Preface

For a long time in human history, the legal status of the child was not the focus of attention by the state, government, international organisations and even family itself. The child was not treated as an independent holder of rights but rather as a more or less subordinate object of rights of the parents or guardians. More attention began to be paid to children and their position just after the First World War, when, thanks to the efforts and commitments of two sisters, Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton, the first Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1924) was adopted. This document highlights a very important maxim *that mankind owes to the child the best that it has to give*, which plausibly had far-reaching consequences for a further improvement of the status of children in the world. After this first Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the second one was adopted in 1959, and only in 1989 was the first legally binding international document regarding children rights adopted as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Since then, a quarter of a century has been passed, and the 19th Congress of the International Academy of Comparative Law, which took place in Vienna from 20–27 July 2014, was a good opportunity to compare the experiences and results in the implementation of the Convention in different parts of the world. Based on the questionnaire, which is appended at the end of this book, authors from 21 countries from all continents, except Africa, submitted national reports about the status of the rights of the child in their countries. This book compiles these national reports, which come from Australia, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, India, Iran, Japan, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Serbia, Solomon Islands, Spain, the Netherlands, the UK, the USA, Uzbekistan and Venezuela. They were also the bases for the general report that represents a synthetic overview of the topic.

On this occasion I would like to thank all national rapporteurs for their research and commitment to the preparation of their reports, without which this comprehensive and profound analysis and overview of the implementation of the Convention

on the Rights of the Child in such diverse parts of the world would not be possible. My gratitude also goes to Penny Booth, professor of Law (England), to whom I am deeply indebted for her invaluable assistance in the linguistic revision of my general report.

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