

SUMMARY

Pál, MAJOROS, László, NYUSZTAY **The role of Visegrád 4 and CEFTA in the Euro-Atlantic Integration of the East-Central European Region**

Regional and subregional cooperation has been playing a traditionally important role in the development of East Central Europe. Motives of subregional cohesion (geographic, social, economic and cultural) are perhaps the strongest between the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, countries that have very much in common both in their history, present development and visions for the future. Among the recent actions of regional thought and practice, the authors focus on the Visegrad Cooperation (VG, V4) and the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) as the most significant networks in the region, established after the fundamental change of paradigm in the participating countries including basic restructuring of foreign, security and trade relations. In the article an analytical survey is given about the almost ten-year history of the foundation, temporary decline and recent re-vitalisation of Visegrad 4 as well as the objectives, results and challenges of CEFTA on the turn of the millennium.

József, HUBAI **Is the Greek road to EU membership suitable for Hungary too? (How can the Greek model be adapted to Hungary?)**

The comparison of Hungary with Greece an EU member country geographically and historically closest to it, shows that Greece was in a less favourable position when it started on the road towards European integration than Hungary will be in the future. The modernization of Greece, the process of bringing the Hellenic state closer to the core area of the EU has fallen behind at the end of the 20th century. The macrostatistics from other similar integrating states, e.g. Spain and Portugal, are much more reassuring.

Hence, it can be ascertained that mere participation in the integration process does not automatically amount to catching up with the core states. The so far unsuccessful attempts made by Greece to modernize, show that the benefits associated with integration can only be expected on the basis of a sound domestic economic policy.

On the other hand, the example of Greece also demonstrates that protection for traditional products and their production, as well as improvement of these products, will continue, even after integration into the EU (see the agrarian sector).

Judit, PAPP

Single Currency – at what price?

The paper examines the potential threats to the newly established single currency area in Europe. The aim of the investigation is to look behind the often cited gains of EMU and consider whether the Euro-zone is in a position for benefits to outweigh likely losses. The analysis is based on the theory of optimum currency areas: after a short introduction into the theory the possible sources of the shocks are discussed and their two basic types are differentiated between. Having identified their nature, various solutions to the shocks are discussed with special regard to fiscal measures. During the analysis EMU is contrasted to the single currency area of the United States of America. Based on the findings the paper concludes that the Euro-zone is not a natural common currency area and the single monetary policy may put a more than reasonable burden on member states in the long-run.

Ildikó, RÉVÉSZ

The economic impacts of the approximation of the Hungarian and the EU environmental regulation on packaging

The author in her article deals with the regulation of waste management and packaging in the EU and Hungary. She introduces case-studies about the Hungarian environmental regulation in practice. She concludes that the new legal provisions, though demand huge amounts of funds and a compromise among the various interest groups, would have favourable impacts on not only the environment but on the economy as well. They could influence positively the environmental elements by improving their state and the human living conditions meaning an increase in the value of human capital just like the economy by encouraging structural change, innovations leading to a shift from extensive to intensive environmental policy.

By causing a rise in the prices of natural resources the new regulation could mean an improvement in the efficiency of energy and raw material consumption, thus in a national level could result in a better balance of trade and balance of payments. It would either contribute to an increase in competitiveness in international markets and to the improvement of trade relations with the EU states and the possible elimination of trade barriers originating from looser national environmental requirements. Therefore, its earliest possible introduction is everyone's interests, from the government through the companies to the population.

Krisztina, BÁRÁNY

The evolution of education policy in the European Union

The education sector must be appreciated as capable of playing a major role in Hungary's accession to the EU, by preparing our fellow citizens for the conditions of life in the Union in both private and professional terms, by widening our horizons and knowledge about other cultures, and by supplying our economy with highly skilled experts who will be able to help Hungary gain a competitive position in her new environment.

The author in her article introduces the evolution of education policy in the EU, with special regards to the 90's and the main educational programmes.

Ildikó, JAKUBOVICH

Prospects of the Hungarian Exhibition Industry in the light of potential EU Membership

Fairs and exhibitions of the highest level bring in multiple additional incomes for the city and its surroundings where the events are held. In order to achieve high revenues and to meet the challenges, the host city, its officials and state executives must speak the same language, a harmony must exist among the different involved parties. As we could see in foreign examples, only complete concentration of wills, efforts, capital, proper timing and creativity result in success in the exhibition industry.

These consequences should be drawn by the interested Hungarian officials and private businesses.

Csaba, TÖRŐ

Hungarian domestic debates over NATO membership

This article intends to present a brief overview of the building of the national consensus with regard to Hungary's endeavours to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. In the course of this assessment it begins with the definition of Hungarian foreign security and defense policy after 1991. Then further along this line several aspects of the direct consequences of Hungary's NATO accession such as changes in the security and defense doctrines, military reform and budgetary issues are examined. At last the focus shifts to the contending opinions on the enlargement and the surrounding debates in the Parliament and in the broader public as well.

Jaroslav, MAZUREK

The Basic Traits of Economic Development in Slovakia during the first Czechoslovak Republic

The author deals with the questions of economic development of Slovakia between the two world wars. He points out, that in 1918 the Czechoslovak Republic was formed from two unequal parts: the agricultural Slovakia and the industrially advanced Czech territories. The different levels of economic development of Slovakia and the Czech territories led to economic differences between them for centuries, which was mainly obvious during the era of industrial development.