Preface

This volume represents the successful conclusion of a research endeavour in progress since the early 1990s. Its roots can be traced back to the informal meetings between East and West European political scientists within the framework of the seminars on post-communist Eastern Europe organized at the Science Center (WZB) in Berlin by professor Hans-Dieter Klingemann. By the 1994 IPSA World Congress, the contours of a project organization were already visible, but the project did not gain momentum until after the ECPR research sessions in Tromsø, Norway, in June 1995. That meeting paved the way for a successful application for generous research funding from the Tercentenary Fund of the Swedish National Bank.

We are all indebted to the ECPR and the Tercentenary Fund. Tomas Hellén wishes to express his gratitude to the Ella and Georg Ehrnrooth Foundation, which made it possible for him to devote himself to the project on a full-time basis during the crucial final stages; and Frank Aarebrot is indebted to the Norwegian Research Council for providing research funding within the framework of its Central and East European programme.

The Science Center (WZB) hosted the two conferences – in December 1996 and January 1998 – which were needed in order to finalize the manuscript; and Hans-Dieter Klingemann graciously provided a spiritual home for all of us at the Science Center throughout the duration of the project.

In March 1997, the project was hit by a severe blow when professor Jan Åke Dellenbrant, who was to have been one of the co-editors, suddenly passed away. We think he would have liked the final product. It is a handbook offering in-depth analyses of the changing cleavage structures in the countries of Eastern Europe as well as hard facts about election results, government formation, electoral system and constitutional arrangements. This volume is dedicated to his memory.

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