

## Recent Developments and Emerging Trends in Public Policy Analysis Guest Editors' Foreword

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This special issue 'Recent Developments and Emerging Trends in Public Policy Analysis') is dedicated to various research topics in public policy and public administration. The five papers, included in this issue, present specific concepts and theoretical models as well as empirical findings.

Three of the papers deal with various issues related to the decentralization and regional policy process. The first out of these three papers, signed by Florin Bondar, explores the concept of quality of government and its importance in the decentralization process in Romania. The paper analyzes this topic using a set of financial indicators revealing

the territorial distribution of the capacity of local public administration to provide public services. These indicators are then correlated with quality of government and government effectiveness indexes at national level. As a result, the analysis reflects a territorial variation of financial independence of administrative units that can be explained by assuming the differences in the institutional set-up of different communities at local level. These results were used further to formulate a perspective on the decentralization process in Romania based on the assumption of non-homogeneity of socio-economic

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development of different regions in Romania.

The second paper is written by a team of researchers: Daniel Klimovský, Zuzana Lacková, Veronika Černáková, Zuzana Maliková, Tomáš Šoltés, Tomáš Želinský and deals with innovation policy as a new development driver of the regions in Slovakia. According with this article, fundamental changes that occurred in Central and Eastern Europe (including Slovakia) in recent two decades have caused that regional policy as well as regional development has become one of the hottest national policy issues. Their findings show that if one connects this issue with the existence of regional disparities, there is no surprise that also the EU considers this topic an extra important one. Innovation policy is the right path to achieve sustainable regional development and how to improve competitiveness of less developed regions. This article is aimed particularly at the innovation policies of the Slovak self-government regions and their outcomes.

The third article deals with the socio-economic impact of European Funds on Eastern European countries and is written by Cristian Păun. The paper presents the results of a quantitative analysis at the level of ten Eastern European Countries (EEC countries) on the social and economic impact of these funds based on panel regression methodology. European Funds are considered to be a reliable solution for emerging economies from Eastern Europe. These funds are granted by European Union to reduce the gap between countries and to ensure a harmonized development at the level of this group of countries

that decided to act together as a united economic entity. In fact, European Funds are previously obtained from taxes applied to all European citizens and redistributed by European Institutions in accordance with predefined principles and rules. The redistributive effect is always present in such situation and has clear impact on economies that are net paying for these funds and on economies that are net benefiting from them.

The last two papers deal both with different policy models based on assessments of empirical data. The first of these two is written by Emanuel Răuță and assess the public management reform in Romania against a set of management variables able to set a framework for performance in public administration. The article is looking at the bulk of reforms that were implemented in the last years and analyses the progress based against a theoretical framework with 4 key elements: strategic planning – managerial planning – public policy analysis – transparency and quality of services. In its theoretical section, the article reviews the literature on performance management by highlighting its main characteristic. The case study reviews the state of affairs in Romanian public management reform, aiming to offer the reader a picture of the reform process. A conclusion is that the performance framework is not functional in Romania, due to the resistance of public administration to adopt key elements of the performance reform process, to the fact that the reforms so far were only partially implemented, in correlation with a normative and legalistic administration with limited openness for adoption of

new public management elements.

The second of the last two papers, written by Harri Raisio and Lyn Carson, argues that a particular type of collaborative governance, *sector mini-publics*, has tremendous utility for policy formulation or evaluation. Sector mini-publics are to be situated between traditional mini-publics and enclave deliberation, and should be evaluated using the same criteria applied to mini-publics in general,

i.e. those that select from amongst the entire population. *Inclusiveness*, *deliberation* and *influence* are just as important as criteria for evaluation. Drawing on three examples of sector mini-publics, each involving a particular sector (young people, people with disabilities and the elderly), the authors build their argument that sector mini-publics have proven value and should be encouraged, as well as subjected to further research.

