
Editorial: Public policies and entrepreneurship

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We have in front of us a special issue of *International Journal of Public Performance Management*. The thematic issue is devoted to a very important topic of public policies in the present times, since modern states have to adapt to the rapid change in the global world and the global economy. Thus, many public policies need to change, reforms need to be introduced.

The special issue thus represents this effort on the case of a small Central European state – Slovenia. The special issue covers the broad range of public policies with special emphasis on different policies that are huge importance for entrepreneurship. When the call for papers, at the end of the year 2019, was published, we were primarily interested in analysing public policies (preferably scientific papers, but also expert policy papers) in regard of introducing entrepreneurial mentality into public sector, case studies in regard of supporting entrepreneurship, structural reforms for supporting entrepreneurship, tax reforms for supporting entrepreneurship, policies in regard of making entrepreneurship more attractive for youth and vulnerable groups, like the disabled, etc. However, during the process of preparing the issue, the pandemic of COVID-19 hit the world and therefore also some of the papers included are touching upon this matter.

The special issue consists of six papers all tackling different spheres of public policies in Slovenia. Since the readership of the journal is worldwide and international, maybe some additional clarification about Slovenia is needed. Slovenia is a relatively small (two million population) Central European country, getting its independence after 1991 collapse of Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. According to Dana (1994) already during Yugoslavia, Slovenia, which is neighbouring Italy and Austria, was a vanguard of reform. Slovenia used to be called also as the best ‘student’ during the process of accession to the EU (Justinek, 2020). Also, historical ties to Western Europe, a strong economy, and more or less stable constitutional democracy have assisted in Slovenia’s transformation to a modern state. Slovenia acceded to both NATO and the EU in the spring of 2004; it joined the euro zone in 2007 (Palalič et al., 2018).

However, with the end of 2008, all the dreams of the best ‘student’, as Slovenia was often referred to, collapsed. Slovenia’s economy was completely unprepared for the global financial and economic crisis, and recorded one of the largest falls in economic growth of the EU Member States in 2009, namely a fall of 7.8%. In the following years Slovenia was almost going towards the Greek scenario of a bailout, but escaped the claws of the debt crisis at the last minute, mainly due to the excellent performance of its exporters and a more positive global economic climate (Justinek, 2020).

Nevertheless, since its independence Slovenia has, comparatively speaking, been losing against other transitional economies; or more precisely, other economies have been

catching up much faster. Bearing all this in mind, and looking at the data for 2017 and 2018, we can see that some other transitional economies that were lagging far behind Slovenia's development in 1991 have now almost caught up. What, therefore, has happened to Slovenia in the last quarter century? Why, despite a relatively advanced (compared to other transitional economies) and developed economy at the beginning of the 1990s, did the country get hit so hard by the last financial crisis and in comparative terms lose pace against other transitional economies, such as Slovakia, the Czech Republic or various Baltic states?

With this special issue, we were trying to evaluate some public policies in Slovenia that might have contributed to this scenario.

The first paper talks about the healthcare system. More specifically, about public founding of family doctors (FDs). In Slovenia namely, patients report difficulties registering with a FD, since the patient-to-FD ratio is well below the EU average. Public primary healthcare providers (PCP) report difficulties with the financial liquidity that endangers the regular payment of employed FDs' salaries and constantly call for additional budget funding, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. It is therefore questionable, whether or not the PCP respects human rights of all the stakeholders in the healthcare sector. In this paper, the author analyses the existing regulations on the public financing of FDs and discusses some better alternative solutions that would promote the patients' right to effective primary healthcare, attract more medical students to specialise in family medicine and consolidate the fiscal sustainability of the primary healthcare sector, which is at great risk of collapse due to a dysfunctional healthcare payment and delivery system.

The second paper touches upon the security sector. The authors initially present an overview of the development of private detective services in Slovenia and the current state of normative legal regulation of the field. The emphasis of the analysis is on the key points of the legal regulation of private detective services. The findings of the research are presented, which is based on the conducted interviews with relevant stakeholders from various fields. The findings represent the starting points for changing the legal regulation of private detective services. Based on interviewees' answers, the authors identified six content sets of the current regulation of private detective services in the Republic of Slovenia, where changes are needed: forms of private detectives' organisations, potential additional work areas of private detectives, entitlements of private detectives, supervision of private detective and investigation services, professional training and a private detective exam, and private detective internship and apprenticeship. For the consolidation and future development of private detective services, taking into account the principle of respect for human rights and freedoms, and at the same time efficient provision of private detective services and thus the protection of legitimate interests of clients, it is necessary to adopt normative legal changes in the field of private detective services.

The third paper screens recent developments of public policies in Slovenia towards respecting human rights in state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Business and human rights (BHR) policies have gained momentum in recent decades, especially among the OECD countries and also globally. This topic is even all the more important for SOEs, where it is often emphasised that they should play the role of BHR trendsetters. States are through their human rights obligations responsible for ensuring and supervising that its SOEs respect human rights in their own business operations and also in their global supply chains. Throughout this article, the authors are analysing Slovenian ownership and

governance policies of SOEs over the last decade. Additionally, the paper screens the global BHR policy agenda and presents the latest developments in this field in Slovenia (the legislative and policy fundamentals). Nevertheless, the value-added of the paper is represented in the niche comparison of the BHR policies in SOEs in Slovenia.

The next paper introduces the COVID-19 pandemic and in this regard possible technological solutions in this regard. The authors claim that the technology adoption cycle in the public sector is usually much longer than in the private sector. The COVID-19 pandemic caused an acceleration in the adoption of various digital tools which serve as a bridge between the public and private sector. These digital tools include instantaneous contact tracing mobile applications (apps) used to alert individuals who have recently been in contact with an infected person and used by governments to manage public health policies. From the perspective of individuals' data storage, there are two general possible approaches, namely centralised and decentralised. Each approach has some legal and ethical considerations, mostly related to finding the right balance between the individual's privacy and public health. In this paper the authors outline how privacy according to the design principle should be applied as a minimum standard when developing government approved contact tracking apps.

The fifth paper addresses the importance of the implementation of the entrepreneurial mentality to heritage conservation projects. This is a field which is relatively understudied compared to the need of the 'third sector' participation in those projects. This paper aims to assess the significance of an entrepreneurial mentality in preparatory heritage conservation activities related to the need for the adjustment of the 'participatory approach' as used and promoted by the heritage conservation doctrine. Although in the paper, the authors focus on the heritage conservation public-private partnership (PPP) projects, they also argue that the implementation of the entrepreneurial mentality in preparatory heritage conservation and revitalisation activities is of the same importance also if the project is eventually not procured under the PPP model, but within a traditional procurement procedure, paid only from the public budget(s). Primary research methods are literature review and case study presentations in combination with participant observation.

The final paper tackles the data protection issues, which is a very important topic in the EU, especially in the last few years. In 2016, with the aim of updating the provisions of the Data Protection Directive from 1995, a reform of personal data protection was carried out. The new legislative package contains two main novelties, addressing different data subject categories, specifically the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR), and Directive (EU) 2016/680. The article presents an overview of the legislative package on data protection, with an analysis of the main changes in some key areas.

To conclude the special issue of *IJPSM* entitled 'Public policies and the development of entrepreneurship' is embracing the present public policy issues in Slovenia and even more wide – the EU. As editor of the special issue, I am convinced that the papers presented in the issue provide interesting new knowledge, as well as interesting new insights into public policies management.

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