ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book marks an end and (hopefully) a beginning.

It is the ultimate end of a journey which began in 2019, when I started my PhD studies at Lund University. It would be impossible to thank all the individuals who have played a part in the development of the research(er) behind this work. My supervisors, Xavier Groussot and Vladislava Stoyanova, offered me the support and occasionally the distance necessary to develop and find my own place in EU law scholarship. Towards the end of the process, Moritz Jesse attentively reflected to me what this work really was about. John Harbord with his rigorous proofreading pushed me to take a final fresh look at my writing and added clarity to the outcome. Various colleagues in the Faculty of Law and the Agenda 2030 Graduate School at Lund University, but also in the academic communities of the European University Institute, the Europa Institute in Leiden University, the Centre for Migration Law in Radboud University, and the Centre for Fundamental Rights at the Hertie School, which hosted me over these past years, were crucial for the development of this project.

At the same time, I wish that this book marks the beginning of intellectual inquiries along two paths: sustainable migration and EU legal history. From 2019 to this day, people have always reacted enthusiastically upon hearing that my research dealt with sustainability and EU migration law. Sustainability is, after all, perceived as a self-evidently good cause at times when migration is fraught with contestation. The listeners assume intuitively that sustainable migration can offer a solution to what is framed as one of the major problems faced by the EU. The reality of what sustainable migration can achieve is a lot more complicated as the reader will discover. And that is – partly – because not all concepts raised in international and European governance come with specific purpose, clear-cut meaning, and legal implications. There is considerable value in interrogating the appearance of such concepts, examining their genesis, and looking at their interplay with legal norms

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before jumping on the bandwagon of institutional discourse and integrating new buzzwords into legal writing. At a time when sustainable migration is the professed objective of the EU, and new proposals are put on the table with the aim to achieve it, I hope that this work will spearhead scholarly dialogue grounded in what sustainable migration can and cannot deliver for migrants' rights in the present form of the EU legal system.

On the second path of EU legal history, little did I expect when I started engaging with this contemporary topic that I would turn to the past in search of answers. EU law scholars tend to be forward-looking, after all. And yet this work is not only an investigation into sustainable migration. It also offers a conclusive reconstruction of the history of EU migration law. The experience of collecting archival material, making information requests, not being able to locate the material that would answer all my questions, but rather finding tons of material, which, while far from my inquiry, significantly informed my intellectual perspective, was a unique pedagogical experience. Next to the personal function that legal historical research served for me, I am convinced that working on the history of EU law areas in times of fast-paced legal development provides a better scholarly ability to assess the function, continuity, and transformation of the EU legal system. At a time when EU legal history is beginning to take shape as an independent field of scholarly research, I hope this work can provide inspiration for similar paths less travelled.

In closing, I would like to thank Niamh Nic Shuibhne, Elise Muir, Sara Iglesias Sánchez, and Niklas Selberg for the enthusiasm with which they examined this work during my defence in October 2023, as well as Sharon MacCann for coordinating what was the most expeditious publication process I could ever imagine.

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