

# Preface

This book is the product of two international conferences held at the Università di Urbino “Carlo Bo” in April 2008 and 2009. When we planned the conferences we wanted to bring together in Urbino scholars from different countries to discuss an issue that traditionally has been faced at the domestic level. Indeed, many times in our talks we had the feeling that the common view, at least in Italian academic circles, was that every economy has its own type of small business. Therefore, policies in favor of small businesses also had specificities depending on the country under consideration. After the two conferences, during which we analyzed case studies in Italy, the EU and the US, we are now more confident that our search for internationally common features in small business economies was worth pursuing. Up to now we had concentrated our attention on comparing the size of small business economies, the policies to support small businesses, innovative small businesses and their financial structures. However we are already working on a 2010 conference that will focus on the effects of the ongoing economic and financial crisis on small businesses.

We wish to thank all participants at the two conferences for their invaluable contributions and their courage in joining us in Urbino. Sergio Arzeni, Charles Ou and Bob Strom deserve special thanks for their continuous support and help in setting up an international network and finalizing the conference programmes. Germana Giombini, who collaborated with us in carrying out research and all conference phases, has made irreplaceable contributions to this project. Finally, we are especially grateful to UBI-Banca Popolare di Ancona, the Pesaro-Urbino Chamber of Commerce, the Marche Region, the C.N.A. – Italia and Marche, and the Svim – Sviluppo Marche S.p.A. for their financial support that made the two conferences possible.

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