Preface

Prof. dr. Wim van de Donk
President of EGPA
Her majesty's Governor in the province of Noord-Brabant, The Netherlands

In this age of accelerating economic globalization, in which regional and national economies become more and more intertwined and interconnected at an international level, we might easily underestimate the importance of an informed knowledge of public administration. The business communities have all kinds of opportunities to learn from each other, an activity that seems to lead, fuelled by modern information – and communication technologies, to an increasing homogeneity of our economic systems and practices at a global level. Where the economic system develops itself more and more as a ‘transnational’ system, public administrations and institutions do have a more ‘international’ profile. In that profile, in which national histories and institutional characteristics and specificities seem to remain relatively more important, also in a cultural sense, than they seem to be in the economic system. Whether such an hypothesis about the different patterns (trans- or inter- nationalization) of economic and ‘public’ or ‘political’ globalization is true or not, remains, of course, open to critical research and reflection.

In any case, this volume on one of the ‘mother-models’ of public administration, the French model, is a highly valuable contribution. Jean-Michel Eymery Douzans and Geert Bouckaert, both esteemed scholars that are highly active both within the European as well as the international community of public administration research, managed to provide the reader with a deep and comprehensive insight into the institutional and politico-administrative characteristics of contemporary public administration in France. They rightfully ask questions and provide answers that might be of use for the kind of research questions I mentioned before. Is French public
administration affected by something like a ‘world movement’ or is it largely keeping close to its rich and highly specific notions on how to administer a state? Both for scholars in the field of comparative public administration, as for practitioners, who work in different public administration all over the world, this volume contains a rich source of knowledge and related reflections.

The European Group for Public Administration is grateful for the work the editors and authors have put in this excellent and informative book.