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## FOREWORD

The last of the co-called Copenhagen-criteria, i.e. the accession criteria set at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, require a candidate country to have the ability to assume the obligations of membership, in particular adherence to the objectives of political, economic and monetary union. In 1995 the Madrid European Council added an additional requirement, namely creation of the conditions for integration through the adjustment of administrative and institutional structures guaranteeing effective implementation of the *acquis communautaire*. In this context much emphasis is placed on the ability of the aspirant Member State to put the EU rules into effect. Indeed, it is crucial for EU legislation to be first transposed into national legislation and second, to be applied and enforced effectively through the appropriate administrative and judicial structures. It is no secret that the required adaptation and sometimes even creation of the relevant structures in the 'new' Member States was a tremendous challenge, last but not least since those Member States were already in a delicate and complex transition process, getting rid of their communist legacies.

However, the adjustment of the national structures for the purposes of implementation of the *acquis* is by no means the end of the story. If we consider EU-lawmaking as a cycle of an interconnected process of European and national lawmaking, in which both the EU institutions and the national authorities are seen as co-actors,<sup>1</sup> an additional major question arises: How did the new Member States adjust their structures in order to participate fully and meaningfully in the preparation, drafting and decision-making phases of the lawmaking process? In other words, it was not only the post-decision-making structures that needed sometimes radical adaptations, but also the pre-decision-making structures and the phase of the decision-making itself that required modifications of the national procedures, mechanisms and practices.

In the present volume, the author explores these aspects by, first, analysing the role Member States in general play in the community pillar decision-making process. This part of the study highlights the existing linkages between the EU and national institutions involved in decision-making. Next, she turns to the mechanisms, instruments and practices that have been adopted and which currently operate in Hungary. The co-ordination of European affairs at national level, the role of the national

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ernst M.H. Hirsch Ballin, 'Reflection on Co-Actorship in the Development of European Law-making', in E.M.H. Hirsch Ballin and L.A.J. Senden, *Co-Actorship in the Development of European Law-Making, The Quality of European Legislation and its Implementation and Application in the National Legal Order* (The Hague, T.M.C. Asser Press 2005).

parliament in the conduct of European affairs and the operation of the Hungarian Permanent Representation to the EU are meticulously mapped out. The same holds true for the last stage of the co-actorship cycle, the phase of implementation.

Previous academic (comparative) research in relation to the accession of the Central and Eastern European Countries was primarily focused on the constitutional adaptations. While the present study certainly starts with presenting the Hungarian constitutional context, it is going far beyond that by examining and evaluating the national legislative and administrative structures and mechanisms. In particular in relation to that last aspect, the study can be characterised as pioneering work. For Hungary – but probably also for many other countries – in a number of respects, the author has conducted unique research, based on empirical data and on not previously collected and analysed government and parliament documents.

This book is warmly recommended to anybody interested in the, until now, little explored and partly also practical implications of EU-membership of, in particular, the post-communist countries.

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