

## Foreword

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to write this Foreword to a book which I am convinced is a truly valuable addition to academic scholarship. It is a piece of work that operates on several levels, all of them intriguing. EC law is largely made at EC level but implemented and enforced at national level. This is its strength and its weakness. This model permits reliance on established national systems rather than requiring the costly invention of European-level enforcement agencies, but any failings in the faithful application of EC law at national level may lie buried, invisible. This book provides two powerful case studies in competition and communications and aims to understand the possibility of 'network governance' as a way to bring together those involved in the application of EC rules without imposing heavily hierarchical solutions—to achieve consistency without damaging the virtuous aspects of diversity in Europe.

In this vein the book is rich in its exploration of how national agencies, national courts and the Commission operate together in pursuit of consistency. In my view the greatest of this book's many merits lies in its subtle and skilful blend of, on the one hand, close analysis of detail—pertaining to the institutional features and practical operation of networks—and, on the other, the thematic understanding that faithful enforcement of EC-sourced laws is no technical matter but rather one that connects to the EU's deeper aspirations to provide a legitimate form of governance. Networks themselves generate intriguing constitutional questions. Preserving their independence may strengthen effective problem-solving but may raise acute anxieties about accountability. So this book is deeply concerned with normative questions of institutional design.

The book is based on the PhD thesis submitted by Dr de Visser at the University of Tilburg. I was delighted to be invited to participate as a member of the jury, and after witnessing a brilliant defence on a rainy day in January 2009, I was happy to be party to the unanimous recommendation of the examiners that the qualification be awarded *cum laude*. I was especially pleased to play a small part in this triumph because Maartje de Visser was a postgraduate student in Oxford in 2003–04. In my seminar class on European Business Regulation she was an extraordinarily positive and constructive influence. I was very pleased when she—entirely deservedly—won the Winter Williams prize for the best examination performance in the subject and took the Magister Juris degree with distinction, acquiring a glittering set of marks. I sincerely hope she will enjoy a successful career as an academic, and I fully anticipate this book will be very warmly received.

Stephen Weatherill  
Oxford, July 2009

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## *Acknowledgments*

Writing a book is a solitary pursuit, or so it is generally accepted. And yet I have come across precious few books that do not first introduce to readers a host of persons that have been of invaluable support in completing the task at hand. This is true, too, of myself. I make mention of the following people to whom I am indebted for making this book a reality.

My supervisor, Professor Pierre Larouche, for giving me room to discover and develop my academic abilities. You have provided me with an intellectually challenging environment—and your high standards have been a constant source of motivation. I have learned much from you.

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