

Foreword

UDK 35.07(497.5)(042.3)

The last issue of *Croatian and Comparative Public Administration* in 2023 offers six new scientific articles dedicated to important and current topics, elaborated by authors from Romania, Turkey and Croatia. Some are more nationally relevant as they touch upon the issues that are currently crucial in a particular country, while others are dedicated to issues of international significance and importance. However, all of them provide insights into matters that, in addition to scientific relevance, also have practical applications for civil servants and public policy makers.

Most of the articles in this issue are devoted to local concerns that are addressed from different aspects. We have classified them into three sections, covering somewhat general questions of local self-government, urbanisation and urban management, and social policy and reform of electoral units.

The first section features two articles devoted to local self-government. In *An Assessment of Institutional Resilience Capacity of the Local Public Administration: Evidence from Romania*, the authors – professor Alina Georgiana Profiroiu and teaching assistant Corina Cristiana Nastacă, both from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Department of Administration and Public Management – raise the question of the resilience of local units. They specifically investigate the capacity for resilience, focusing on its four dimensions: capacity for innovation and learning, strategic capacity, stakeholders' involvement in decision-making, and transparency and communication. As the empirical basis of their work, they use research conducted in the city of Bucharest. The second article was written by Tănase Tasențe and Mari-Isabella Stan from the Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences, Ovidius University of Constanța (Romania), and is titled *Citizen-Centric Smart Cities: Empowering Public Administration through Social Media and Citizen Engagement*. Investigating various elements of the smart city concept, including economy, people, environ-

ment, governance, etc., the authors determine the importance of innovative and tailored approaches to leveraging social media as a catalyst for smart city development. The article is based on the study of the Smart Cities Marketplace, an EU initiative providing a collaborative platform for the development of smart and sustainable cities.

The second section focuses on counter-urbanisation and integral territorial governance. In *Counter-Urbanisation as Refuge During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study from Turkey*, the authors Levent Memiş, Sönmez Düzgün and Semih Köseoglu investigate the impact of migration from the city to rural areas caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. On the basis of 84 semi-structured interviews conducted in 17 rural settlements in Turkey, they determine the specific challenges regarding the governance of such areas as a result of counter-urbanisation. The authors conclude that counter-urbanisation renders the existing organisational structures inadequate, especially regarding communal services, and places new needs on the agenda. The second article was written by a group of authors from Croatia, namely Ivana Keser, Jakša Puljiz and Sanja Maleković, all three from the Institute for Development and International Relations in Zagreb. In the article titled *Potential and Challenges of Integrated Urban Governance*, the authors address the topic from a development point of view, emphasising its two components, in particular improved coordination and better involvement of different stakeholders in development processes in the urban context. Such a fundamentally inclusive approach increases the legitimacy of development activities, which is especially significant in urban areas.

The last two articles in this issue cover the topic of emerging spaces and the mathematical model for the formation of electoral units. In *Emerging Spaces: Impact Investing*, assistant professor Danijel Baturina from the Social Work Study Centre, University of Zagreb Faculty of Law, tackles a new and important topic in public policy. The article defines impact investing, analyses its characteristics and the forms in which it appears, channels and sources of capital, and impact measurement. Starting from Croatian circumstances, the author analyses the potential of such a way of investing in the wider social sphere and future development of the practice, but also the directions that impact investing research may take. In the article *New Method for Defining Electoral Units in Croatia*, full professor Kristian Sabo and professor emeritus Rudolf Scitovski from the Faculty of Applied Mathematics and Informatics, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek (Croatia), elaborate in detail the new model for creating electoral units in Croatia. The main contribution of the article is that it

shows how it is possible to configure the electoral units in such a way as to preserve the existing borders of the counties, while at the same time the relative differences in the weights of the voters' votes are within the legally predetermined accuracy, which is five percent.

This year also brought about some personnel changes in the editorial team, which were already discussed in previous forewords. Nevertheless, we hope to continue to create a compelling and relevant journal that will maintain the highest ethical and scientific standards. Finally, on behalf of the entire editorial team, we wish all our readers a successful, fruitful and intellectually stimulating 2024!

Professor Vedran Đulabić
Editor-in-Chief