

Foreword

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After a short break between the first and the second, most tragic wave of the COVID-19 pandemic that has terribly shaken Europe and Croatia, we have succeeded in preparing the fourth issue of the *Croatian and Comparative Public Administration* in 2020, with a hope that the end of the most lethal world health crisis which has marked the year 2020 is in sight. The Editorial Board has prepared three subcategories of papers, encompassing administrative reform in Slovenia, governance issues sparking during the post-socialist transition, and the jurisprudence of constitutional courts related to public governance.

The first section, which deals with public administration reform in Slovenia, contains two papers. Matej Babšek, Nina Tomažević and Polonca Kovač explore how the rule of law can and should influence administrative reform. Building on the analysis of 213 court judgements, they find gaps to be filled during the reform of social work centres in Slovenia. The relevant case law reveals two main reform themes, the participative procedure and flexible organisation of social work centres, leading to a new, modern interpretation of the principle of lawfulness in the work of public administration.

Simona Kukovič and Gorazd Justinek offer a review of six public administration reform waves in Slovenia, with focus on the current Public Administration Development Strategy 2015-2020. Based on the doctrinal analysis they have concluded that this Strategy moves beyond the doctrine of new public management as the exclusive inspiration, towards some post-managerial ideas, embracing citizen involvement, networking, participation of stakeholders in law-making, horizontal integration, professionalism, digitization and introduction of e-services.

The second section deals with governance issues in the post-socialist transition countries, including Ukraine, Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia. Josip

Jambrač analyses conceptual questions of transition/transformation and concludes, after an analysis performed in the evaluative manner, that the public governance model built in post-socialist Croatia has many deficiencies. He points out that Croatia has attempted to radically change the institutional landscape of the country through significant constitutional reforms. They began with the first Constitution of 1990 and continued with the constitutional amendments adopted in 2000/2001 and 2010. Croatian public governance, and societal and economic outcomes are beyond the results of successful CEE countries.

Andrii Zahorulko analyses the National Security Strategy of 2015 as the main instrument for achieving and preserving national security and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Its strategic goals are to be realised through the restoration of peace, regaining the state control over the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and implementation of a mixture of international, legal, political, diplomatic, security, humanitarian and economic measures.

Valerija Botrić compares managers' perception of corruption in three post-socialist countries on the former Yugoslav territory, Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia. The author has collected the data for the last two decades which show that managers are most likely to acknowledge the existence of grand corruption in Slovenia, while petty corruption seems to be more widespread in Croatia and Serbia, without any systematic change during the analysed period. Additional efforts to reduce corruption would probably be welcomed by the business sector in Croatia.

The third section deals with the role of constitutional courts in shaping public governance and democracy.

Jernej Letnar Čerňič uses three-fold judicial ideology model, measuring economic, social, and authoritarian dimensions of judicial ideology of the Slovene Constitutional Court during three terms, 1993-1997, 2002-2006, and 2011-2016 with the focus on the authoritarian dimension. His research illustrates that the Court was caught in the middle of ideological positioning with regard to the authoritarian dimension during all three mandates, issuing decisions that balanced between protecting individual rights and preserving the authority and stability of the existing governance system.

Matija Miloš explores how the Croatian Constitutional Court controls the clarity of referenda questions. He argues against the rejection of judicial review and develops a more nuanced perspective, trying to find ways to distinguish the cases where judicial oversight was conducted in a manner

that facilitates democratic processes from those where the legal argument has been deployed as an obstruction. He considers that his approach allows the courts to apply clarity in a context-specific manner.

Finally, we have included two book reviews into this issue. The first one is Edoardo Ongaro's *Philosophy and Public Administration* (2017), and the second one is John Halligan's *Reforming Public Management and Governance* (2020), both published by Edward Elgar and written by the Editor-in-Chief.

At the end of our 20th publication year, I will use this opportunity to stress some important facts. During these two decades, our journal has undergone various changes, with editorial boards persistently trying to improve the editorial process and the quality of papers. For me, this is an opportunity to recall the past 15 years of being editor-in-chief. You will allow me to be proud of our results and outcomes. I do hope that we will soon prepare a more thorough review of this exciting period.

I wish you a pleasant reading, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Professor Dr Ivan Koprčić
Editor-in-Chief