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## EDITOR'S NOTE

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### Dear Readers,

You have just received the first issue of the *Central European Journal of Public Policy* (CEJPP), the aim of which is to provide academic scholars and professionals in different policy fields with the latest theoretical and methodological advancements in public policy supported by sound empirical research. CEJPP is a reviewed scientific periodical in the English language that addresses all topics of public policy, including civil society, social services and health care, environmental protection, education, labor market, immigration, security, public financing and budgeting, administrative reforms, performance measurements, governance, etc. In a way, its sheer scope largely determines the multidisciplinary character of the magazine, which attempts to find and provide a description, explanation and evaluation of public policies, using a wide range of quality and quantity-oriented social scientific approaches.

The idea to start the journal matured for a fairly long time. Being researchers in the realm of public policy, we were acutely aware that it would be very difficult to develop and cultivate our field without a journal of our own. It may not be accidental that the decision to start a journal was made now, when Martin Potůček, in his analysis of public policy development in the Czech Republic (pp. 102–121 of this issue) speaks about the germinal phases of that field's mature age. But there were many other reasons why we have decided to invest our efforts and time in the shaky business of producing a journal. We are convinced that the specific historical development of the Central European region requires a specific approach to the analysis and building of public policy, and it is thus not possible to uncritically ape and apply the approaches, methods and findings of "Western" (notably American) policy analysis. We have arrived at this conviction due to our own experience in research and analysis, reflecting the findings accrued by contacts with hands-on agents participating in the in-service training courses, and teaching master degree and doctoral students. Therefore we would like to make a modest contribution to the constitution of public policy as a unique scientific discipline in our region. We see this journal above all as a common ground for academic scholars and professionals in different policy fields fostering open debate on substantial as well as theoretical and methodological issues. Our first contribution is an essay by Jiří Musil

(pp. 8–29), a sociological reflection about the existence and significance of Central Europe as a specific European macro-region in various historical epochs.

However, public policy is by far not only a dry academic issue. Our aim is to offer hands-on public policy professionals with an analysis of specific substantive fields and policies based on the latest theoretical findings and empirical data. We see the lack of well-founded, methodologically robust, empirically proven and policy-relevant analyses as one of the gravest public policy problems in the Czech Republic, and probably also in the other countries of the Central European Region. This situation is largely due to the lack of demand on behalf of politicians and public administration officials, the meager tradition of our field in the post-socialist countries, or indeed the problems associated with the publication of the analyses that often fringe several scientific disciplines and politics, in specialized scientific periodicals. Our aim is to provide sufficient space to such articles, and we hope that, over a period of time, we can help not only to improve the scientific advancement of the field but also to spur demand among the decision-makers at all levels of public administration. This issue offers three empirical articles whose geographic, thematic and territorial-administration aspects corroborate our intention to not only cross national confines but also blend different scientific disciplines in the process of tackling miscellaneous public policy topics. The paper by František Ochrana and Markéta Fantová Šumpíková (pp. 30–47) presents the first outcomes of a unique research project focusing on the manner of providing public services at the municipal level in the Czech Republic. Another two papers discuss the national level, but each of them addresses a different public policy field. In his analysis, Juraj Nemeč (pp. 64–79) evaluates the introduction of performance management and performance-financing arrangements in the Slovak higher education system, and he urgently calls for a comparison with the other Central European countries. His paper definitely should not escape the attention of the community of experts in this field, and the same holds true of Jan Morávek's paper on drug policy (pp. 48–63). He discusses problem structuring in the Czech drug policy as it emerged in a rich policy controversy over the so-called anti-drug bill of 1998, which criminalized the possession of "bigger than small" amounts of illicit drugs. As indicated by this paper and other international studies, the problem of delineating and structuring the problem is of key importance to the whole policy analysis process; we have therefore capped our first issue with an article by Arnošt Veselý (pp. 80–101) that sums up the literature and offers a classification of the various approaches. This serves as the opener of a methodological section which will deal not only with various methods and approaches to the analysis and formulation of policies and/or their application but also with more comprehensive methodological issues. We take

the definition and structuring of the issue as it is for an important first step to good policy analysis, and we intend to break the ground for methodological articles dealing with its better-known phases, such as the proposal and selection of a policy, and its implementation and evaluation.

It goes without saying that we will also brief you on topical public policy concerns, on events accomplished and events in the pipeline, new books, and other relevant events. Hopefully, our journal will inspire you to get hold of its further issues and maybe also to send in your own stuff. We are open to new inputs and detailed information for authors is available on [www.cejpp.eu](http://www.cejpp.eu). That's where the future contributors and reviewers may find information and guidance.

I would like to thank all members of our Editorial Board, for without their enthusiasm and support, our journal would never see light. My thanks go also to our colleagues at CESES, and beyond. Let me mention Professor Malíková and her Institute for Public Policy, our institutional partners, and the promising interaction within the CINEFOGO international network. We have pooled our resources to create a magazine we can be proud of. However, we know that there still is a lot of room for improvement and a quality, readable journal will not be created overnight. We do believe that together with your valuable inputs, we can help fulfill our magazine's mission with every new issue, and help advance the theory and practice of public policy, not only in Central Europe.

**Martin Nekola**, Editor-in-Chief

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