Preface

This volume is part of the output of a much larger project, associated with the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence for the Study of a Transnational Europe (CESTE) and funded by the European Commission from 2013 to 2016 at the University of Portsmouth. CESTE and its several activities were based on the prior research of several of its contributors including the editors, Paul Flenley and Michael Mannin, in the fields of East European/Russian studies and the EU and Europeanisation, respectively. The associated research activities led to three conferences that brought together colleagues from a Europe-wide collection of universities, whose interests complemented our own questioning of the relevance and success of the EU as a progenitor of political and socio-economic change (Europeanisation) among its Eastern neighbours.

This field of study and its associated controversies have paralleled, and been partly obscured by, other recent challenges to the EU – economic, political, strategic (with the Trump election) and existential issues (in the case of Brexit). However, the EU and its Eastern neighbourhood relationships remain a part of the more familiar internal dilemmas that the EU faces in relation to free movement, migration, external security, energy futures, EU-Russian relations, notions of identity and the balance of power between member states and community institutions. All of these are reflected in the problems of EU–Eastern neighbourhood relations and are discussed in the following chapters. We hope this will make a contribution to the analysis of the dilemmas that the EU faces as it adapts to its changing role in twenty-first century regional and world politics.

Paul Flenley and Michael Mannin
Portsmouth, 2017