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Article Editorial

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Editorial

Ten years have passed since major changes in the political and economic system began in Central and Eastern Europe. Now we can rightly raise the question: can we still speak about transition, or are these changes pre-dominantly over with these societies and economies having already emerged with their own specific institutional and market structures and cultures. However, these countries continue to regard the developed European countries as their benchmark. This also means that subsequent changes will hopefully support convergence between the Western and Eastern parts of Europe. One decade is, of course, not a very long time even though we were witnesses to extremely rapid development. Nevertheless, the time elapsed still enables us to look at the past and present with some sort of historic perspective, and not to think in stereotypes, and not to see the world only in black and white, but to watch and identify also the details and subtleties. Well, this is exactly what is typical and characteristic for us in the publications: we can read excellent analytical articles and studies from various authors that make me indeed think in depth.

In *Gurkov's* study there is an analysis on adaptation of Western management methods in Russia and it presents very interesting conclusions on values assumed and followed by the Russian top managers and on techniques mentioned above. The managers, particularly in companies producing for export to the West, are fully aware of the significance of such enhanced methods, one can still clearly feel the difference how such methods are applied, depending the market or region they operate on.

The study by *Larimo, Nieminen and Springer* is also focusing on analysis of market conditions, as the said authors analysed the behaviour of Western European companies (primarily Finnish and Austrian) under the most competitive market circumstances in Central-Eastern European and in Russia. It is most probably a reason for surprise for many of us that the intensity of market competition in the countries of the study is not significantly lagging behind that of the developed European countries, moreover it has a fairly interesting specific feature: this competition is going on dominantly among Western companies and their investments. Nevertheless, local personal connections are so-to-say critical success factors, in addition to the quality and corporate image.

Kewell studies the specific features of personal connections and the networks based on them, primarily using Poland as the example. He raises very exciting questions, like how the network based on personal and political connections and alliances of interest (which still exist and can be easily traced back to the socialist regime) could contribute to the changes in Poland and the emerging organisational structures and management behaviour, while this network is inter-twined through thousands of threads with the ex-communist elite. The article implies several ideas that are tied, of course, not only to specifications

prevailing in Central-Eastern Europe. For example, the dispute over the manager capitalism has been flourishing for decades in the West, and as there were touchable traces of this dispute in many countries in Eastern Europe.

Tony J. Watson, professor of Organisational and Managerial Behaviour at Nottingham Business School points out to the role of managers and the significance of a management that can recognise and be fully aware of the challenges embedded both in bureaucratic procedures and entrepreneur-oriented behaviour (See his interview made by Ruth Alas). The professor is an eminent scholar and expert of the Central-Eastern region, particularly of the Czech Republic and he speaks with great optimism about the knowledge, skills and abilities of managers in the region, specifically about the adaptation capabilities of managers.

The concise country studies prepared by *Pučko, Alas and Zernand, Malý, and Llací, Kume and Leskaj* are extremely informative and interesting reading, and they try to present in a standardised structure the following:

- Role of the management in controlling change, and organisational redesign;
- The management functions typical for the transition time (planning, organising, leading, controlling);
- Changes in content or scope of some key business areas (e.g. marketing, financial management, human resources management).

These articles offer to the reader, in summary, a fairly interesting and informative picture on market, management and organisational issues prevailing in the Central and Eastern European countries, and such issues will be increasingly more and more interesting also for the Western readers, because the issues and results presented will soon be shared by these countries.

Miklós Dobák