

Foreword

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In spite of the COVID-19 pandemics, the Editorial Board has been able to prepare a new issue of the *Croatian and Comparative Public Administration*, with six new papers organised in three sections, dealing with civil service, migrations and various public governance themes.

The first section begins with a paper by Veran Stančetić whose interest is in the battle between spoils and merit system in the Western Balkans with particular focus on the situation in Serbian public administration. In most Western Balkan countries, the spoils system remains a reality, reflecting overly close and distorted relations between party politics and administrative professionalism, despite the fact that laws stipulate the merit system. Ulain Noor and Fiaz Hussain evaluate 26 different Pakistani anti-corruption strategies. In order to be able to perform such an evaluation, they collected the opinions of policy professionals working at various policy institutes in Pakistan about the effectiveness of these documents. Based on quantitative analysis, they have concluded that each strategy has a certain level of effectiveness in eradicating corruption, but the real problem lies, as in many other countries, in their implementation.

Dario Čepo, Mateja Čehulić and Siniša Zrinščak present and analyse the results of two waves of their empirical research dealing with the practice of framing media discourse on refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers. The content analyses were performed in Croatia in 2015-2016 and in 2018. While the predominant frame in both periods remained neutral, the change in ideological stance of the government, from social democrats to conservatives, coincided with the relative rise in the number of media articles with a negative portrayal of the migrant issue.

Yeşeren Eliçin's paper elaborates decentralisation reform launched in Turkey in the 2000s. Her analysis led her to conclude that the reform agenda adopted in the 2000s was overturned to lead to an increasingly authori-

tarian and centralised power following the constitutional referendum in 2010. Recentralisation in Turkey led to the erosion of local autonomy and democratic accountability, simultaneously making room clientelism and corruption.

Dario Nikić Čakar explores the stability of coalition governments in Croatia in the period 2000–2020. His hypothesis is that cabinet instability is influenced by the limited scope of coalition agreements and ineffective conflict resolution mechanisms. He concludes that insufficiently developed and formalised coalition agreements caused malmanagement of coalition conflicts and opened space to the *ad hoc* mechanism of informal and highly personalised decision-making by a small group of coalition leaders.

Iva Lopizić examines the real role of the first instance state administrative bodies in Croatia before their abolishment at the end of 2019 and mergers with counties as second-tier local governments. Her interest in complex and often blurred functioning of the state bureaucracy provides many useful insights into organisation and functioning of the deconcentrated state administration in Croatia.

I remind you that in line with our commitment to open science policy all papers published in our journal since its establishment in the late 1990s are accessible online without paywall.

Have a good read and stay healthy!

Professor Dr Ivan Koprčić
Editor-in-Chief