Acknowledgements

This book is the product of more than three years of research conducted mainly in the highly stimulating environment of the European University Institute in Florence. This book would not have been possible without a great deal of help from many people. I would like to reiterate my thanks to everyone who took time to review this book and make invaluable comments and suggestions.

First of all, I would like to express all my gratitude to my supervisor Professor Francioni for his continuous guidance, availability and support throughout the development and drafting of the PhD thesis on which this book is based. Special thanks go to Professor Olivier De Schutter and Professor Enzo Cannizzaro as members of the jury of my PhD defence, who provided insightful and thought-provoking comments on my work.

My warmest thanks go also to Professor Cremona for her stimulating observations on an early draft of this book and for her precious guidance until the completion of this work. I cannot fail to thank Professor Moreau, who helped me to define the object of my research at the beginning of this work, Professor G. de Bürca and B. de Witte, who believed in this research project from the beginning and gave me the chance to present early excerpts of this work.

I am most grateful to Jean Pierre Laviec and Lucio Baccaro for allowing me to conduct research at the Institute for International Labour Studies of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva and to discuss an embryonic version of my book in that context. I would also like to thank Professor Peter Rosenbulm and Professor Mark Barenberg who provided a fresh new look on my research during my exchange at the Columbia University Law School. I am very thankful also to Jar for his support during the editing phase of this book.

However, it would not have been possible to accomplish this long term endeavour without their unconditional support. A special thank you goes to mamma, papà and Ila, who patiently stood by me and relentlessly encouraged me during these years.

Finally, life in Florence would not have been the same without the irreplaceable friendship and reliable presence of all my friends. To all of them, (and to all those I have forgotten to mention), goes my most sincere grazie!