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Reviews. Reports

Recenzje. Sprawozdania

Dorota Maj, Kamil Aksiuto, Report from “Civic Participation in the V4 Countries after 1989” – scientific seminar, October 11–13, 2017

A scientific seminar “Civic Participation in the V4 Countries after 1989” was held at the Faculty of Political Science of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University between 11 and 13 October 2017. The event was organized as a part of a grant “Practical Aspects of Civic Participation and Referendum in the Visegrad Group Countries after 1989” which is generously sponsored by the International Visegrad Fund. The scientific team from the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, which is a leader of the project, consists of: Professor Maria Marczevska-Rytko – project coordinator; Kamil Aksiuto, PhD; Dorota Maj, PhD; Marcin Pomarański, PhD. Also, the list of participants in the seminar included: László Komáromi, PhD (Pázmány Péter Catholic University in Budapest, Hungary), Jaroslav Mihálik, PhD (University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia) and Dusan Brabec, MA (Charles University in Prague, the Czech Republic).

The seminar was a first attempt at summarizing the results of research with regard to civic participation in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia after 1989. The main goal of the seminar was to deal with the question whether the formal-legal solutions which were adopted in the Visegrad Group countries after the fall of communism and which were supposed to make it possible for citizens to actively participate in the political decisions, are well suited for the purpose of political practice. Moreover, the participants had an opportunity to compare the experiences of the individual V4 countries with regard to civic participation, to identify the main possibilities for the improvement of the quality of civic participation as well as potential barriers that will have to be overcome to boost the civic engagement of the societies under study.

It was the intention of the organizers of the seminar to provide a wide platform of a common deliberation on the topic of civic participation in the V4. Thus, the programme of the seminar included events involving various actors interested in the topic. Participants met with the local authorities of Lublin, represented by Krzysztof Komorski – Deputy Mayor of Lublin, as well as with the authorities of Zamość: Andrzej Wnuk – Mayor of Zamość and Damian Miechowicz – Chief of the Department of Tourism and Promotion of Zamość. During that part of the seminar, the focus was on the forms of civic participation that are being adopted in Lublin and



Zamość, but also on the relations between the local authorities and the broader social milieu. A significant stress was placed on the discussion of the participatory budgeting, all the more so as this tool is being used in the region.

Different dimensions of civic participation were explored during the meetings with representatives of non-governmental organizations. Participants familiarized themselves with

the activity of 3 such organizations: Centre for Local Development Foundation, “New Pond” Foundation and Padua of the North Association. A vital part of the seminar was also initiated by the presentation of the solutions aimed at improving civic engagement in the V4 countries addressed to students and students’ organizations functioning at the Faculty of Political Science.

Seminar in Lublin was the first of a series of events which will be organized as a part of the granted project. Another meetings devoted to the topic of civic participation are planned in Lublin in January and March 2018. Similar events will also take place in Prague, Trnava and Budapest.

Grant “Practical Aspects of Civic Participation and Referendum in the Visegrad Group Countries after 1989” is a first successful project in a number of years in which the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University is a leader. The project involves scientific teams from Pázmány Péter Catholic University in Budapest (Hungary), University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (Slovakia) and Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic) as well as “The Newspaper of Local Government and Administration”. There are 12 scholars taking part in the project: Professor Maria Marczevska-Rytko; Kamil Aksiuto, PhD; Dorota Maj, PhD; Marcin Pomarański, PhD; Michel Perottino, PhD; Kamil Švec, PhD; Peter Horváth, PhD; Ján Machyniak, PhD; Jaroslav Mihálik, PhD; Bystrík Šramel, PhD; László Komáromi, PhD, and Dusan Brabec, MA. As a direct result of the grant, a scientific monograph on civic participation will be published and a Guideline of Best Practices in that field will be created.