

Preface

This book presents the results of long-standing research interests of the editors and the contributors. A major part of the content is based on a research project led by Guenther Schaefer at the European Institute of Public Administration in Maastricht. This project, ‘Governance by Committee, the Role of Committees in European Policy-Making and Policy Implementation’, was launched in 1999 and has been financed by the European Commission as part of the EU’s 5th Framework Programme, ‘Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge Base’.

The project co-ordinator was the European Institute of Public Administration and five partners participated – the Centre of European Law at Kings’s College London, Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Bordeaux, Université Montesquieu Bordeaux IV, Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Rennes, Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna and University of Cologne Jean-Monnet Chair for Political Science. The aim was to generate new knowledge with regard to the practical procedures and processes in the EU policy-making process, challenging some of the existing theories of the day – by means of extensive and thoroughly empirical research.

This volume can be seen as an extension and expansion of that original research project. Authors have updated their initial findings and related areas that were not included in the original project have been added. The material on specific types of committees has been put into the context of a wider analytical structure that includes themes such as deliberation vs. strategic bargaining; formalisation vs. informality in EU policy-making; and related normative concerns about good governance in the EU.

Now that the book is published, we feel it is important to stress the contribution of Guenther Schaefer – without his initiative, enthusiasm, hard work, leadership and charm this project would not have been as successful as it was and this book would certainly never have been written.

The volume has been a long time in the making, and we would like to thank all the members of the original research team for their patience and their willingness to revise and update their chapters after sometimes long intervals during this journey. We are equally grateful for the contributions from those who signed up to the book at a later stage and had to adapt

their work to an already existing framework. Everyone has always been very understanding and supportive of the demands from the editors. Irina Dettmann at EIPA helped us enormously in bringing the various chapters together, formatting the text and preparing everything for the submission of the final manuscript – a major task that was executed meticulously and professionally. At a later stage, Filiz Hayirli also provided much appreciated editorial assistance.

We owe a note of thanks also to the staff at Edward Elgar, who have been a model of good cooperation and support for editors and authors. Special mention must be made of Alex O’Connell for her patience, unwavering support and constant good spirits; and of Edward Elgar himself, who, from the moment the proposal for a book was made, was fully behind our project.

We hope that all who have contributed to the making of this book are as satisfied with the result as we are. Above all we hope that the reader will find this a useful and topical addition to the literature on the European Union.

Thomas Christiansen and Torbjörn Larsson
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