

## PUBLIC POLICY IN CEE

### INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC POLICY

Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences,  
Comenius University in Bratislava



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The Institute of Public Policy operates within the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava<sup>1</sup>. It was established in 2003, within an international project *Public Policy Making in Slovakia*. This institute is the first in Slovakia where a 2-year Master's programme "Public Policy" was launched. It provides interdisciplinary educational as well as research knowledge in the field of policy making and policy implementation.

As for study opportunities, the number of students has doubled since the institute was established (up to 100 internal students enrolled in the academic year 2009/2010). Big emphasis is put on the online support of education in as many courses as possible. Thus students can access study materials as well as deliver their papers online. In September 2011, an English version of the online public policy programme will be launched, which is primarily designed to attract students from abroad. This activity has been supported by the Operational Programme Research and Development.

1 web: <http://www.fses.uniba.sk/index.php?id=2048>

facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/#/group.php?gid=10988590247&ref=ts>

The researchers working at the Institute focus on socio-economic as well as socio-political relations and quality of governance in transforming and recently transformed societies. They also deal with the issues of political networks and participation of various actors within them, as well as analysis of decision-making processes and their impact on citizens. Some of them also have work experience within non-academic environment (e.g. the Open Society Foundation, Ministry of Finance of the SR, Transparency International Slovakia, Slovak Governance Institute, Local Government Development Center), which is highly appreciated, especially by students who prepare themselves to become well-educated policy-makers and analysts.

Concerning the number of researchers, the institute seems to be rather a smaller one so far, with focus on high quality and expertise. The Head of the Institute is Prof. Ľudmila Malíková, PhD. (Politico-Administrative Relations, Local Government, Public Administration and Modern Governance), Associate Professor Katarína Staroňová (Public Policy Processes, Public Policy Instruments, Impact Assessment), Associate Professor Emília Sičáková-Beblavá (Multi-Level Governance, Public Sector Management), Associate Professor Miroslav Beblavý (Economic Aspects of Public Policy, Social Policy, Public Finance and Modern Governance) and Martin Filko, an expert dealing mostly with decision-making theories and health policy. The Institute shares its PhD programme "European Studies and Policies" with the Institute of European Studies and International Relations (the same faculty), having currently 8 internal (full-time) and up to 10 external (part-time) PhD students. The Institute will have its first PhD graduates in 2010 (Mgr. Juraj Mišina, Mgr. Ivan Rončák and Mgr. Alexandra Suchalová).

Since 2006, the PhD students have been preparing a quarterly newsletter "Public Policy News—PPN" issued by the IPP, with regular sections such as study, book review, new books published at the IPP, reports from conferences, introducing other Slovak and foreign partner institutes as well as other news. The PPN is also available online at the IPP website, in Slovak language only (some articles are (and others can be written) in English).<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to its personal capacities and experts, the Institute has gained membership in several professional networks related to research and training in public policy and public administration programmes. These experts are leaders of working groups within the so-called NISPAcee (Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe) and TNPA (Thematic Network for Public Administration—within the Erasmus programme). The Institute also co-operates with the prestigious international or-

2 web: <http://www.fses.uniba.sk/index.php?id=2907>

ganization EPAN (European Public Administration Network), although it is not a member yet.

The IPP has ongoing working relationships with other national and international academic institutes. Since the IPP has been established, we have worked with several research and academic institutions concentrating on public policy related issues: Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava; Center for Social and Economic Strategies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague; Central European University, Budapest; University in Pittsburgh, USA; London School of Economics, UK; Erasmus University, Rotterdam; and Institute of Public Administration (ROI), Netherlands.<sup>3</sup>

Also, the implementation of several interesting research projects financed and supported by international organizations and donors should be mentioned here. “The Migration Bank” and “Research of a high quality—a pre-condition for successful integration” are two of the latest among them. Both aim at migration and integration policies.

Furthermore, the IPP wishes to contribute to sharing the achievements of public policy research by publishing it. Four to six monographs are published by the Institute every year, focusing on topics such as politico-administrative relations, transparency in the public sector and anti-corruption policies, social housing, provision of public services etc. Gradually, textbooks for students are published at the institute, too, which is another important task to be continuously fulfilled.

As for further plans and tasks, from September 2009 till March 2011, the IPP is a part of a Centre of Excellence project “Quality of key institutions in the development of knowledge society and institutional innovations”. Its aim is to conduct empirical research identifying the factors of success/failure of such institutions. Thus organizational (e.g., emergence of the regional level of governance, or organizational innovations in transposing EU legislation) as well as institutional innovations (e.g., electronic auctions in the public sector) will be examined, to a great extent based on case studies. Several outputs—monographs, policy papers and studies—will be produced within this project.

In sum, the Institute of Public Policy with its educational and research pillars seeks to be a high quality department in the field of public policy. During its 4-year existence, it has managed to establish the first M.A. programme of its kind in Slovakia and increase the number of students significantly, produce several publications as well as policy papers proposing possible improvements

3 Masaryk University, Brno; European Public Law Center, National Kapodistrian University, Athens, Greece; Molde University, (Socrates/Erasmus Bilateral agreement), Norway; Wroclaw University, Poland.

in given areas, and also host a couple of respected researchers from abroad, e.g., Guy Peters, Leslie Pal, Laszlo Vass (2007–2008). Its ambition is to remain innovative and highly professional in its use of working methods.