I first encountered the concept of transposition when I was seven. My piano teacher explained that transposition is the process of moving notes up or down by a constant interval so that the tune remains the same but the key (tonality) is changed.

Little did I know back then that later in life the study of transposition would preoccupy my days for more than four years. The context of my research on transposition, however, would not be music, but the intersection of EU politics, administration and law. In the European Union, transposition is the process of adoption of appropriate national measures with which to implement a common European directive. As removed as it is from musical transposition, transposition of EU law still resembles playing a common tune simultaneously in different tonalities. In the real world of EU governance, however, member states are often out of tune, and out of tempo. This book explores the adaptation of several new players – the former communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe – to the common EU orchestra.

The main argument of the book is that, although generally successful, the adaptation of the CEE countries to EU rules exhibits exciting variation across time, policy areas, and countries. I find that compliance with EU law is rarely a subject of heated political discussions; more often than not, it is a matter of routine bureaucratic policy-making. Nevertheless, political factors do influence the content, timing and tempo of transposition. Hence, the main title of the text – ‘Between Politics and Administration’.

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