

Foreword

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The autumn edition of the Croatian and Comparative Public Administration journal brings six new scientific articles grouped, as usual, into three sections. The first section is dedicated to the topics of services of general interest, and the role of regulatory authorities with regard to these important activities. The second section concerns participation in public governance, particularly participation in crisis situations and participation in local self-government. This is also a topic gaining in importance, especially in the times of increasing climate changes and natural disasters affecting areas that were not previously exposed to such turbulences. Local self-government is often the first line of defence in case of major natural disasters and crisis situations. This puts a spotlight on public authorities and adequate participation management required to better respond to the changes we are facing. The third section is reserved for articles addressing the topics of ethical infrastructure in public administration, and the impact of EU law on member states and their public administrations. The article entitled *New Challenges in Times of Crisis: The State in a Liberalised Energy Market* was written by Dóra Lovas from the Faculty of Law and Political Science of the University of Debrecen in Hungary. The author analyses the policy of liberalisation in the energy sector at the level of the European Union, and the situation in that area after three decades of implementation of liberalisation. Liberalisation is a complex policy in the development of economic services of general interest which, on the one hand, requires taking several successive steps, while on the other hand it is faced with numerous obstacles in different EU member states. In this case, the role of the state, changing significantly in liberalised sectors, is particularly important, and ranges from providing access to financing (state aid rules) to its active role in establishing and maintaining functional market relations. The second article in this section, *Regulatory Bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Does a Model of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Regulators*

Really Exist? written by Neven Akšamija, PhD student at the Faculty of Law of the University of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), explores a somewhat similar topic. The article analyses the institutional structure, more precisely regulatory agencies, intended for the regulation of economic services of general interest in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is one of the few recent scientific articles dedicated to this and similar topics in Bosnian-Herzegovinian administrative and legal literature, and therein lies its special value for the scientific audience outside that country.

The article on *Public Participation in Rapid Response Services for the Sustainability of Jakarta Smart City* was written by Firman Firman (Department of Public Administration, University 17 August 1945 Jakarta), Iqbal Aidar Idrus (Department of Public Administration, University Andi Djemma), and Restu Rahmawati (Political Science, National Development University Veteran Jakarta). The authors analyse the concept of a smart city as applied through the Jakarta Smart City initiative. The topic is addressed through the prism of participation, where the emphasis is placed on the sustainability of the initiative which represents a digital governance tool. The article detects the causes of low participation and offers suggestions on how to address them to make such initiatives even more useful as tools of public administration and management. The second article in this section was written by Ivana Ninčević Pašalić from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism in Split (Croatia), and is entitled *E-participation in Local Self-Government in Croatia*. The article is based on research into the practice of e-participation in 83 units of local self-government in Croatia, and explores several dimensions of participation, such as information, consultation, and decision-making. The article establishes the difference in the practice of participation, determined by the size of local self-government units, and points to the ubiquitous issue of the capacity of local self-government units to conduct public affairs within their jurisdiction efficiently.

Ethical and related issues in various public sector organisations are increasingly important research topics in administrative science and related disciplines. In the penultimate article published in this issue, *Impact of Ethical Infrastructure on the Performance of Executive Power Administrative Units in Bulgaria*, author Izabela Filipova Yonkova from the Faculty of Management and Marketing, D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov (Bulgaria), focuses on the analysis of ethical infrastructure and its impact on the performance of executive power. The article has an empirical basis in the conducted survey and in-depth unstructured interviews with several stakeholders from the category of senior officers and experts

from Bulgarian administrative bodies. In addition to formal mechanisms dedicated to the development of ethical infrastructure, additional efforts are needed in order to develop soft mechanisms that will be internalised in public administration independently of their formal basis. This is especially important for East-European transition countries, where ethical standards are still not fully separated from their formal, mostly legal requirements that promote ethical behaviour.

The last article in this issue is entitled *On the Doctrine of the Direct Effect of European Provisions Regarding the Requirement of Enforceability* and was written by Koraljka Sansović from Zagreb (Croatia). The article is dedicated to the relationship between EU and national law, and in this regard relies on doctrinal-theoretical concepts, but also on the analysis of judgments of the Court of the European Union that contributed to the additional development and elaboration of the concept of direct application.

As a special addition, this issue also features a review of the book written by Eduardo Ongaro and Michele Tantardini entitled *Religion and Public Administration: An Introduction*. The review was written by Karlo Kožina, an assistant at the University of Zagreb Faculty of Law. Because of the interesting topic it tackles, we thought it useful to draw special attention of our readers to this book.

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Editor-in-Chief