

## FOREWORD

Political science has made great progress in Eastern and Central Europe since its beginnings – or at least emancipation from ideological constraints - in the years of post communist transition to the point marked by the first issue of this journal. The usually self-made pioneers of “politology”, as the discipline came to be called in most of the region, sometimes had remarkable influence on public discourse in their countries. But the institutionalization and academic standards of the discipline were invariably modest throughout the region in the early 1990s. In most countries, the readers of the mainstream political science journals probably noticed only a modest improvement since. Yet, below this surface, a far more dramatic change occurred as proper political science programs emerged at ever more universities.

A whole new generation of young scholars is eager to earn a name for themselves by impressing specifically academic, rather than just lay audiences with the way they master the tools of a profession. There is probably no better signal of this change than the fact that a group of graduate students decided to launch a journal that, in its procedures - and indeed even in its language of communication – emulates the best academic journals of our time. Manuscripts are solicited from all members of a virtual community only united by a shared interest in analyzing politics in a truly scholarly - if you like, scientific - way, and not divided by political, linguistic, institutional, and social network boundaries. The manuscripts are peer-reviewed in a double-blind system where only academic merit can count; the authors receive feedback on reasons of rejection or expected improvements; and the target audience of the journal is no more and no less than the whole universe of potential contributors.

There is no need to point out that this firmly puts us in a new world in the history of Eastern and Central European political science, which will certainly feed enthusiasm among everyone committed to advancing a sound understanding of modern societies by creating social niches where the only trump cards are reasoned arguments. The role of my institution is merely to provide the logistics that allows the production of such a journal, and wait with great excitement to see how the content and impact of this journal will live up to the noble expectations of its founders. I wish all readers to find as many inspirational and eye-opening articles in this journal as the editors hope in their bravest moments. The talent, skill, and knowledge of the potential authors are certainly out there for such an enterprise, and it is up to all of us to see their best contributions reaching the audience of this journal.

**GABOR TOKA - HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**