PREFACE

It may well be that “thou shall not let the desire to reach the goal destroy the joy of the process”, however, it must be said that actually achieving something one once set out to accomplish feels rather good too. Since this project started in September 1996 a lot of people have been involved in making the process more enjoyable and the final product better then it otherwise would have been. First and foremost I am infinitely grateful for the suggestions, comments and support provided by Ola Listhaug. The Department of Sociology and Political Science, at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, have also been very good in letting me concentrate my teaching periods and hence have made it possible for me to have two sabbaticals during the last four years. My first sabbatical, from August 1997 to July 1998, was spent at the Centre for Advanced Study at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters in Oslo. It was highly instructive and beneficial to be a member of “The Foundations of Public Opinion” research group. The contacts made during the year in Oslo were worthwhile not only for this study but for other projects as well. My second sabbatical from September 1999 to February 2001 has been spent at the Department of Political Science at Trinity College Dublin. My period in Ireland would not have been possible without the kind invitation of Michael Marsh as well as economic support from the EU sponsored TMR network called “Political Representation in Europe”. Despite having a very good “craic” with the locals, my stay in Dublin gave me the opportunity to fully concentrate on finishing this study. Marcel van Egmond, my office mate throughout the last six months, was also very helpful with his constant threats to unplug my internet connection and sabotage my e-mail program if I didn’t get back to work. For this I am of course very grateful.

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