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Dear Reader,

The collaborative research center 580 “Societal development following structural change, discontinuity, tradition and structural development” at the Universities of Jena and Halle conducted a workshop in October 2007 on the topic of economic elites in Central Eastern Europe.

In this special edition, a selection of elaborated contributions to the workshop will be made available to a wider audience. Research on economic elites in Central Eastern Europe reached a climax in the mid 1990s but has decreased since. Thus, it is due time to reexamine Central Eastern European economic elites, especially with the integration into the European Union. This special issue intends to encourage such a debate. The workshop marked the beginning of the A2 project “Economic elites in an extended Europe: recruitment, careers and behavioral orientations of managers” of the collaborative research center. The project compares the composition of economic elites in Germany, Poland and Hungary. Special interest will be given to conception of responsibility that elites attribute to their actions and the corporations they lead. One could hardly ask for a more relevant research design for current times: the most recent economic crisis has called attention to the question of corporate responsibility with such urgency that we may well be witnesses to the birth of a new economic order or at least a new arrangement between the state, corporations and individuals. The following articles do not yet provide answers but do analyze the significance of economic elites for the characteristics of the respective capitalisms.

In all of the examined countries – the Visegrád states as well as East Germany – a relationship between the transformational path and the configuration of the respective leading economic elites was observed. Jan Drahokoupil observed a strong relationship between the economic transnationalization in Central Eastern Europe and the development of “comprador service elites”, who profit greatly from the cooperation with foreign corporations; which is also true for the Hungarian example, elaborated by György Lengyel. In all countries the elite constellation has, in the meantime, solidified. One can, therefore, speak of a consolidated elite. Krzysztof Jasiecki showed in his article how different types of economic elites appear and become more important during the course of transformation. In consideration of the advanced age of most economic elites, most likely a change in generation is to be witnessed soon; see in particular the German example from Bernd Martens. Whether this generation change will, in turn, have an influence on responsibility discourse must still be examined.

With the special issue at hand, we hope to contribute to an intriguing debate and wish enjoyable reading. We would also like to thank again all workshop participants for the fruitful discussions as well as the reviewers for their careful selection and reviewing of the articles.

Katharina Bluhm, Vera Trappmann
(Guest editors)

Changes on the Editorial Committee

After more than ten years, **Ingo Winkler** resigns from the Editorial Committee of JEEMS due to his new position at the University of Southern Denmark. With his enormous work and his remarkable engagement Ingo has considerably contributed to what JEEMS has become throughout the past decade. We feel highly indebted to him - thank you very much, Ingo, for all you have done in favour of JEEMS!

Moreover, we are happy about Ingo's decision to keep on serving as a member of the Editorial Board and, thus, to support us with his great experience.

At the same time, we are pleased to announce that **Irma Rybnikova** will take over Ingo's position on the Editorial Committee. Native Lithuanian, Irma graduated from the University of Vilnius. Currently, she is completing her PhD thesis at the Dresden University of Technology. On 1st October 2008, she joined our team at Chemnitz University of Technology succeeding Ingo Winkler: Welcome, Irma, we are looking forward to an intensive and fruitful co-operation!