Series editor's preface

Advances in biotechnology raise regulatory issues that both quantitatively and qualitatively differ from anything that regulators have had to deal with in the past. *The Regulatory Challenge of Biotechnology*, the first book in this series, explored some of the most pressing of these challenges in agricultural and medical biotechnologies.

The title of this monograph, *EU Regulation of GMOs*, might suggest that this second volume in the series represents a highly specialised account of the regulation of genetically modified organisms in the European Union. Indeed, GMO regulation, especially within the foggy institutional context of the European Union, is spectacularly technical and complex, and hence to some extent invites such a specialised account.

However, one major argument that Maria Lee forcefully articulates in this volume, is precisely that stalemates in the regulation of GMOs in part are the inevitable result of exclusive reliance on different kinds of specialisation such as scientific risk assessment and patent law, and on European technocracy more generally. It is therefore particularly important that this book, apart from containing a strong argument in favour of public involvement at various stages of the regulatory process, amounts to the kind of accessible and holistic account of current EU policy as regards GMOs that is needed to facilitate such public participation.

Although this volume concerns EU law pertaining to GMOs, each chapter is doing justice to the reality that its proper understanding necessitates an appreciation of the institutional and political context from which those legal provisions arise. This is true in respect of risk regulation, labelling, coexistence, and the EU's regime on the patentability of GMOs. Finally, although not so long ago many EU lawyers could perhaps still afford to remain ignorant about WTO law, this certainly no longer applies to those who deal with GMOs. Chapter 6 therefore most appropriately is devoted to the WTO, which operates from a paradigm that is distinctly different from that of the EU, which is likely to continue to remain a source of conflict for the foreseeable future.

In sum, there is every prospect that this book will de-mystify and expose the fascinating world of GMO regulation to a new audience and provide a new perspective for those already familiar with the subject. That this is much needed will be hardly open to debate after this important book.

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