This book has had a long gestation. The idea for the research on which it is based originally took shape in 2001 when I was based at the Personal Social Services Research Unit and at the Centre for Civil Society (CCS), both at the London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE). Helmut K. Anheier had taken up his all too brief spell as CCS director, and encouraged me to take a closer look at the policy relationship between the EU institutions and organizations between the market and the state. When at LSE, I accordingly wrote and submitted coordinated proposals on this topic for the European Union’s 5th Research Framework Programme (Key Action: Improving the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base) and the European Science Foundation’s European Collaborative Research Project (ECRP) in the Social Sciences, to which the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) was a signatory.

Much to my surprise and delight, both initiatives were successful (as EU project number SETN-2002-00055; ECRP proposal number 2001/08; and ESRC Award R00223735). After some teething problems and administrative delays, the bulk of the research on which this volume is based was then undertaken between 2002 and 2005. Thereafter, I moved from LSE to the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research (SSPSSR) at the University of Kent. Distracted (pleasantly!) by new teaching responsibilities and the arrival of two children, the Handbook took much longer to finish than originally anticipated, finally being completed in January 2009. Vital financial support for this final phase of the work came from the Charities Aid Foundation, allowing me to keep up to date on key developments at EU level since 2005, review the evolving British situation and work on the volume in general. From October 2008 onwards, this work was also supported by the newly established Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC), based at the Universities of Birmingham and Southampton, but sponsoring my Kent-based research on third sector policy.

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Jeremy Kendall, SSPSSR, University of Kent, 7 April 2009