

Foreword

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The last issue of this year's volume contains six scientific articles organised in three thematic sections, namely public law, multi-level governance and public management, and crisis management. The published articles were written by a total of twelve authors from five countries. Hence in this issue as well the international and comparative focus of our journal continues to provide insights into the experiences of different public administration systems, thus contributing to the somewhat universal character of scientific knowledge in the field of public administration.

The first section contains two articles from the broader field of public law. Ivan Padjen, retired tenured professor of law, in his article on *Croatian Jurisprudence and Repopulation: Parents Educators v. the City of Zagreb* deals with a current and controversial topic that has been in the spotlight of the scientific, professional, and political public in Croatia over the past few years. The author problematises the decisions of competent courts (administrative and constitutional) in Croatia in relation to the termination of social benefits for parents educators by the City of Zagreb. The article assesses the alignment of court decisions with constitutional and *jus cogens* principles, and proposes alternative decisions that better conform to these principles. It also explores the broader implications of these decisions on population retention and negative demographic trends in Croatia, and finally, identifies and analyses several elements by which the jurisprudence in question negatively affects Croatian law.

A group of authors from Kazakhstan – Assel Karipova, Samal Serikbekova, Galymzhan Aralbekov, Zhazira Tuleugaliyeva, and Ainur Sarsenova – in the article titled *Comparative Analysis of Administrative Liability for Driving While Intoxicated in the Commonwealth of Independent States*, conduct a comparative qualitative analysis of the administrative law regulations of six countries, namely Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Armenia. They explore the similarities and divergences in

penalties, enforcement mechanisms, and policy effectiveness. The article underscores the importance of harmonising laws and enhancing cross-border cooperation for tackling the issues at hand more effectively. Based on these comparative examples and experiences, the authors establish guidelines for improving legislation that should move away from the former Soviet tradition and move closer to the regulatory standards of Western European countries.

The second section contains an article by Jasmina Džinić from the University of Zagreb Faculty of Law and Carlo Panara from the University of Leicester Law School, titled *Engagement with the EU by Local and Regional Authorities from South East Europe*. The article starts from the concept of multi-level management and analyses the engagement of local and regional authorities in relation to EU institutions. It explores their roles in implementing EU policies, securing funding, and shaping multi-level governance. The authors highlight challenges such as limited administrative capacity and the need for stronger institutional frameworks. With its comparative analysis of as many as twelve East European countries, the article represents a significant contribution to the literature on multi-level governance, especially with regard to local self-government and its direct interaction with EU institutions.

In his article on *Factors Affecting the Relevance of National Security and Defence Strategies*, Dražen Smiljanić, assistant professor at the University of Defence and Security in Zagreb, identifies the factors that influence the relevance and adaptability of a strategy, using national security and defence strategies in contemporary settings as a research unit. The author discusses several risks that influence strategy development such as geopolitical shifts, technological advancements, and emerging non-traditional threats like cyber-attacks and climate change. The article underlines the importance of dynamic and inclusive strategy-making processes, integrating both traditional defence mechanisms and modern approaches to security.

The first article in the last section of this volume was written by Oscar Radyan Danar from Brawijaya University (Indonesia), under the title *The Role of Collaboration in Supporting Community Resilience Programmes in Post-Disaster Events*. The article deals with the issue of resilience of communities after major, predominantly destructive events, most often natural disasters such as fires, floods, earthquakes, and the like. The collaboration of different actors in such extraordinary circumstances is assumed to be an essential success factor for returning to a state of regular func-

tioning. The work is based on quantitative research conducted through a questionnaire sent to the local population. Among other things, the article concludes that “... not all collaboration processes have an effect on community resilience programmes, however it can be influenced by other variables considered in this study”.

The final article in this issue was written by Pavel Horák and David Špaček, both from the Masaryk University in Brno (Czechia). The article titled *COVID-19 Crisis and State Administration Authorities: A Systematic Review of National Regulatory Measures Adopted in Czechia* presents a systematic review and qualitative analysis of legal documents adopted by national bodies in Czechia in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The article evaluates the effectiveness of national policies, their socio-economic impact, and the coordination between government levels. It shows that the executive branch, particularly the government and the Ministry of Health, took the leading role in addressing the COVID-19 crisis in Czechia. Secondary law was the key format for regulating issues related to the functioning of state administration, specifically reducing personal contacts, ensuring protective equipment, and using electronic communication channels for remote work. The authors identify the lessons learned, such as the importance of transparent communication, data-driven decision-making, and the flexibility to adapt policies in rapidly changing circumstances. Recommendations are provided to improve preparedness for future public health emergencies.

With another completed volume of the CCPA journal, it is worth highlighting several challenges we faced this year. The constant increase in the number of submitted articles exerts additional pressure on the editorial team, both in terms of the speed of processing of incoming articles and in terms of finding and retaining relevant reviewers who will, with their reviews, comments and suggestion to the authors, additionally assist in the overall editorial work. We also encountered the phenomenon of simultaneous submissions of articles to several journals, which sometimes results in the authors not responding at all after the (positive) review process. Furthermore, there are constantly present ethical issues related to plagiarism, inadequate citation, data manipulation, etc., which are further intensified by the appearance of artificial intelligence tools that should sometimes probably appear as a kind of ‘co-author’ of submitted articles. In addition, the publishing of interdisciplinary research can sometimes be challenging due to the varying standards and methodologies in different disciplines, not only when writing articles, but also in the process of reviewing them and making the final decision on their publication. All this

increases the time between the submission of the article and the decision on its acceptance or rejection and, finally, publication.

Having these and other similar challenges in mind, in the coming year we hope to introduce certain innovations that will further raise the quality of our journal, in particular those that will allow for additional acceleration of the overall review and editorial process, increased relevance of the published articles, and better public communication of research findings and contributions not only to administrative science, but to everyday administrative practice as well.

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