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## Introductory Note

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The articles in the thematic block of this issue of *Politička misao* were presented at the IPSA Research Committee 32 conference in Dubrovnik (CAAS) ‘**Developing policy in different cultural contexts: learning from study, learning from experience**’, from 10-12 June 2011. The only exception is the article written by Ivana Đurić, which was added later.

### Organization of the Conference

The initiative for the conference came from RC32 and the Croatian PSA, which had collaborated to organize a successful conference in Dubrovnik in 2008 with support of the University of Dubrovnik, as well as the University of Zagreb and its Faculty of Political Science. As the organization of the current conference progressed, other scholarly bodies expressed interest in joining the enterprise. The Institute for Public Administration in Zagreb offered to co-sponsor the conference and arrange one of the streams. In response to a letter sent by RC32 at the request of Rainer Eisfeld and Les Pal, the Research Committee on Public Policy and Governance of the Russian Association for Political Science asked to be involved and to be allowed to nominate speakers. RC05 (Comparative Local Government) also expressed interest in co-sponsoring the conference and organizing several panels. The University of Zagreb and its Faculty of Political Science agreed to provide organizational and financial support.

The full list of collaborators is therefore:

- IPSA Research Committee 32 (Public Policy and Administration)
- Croatian Political Science Association
- Institute of Public Administration, Zagreb
- IPSA Research Committee 5 (Comparative Local Government)
- Research Committee on Public Policy and Governance of the Russian Association for Political Science

- Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb
- University of Zagreb.

Co-chairs of the Conference:

Hal K. Colebatch (hal@colebatch.com)

Ivan Kopric (ikopric@pravo.hr)

Zdravko Petak (zpetak@fpzg.hr)

### **Rationale for the Conference**

In the last two decades, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been engaged in regime-reconstruction, particularly the states of the former Yugoslavia, where the country itself, as well as the regime, had to be re-established. In this context, there has been a particular interest in policy as part of the dynamic of governing, and this conference has been convened to focus on the policy process and the practices by which it is constituted. It identifies the subject as ‘policy development’ rather than ‘policy making’ or ‘policy analysis’, recognizing that policy is generated by a wide range of practices and participants, inside and outside government, and that norm-setting by bodies like the OECD and the EU may be as important as choice by authority figures in government. It recognizes that policy practice is ‘put together’, and seeks to identify the way that the experiential knowledge of practitioners, as well as the research-based knowledge of academics, is used to inform practice.

The conference was therefore an occasion for both academic observers and policy practitioners to review the nature of policy knowledge and policy practice in the region, and what can be learned from analysis and research from outside the region. The principal outcome of the conference was related to strengthening the links among researchers and practitioners in the region, in post-Soviet states, and in the political science profession generally.

### **Conference Format**

The conference was organized within five streams, running over three days:

1. Analytical/conceptual – stream-chair: Hal Colebatch
2. Policy practice in Europe – stream-chair: Zdravko Petak
3. Reforming public administration in South-east Europe – stream-chair: Ivan Koprić
4. Policy analysis in local governance – stream-chair: Hellmut Wollmann
5. Policy in relation to higher education – stream-chair: Tihomir Žiljak

The majority of articles published in this issue are related to the first panel, dealing with the analytical or conceptual side of policy in the transitional context. The exceptions are papers written by Josip Lučev and Zdravko Petak, which belonged to the second stream. Other articles from the second stream, as well as articles from the fifth stream (Higher education policy) will be published in the journal *Anali Hrvatskog politološkog društva*, while the articles from streams 3 and 4 have been published in the journal *Hrvatska i komparativna javna uprava*.

*Zdravko Petak*