Preface

This is an ambitious book stemming from a very rare opportunity: that of having had numerous scholars from both Europe and the United States who study intergovernmental relations and multi-level governance interact closely over three days in order to share their findings, integrate frames of analysis, and build bridges across streams of research distinct and often too distant. The conference, ‘The Fourth ASPA-EGPA Transatlantic Dialogue’ on the topic of ‘The Status of Intergovernmental Relations and Multi-level Governance in Europe and the US’, was held in Milan, Italy, at Bocconi University in June 2008.

The book is ambitious for its scope: to examine the dynamics of intergovernmental relations and multi-level governance throughout all the phases of the public policy cycle – formulation, implementation, evaluation and performance improvement.

The book is also ambitious for the breadth of the topics investigated, the multiplicity of the theoretical approaches, and the extension of data and empirical evidence its authors resort to – all deployed for the purpose of furthering the exploration of (1) the status of theories for explaining/interpreting the dynamics of intergovernmental relations and multi-level governance and (2) their empirical developments in the public sectors on both sides of the Atlantic.

This volume is to be read in an integrated way with the companion volume (*Governance and Intergovernmental Relations in the European Union and the United States: Theoretical Perspectives*, by the same editors and publisher), that explores intergovernmental relations and multi-level governance as interpretive frameworks, their evolution over the time (centuries for ‘American’ intergovernmental relations, decades for ‘European Union’ multi-level governance), their interconnections, and especially the lines of research that might stem from a closer integration of the two streams.

The reader will find that this volume provides a contextual complement to the conceptual perspectives that are explicated in the companion volume. Organized across four threads, this volume (*Policy, Performance and Management in Governance and Intergovernmental Relations: Transatlantic Perspectives*) draws on US and European experiences to underscore the critical relevance of intergovernmental and multi-level

governance. Who will govern the emerging, more complex entities that must address problems of implementation and coordination across established legal boundaries at all levels of government, from municipalities to nation states? How will we govern those entities? Do we have models for assessing the performance of intergovernmental agreements and quasi-governmental bodies? Will intergovernmental arrangements serve the public welfare?

These are difficult questions, and have not been sufficiently addressed in the traditional literatures of public administration, political science, law or other disciplines. Addressing such emerging, twenty-first century concerns is the mission of the Transatlantic Dialogues, jointly organized by the American Society for Public Administration and the European Group for Public Administration. These two volumes are the products of the Fourth Dialogue, for which we were privileged to serve as the co-chairs. On behalf of the American and European participants and partners we hope these volumes define a pattern of enduring expectations and high scholarly standards for publications from subsequent Dialogues.

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