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Public play upon private standards

How European and international economic law enter into voluntary regimes for sustainability

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Acknowledgments

Unexpected setbacks aside, the average candidate begins his PhD relatively aware of the intricacy of writing a dissertation. Today I found out that such awareness does not immediately extend to its acknowledgement section. To thank all the individuals which one way or another provided support throughout this path is extraordinarily complex, but I realised it only at the moment I began writing. Ironically, the writer's block at the last stage of this journey uncomfortably brings to mind some way too familiar feelings from its beginning, when I settled in Amsterdam after a brief detour to Maastricht, full of naivety and with just slightly more hair than today. Almost five years (and countless litres of coffee of questionable quality) later, the time has come for the daunting task to wrap up in a few pages some of the most exciting years of my life.

This dissertation would have certainly not been possible had it not been for an unexpected job offer which my supervisors Pieter Jan Kuijper, Annette Schrauwen and Jim Mathis made me in early 2012. My responsibility during these years has been not to make them regret their choice. All of them, equally, provided an unbelievable amount of support, understanding and protection. They also demonstrated a remarkable ability to keep a straight face during our supervision meetings as, for example, when six-months from the submission date I was contemplating the application of an otherwise unspecified 'efficiency framework' which would have revolutionised my thesis and, inevitably, the whole discipline of international law. There is no amount of words that can sum up my gratitude for talking me out from that idea, as well as several others. Pieter Jan, your boundless knowledge was a safe harbour where to find refuge in times of doubt - and there have been a few. Annette, you have been an unrelenting source of kindness and comfort. Your door was always open and you have been available every day of these five years. Jim, you had a joke for me on every occasion, or at least some old GATT cases to go through. I will be missing your punchy remarks, and I am certain that the Faculty will miss you as well after your retirement. I would like to thank the members of the reading committee, Marco Bronckers, René Lefeber, Rein Wesseling, Denise Prévost and Ingo Venzke, for taking part in my defence, for their valuable comments, and for having found the time to read through the long manuscript - which already looked rather intimidating before the layout editing.

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Eljalill and Vigjilencia, my best memories at the UvA are with my office mates in room E0.10. We met as PhD students, we parted ways as doctors and, most important, friends. There are many people in the Department and in the Faculty with whom, throughout the years, I shared thoughts, lots of happy moments, a few occasional sad ones, and many more drinks and coffee breaks than my supervisors could ever suspect. These people are, in no special order and with the risk of forgetting someone, Aart, Anne, Nick, Giovanni, Maarten, Chris, Or, Nienke, Isabelle, Natasa, Emma, Fons, Yedan, Maria, Markos, Sara, Heather, Katrine, Vladislav, Vincent, Tatevik, Joao Pedro, Bérénice, Betty, Willem, and Angela. Tim deserves to stand out for having kindly agreed to translate my summary into Dutch. This book also benefitted from discussion with Kati Cseres, Laurens Ankersmits, Phillip Paiement, Victoria Daskalova, Arkady Kudryavtsev. For each chapter that ends, there is a new one which begins. I would like to thank everyone at the T.M.C. Asser Instituut for making me feel at home from the first day, in particular Janne Nijman and Antoine Duval.

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