

**Michał Dulak: How much left do we have from „honest brokers” in the EU?  
Effectiveness of the EU presidency under the Lisbon Treaty regime. Case of the Central  
and Eastern European Member States.**

A good practice in planning and implementing public tasks is to evaluate what has been done. The conclusions drawn from such a review allow, firstly, to exclude errors that may appear during the implementation of subsequent tasks, and secondly, they are important for the gradual building of so-called learning public administration. That's why the presidency in the EU is interesting object of research because it engages the efforts of the national public administration in the direct relations with the EU administration in order to implement the agenda of the country holding the presidency. Therefore, the paper on the basis of which the presentation will be presented at the first conference titled Understanding East Central European Politics will consist of three parts. First of all, the changes introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon regarding the formula of holding the presidency of the Council of the European Union will be presented in a general outline. This issue will be considered from the perspective of changes in the EU political system of exercising power in the EU. The competencies of the institution of a presidency significantly changed under the current treaty. They were diminished by creation of the permanent President of the European Council and new institutional position of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Also new organization of performance framework for the presidency, i.e. a group presidency of three member states, has affected the role and position of the presidencies. As a consequence of these changes coordination, planning and representative functions were limited, as well as the instruments subscribed to them, which favored the presidency to play a role of the national interests' representative. The second part of the paper will present institutional changes that have taken place in five countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which in 2011-2018 held or hold the presidency in the EU. The comparative method will analyze one large country from the region (Poland), three medium-sized countries (Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovakia) and one small country (Lithuania). In this part, changes in government public administration and in the organization

of the parliaments that were to prepare the country for the presidency will be taken into account. In the third part, the author will examine whether the strategic goals that each of the listed EU Member States have set for themselves during the presidency of the Council of the European Union have been achieved. This is necessary to determine the effectiveness of the presidency. In order to assess an effectiveness of mentioned countries I will use a project assessment perspective, which theoretical model was initially developed in the book *Skuteczność polskiej prezydencji w Unii Europejskiej* (trans.: The effectiveness of the Polish presidency in the European Union) edited by professor Krzysztof Szczerski. A thesis standing behind this approach says that after the treaty of Lisbon has come into force, and has changed crucial functions of each presidency, we can't any more consider a country chairing the Council neither as honest broker nor as representative of own national interests. That's why we can observe that presidencies became less political and more technocratic focused on organized administrative procedures. Thus it is possible to distinguish basic similarities between the character of presidency and theoretical features of the project. Project is defined as an activity: aimed at accomplishing of objectives; involving to this task many actors, arranged in specific organizational structure (in case of presidency this concerns especially a national administration); characterized by definite beginning and end; different from routine procedures of a given organization (in case of presidency: the procedures of national administration); characterized by unrepeatability (country holds presidency once every several years). A project assessment perspective delivers more adequate categories based on project management theory and practice. According to the presidency's evaluation model, proposed in the previously mentioned book *Skuteczność polskiej prezydencji w Unii Europejskiej*, presidency understood

as a project can be assessed by description of objectives' character. Analyzing their content and the way of planning we can assess the ambitions and plans of a country concerning how should look the role of the presidency. We can distinguish three pairs of categories describing the character of the objectives: a) innovative objective/continuity objective; b) firm objective/soft objective; c) agreed objective/individual objective.

### **Besnik Pula: Configuring globalized capitalisms: assembly platforms, intermediate producers, and combined roles in Central and Eastern Europe**

Existing literatures in comparative political economy have made successive attempts to define and characterize the institutional political economies of Central and Eastern Europe. From "liberal market capitalism" to "dependent market economy," to efforts to graft Central and Eastern European political economies along the liberal and coordinated models of the Varieties of Capitalism perspective, the literature contains a plethora of general types none of which seem to fully capture the distinct features of the region's political economy and international specialization. This paper addresses this question by examining Central and Eastern European states through an inductive definition that treats each economy's international economic role in the context of a globalized European economy. In doing so, it identifies three such roles occupied by Central and Eastern European states: assembly platform, intermediate producer, and combined. The paper develops this typology of comparative political economies and shows its applicability to the economies of Central and Eastern Europe and their origins in socialist industrial legacies and the politics of postsocialist economic reform. It then describes the relationship between international economic roles and domestic economic institutions using a production regime approach.

### **Gábor Tamás Molnár – Károly Mike – István Boza: Do Business Associations Support Rent-Seeking? The Case of EU Funds in Hungary**

While functions of business associations (BAs) are the subject of an ongoing scholarly debate, studies empirically testing different theoretical perspectives are still lacking. In mainstream public choice theory, BAs are mainly vehicles of rent-seeking, whereas new institutional economics emphasise their value-creating functions (such as supporting contract enforcement). The case of EU grant allocation in Hungary provides an exceptional opportunity for studying rent-seeking activities due to the large amount of allocated rents within a single framework. Based on data on grant applications and BA membership from a survey of SME managers and official data on grant allocation for the 2007-2013 financial framework, regression analysis is utilised to study the effects of associations on the choice and effectiveness of rent-seeking strategies. Our hypotheses are only partially confirmed. Membership in local BAs increases the likelihood and success rate of rent-seeking strategies but not grant size. National professional association membership has no significant effect on likelihood, success rate or grant size.

### **Zoltán Török: Unintended Outcomes. Effects of the EU and the IMF on Hungary's public sector and administrative reforms**

This article investigates European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) influence on Hungary's public sector reforms in the period 2004–2013, i.e. a time period that saw the initiation of the EU's Excessive Deficit Procedure (the whole period) and an IMF bailout programme (2008–2010). In this case, public sector reforms became derailed from the externally proposed trajectory and took the opposite direction: instead of fostering decentralization of the state administration and deepening the Europeanization process, Hungary's restructuring of the public sector delivered centralization and a 'power grab' that eventually impinged on some core values of the EU 'constitution' (the *acquis communautaire*). This study aims to explain this empirical puzzle by in-depth analysis of how external influence

was exerted and became interwoven with dynamically changing domestic factors in circumstances of conditionality. The research is framed by existing policy transfer and public sector reform theories. The article argues that the Hungarian case provides evidence of the unintended consequences of EU-driven public sector reforms.