

Foreword

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The preparation of the second issue of *Croatian and Comparative Public Administration* in 2020 was inundated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite many hardships related to a new world-wide online environment, quite different than the one we are used to, the Editorial Board has prepared an interesting array of papers. They cover three thematic areas rather different than those in the first issue published a few months ago.

The section on local government and democracy contains analyses referring to the Czech, Polish, Spanish, and Croatian context.

Mihovil Škarica reviews the evolution of municipal-county relations in Croatia during the last two decades. Constitutionally announced decentralisation in the beginning of the 2000s was founded on the principle of subsidiarity and followed clear political promises of serious decentralisation. Instead of decentralisation to municipalities and towns, counties have won the decentralisation game, with conflict culture prevailing over cooperation culture. Municipalities and towns have become increasingly dependent on the counties, which have coordinating, supplementing and supervisory competences over local governments.

Ángel Iglesias Alonso and Roberto L. Barbeito Iglesias examine local participatory practice by empirically researching the use of an online platform in the City of Madrid. Based on the municipal statistical data and qualitative interviews with relevant local actors, they have found that the participatory electronic democracy project implemented in Madrid from 2015 to 2019 has produced meagre impacts. The use of new technologies can erode local democracy if it is not accompanied with innovative forms of local political and administrative participation.

Marcin Princ and David Kryska present a thorough comparative legal study of local government competences relevant for the management of migrations in the Czech Republic and Poland. Their main thesis is that shared compe-

tences, solidarity, and joint action are necessary for successful management of contemporary wicked problems of public governance. The authors find that the role of local governments, especially big cities, has been growing in both countries. This also applies to their role in dealing with migrants.

The second section deals with the impacts of post-socialist transition on public governance. Remzije Istrefi and Arben Hajrullahu present their in-depth case study of public administration development in Kosovo during atypical transition and, in the most recent phase, Europeanisation. On the basis of their analysis they accentuate the need for generation of Europeanisation agents by means of an improved education system, because formal Europeanisation via harmonisation with the *acquis communautaire* is not sufficient for achieving deep transitional effects.

Finally, the public law section presents two conceptual analyses dealing with the role of law in diplomacy and with two important legal concepts in the European Union law.

Ivan Padjen presents his conceptual paper about legal limitations to diplomacy. He examines the success of the Croatian foreign policy in regard to constitutional regulation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The author bases his analysis on the fact that Croatia is one of the sides in the Dayton Accords. These Accords outlined the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and were signed by presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia in 1995.

Koraljka Sansović analyses the concepts of direct applicability and direct effect that were created and developed in the European Union law as a result of the practical usage of regulations and directives as binding acts of secondary legislation. She presents the exceptions from these concepts in case law and concludes that they derogate but do not abolish written basic legal rules. The author claims that they are necessary for the development of European law and accomplishment of its goals.

In an effort to achieve full transparency of our editorial process, we publish the list of all reviewers who participated in the double-blind review process in 2018 and 2019. This is a wonderful opportunity to express a great appreciation to all of them on behalf of the Editorial Board. Their contribution to the quality of papers and our journal is outstanding.

Dear readers, I wish you a pleasant reading.

May you stay safe during the pandemic.

Professor Dr Ivan Koprić
Editor-in-Chief