been and should be adopted to meet the challenge of regulating international business activity. They also demonstrate how varied international cooperation is across fields. It is highly developed and formalized in, for example, international trade and tax. In other areas, such as competition policy, there is only modest cooperation among states. In some areas, such as dispute resolution, there is heavy reliance on domestic institutions to make international transactions possible, while in other areas such as the environment there is greater emphasis on international instruments.

Given the diversity of relevant issue areas it should not surprise us to observe that states have chosen to adopt a variety of strategies in their interactions. It is our belief, however, that a better understanding of issues across all of these areas will give a richer sense of the regulatory choices that are available and inspire new and more effective ways of managing international activity. We hope that this book will facilitate that endeavour.

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